

THE SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW.

VOL. XXIX.—NO. 4.

OCTOBER, MDCCCLXXVIII.

ARTICLE I.

THE FREEDOM OF THE WILL IN ITS THEOLOGICAL RELATIONS.

Recent discussions, conducted partly in this REVIEW, have directed special attention, and attached fresh interest, to the old but unexhausted, the perplexing but infinitely important, question of the Freedom of the Will. Almost from the dawn of philosophy, and the earliest development of theological doctrine, serious thinkers have, in testing their powers of reflection upon it, consciously touched the limits of the speculative faculty. Yet, as it never has been conclusively settled, each generation is attracted to its consideration as by an irresistible impulse. The agitation of it proceeds, and will, no doubt, continue, until the revelations of another and higher sphere of being have been reached. The relations of the question are too widely extended, its practical consequences too far-reaching, to admit of its being jostled out of the field of human inquiry. But important as it is, the keen and protracted discussions of it by the profoundest intellects of the past and of the present leave but little room for the hope of a solution upon merely speculative grounds. Kant and Hamilton have expressed the conviction that the intricacies of the subject cannot be cleared up in the domain of empirical thought. In the light of such confessions, we are not so presumptuous as to suppose that any lucubrations, the utterance of

companiment to a song. The composition is builded upon the bass—the song is in harmony with the accompaniment, but both bass and accompaniment are very small parts of the whole, so far as this whole is forceful or significant.

And, considered philosophically, by such an intelligence as Gabriel for example, (“which things angels desire to look into.” 1 Peter i. 12,) nothing could be more entirely wonderful, significant, and forceful, than the “sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow them.” (1 Peter i. 11.) There is no other thinkable solution of the problem, if God would save the world he made so wonderfully and furnished so elaborately. The philosophy of wonders is the philosophy of providence, and its crowning mystery and crowning glory is in its provision of a possible salvation for the wisecracs who doubt the existence of God and who deny the power of his grace.



ARTICLE V.

RETRIBUTION ; OR, SIN MUST BE PUNISHED.

The ways and acts of God, properly understood, are ever good and true and beautiful. If any suffer or perish at last, the fault is not with the great and wise and merciful Creator, but in the rebellious, wilful creature. “God made man upright.” Moreover, our first parents were hedged about with helps and checks innumerable. Jehovah made man free. True, the Creator demanded a test, in the form of obedience, from the creature; but Adam possessed a perfectly unconstrained freedom of choice. In regard to the forbidden fruit, he could eat or not eat, as he chose. This was fair and just. For had God compelled man to do, or not to do, then virtue could never have existed. For the creature’s services, in order to be acceptable, must always be voluntary. Adam, therefore, was put upon trial, but under the most favorable surroundings. He fell. Even after the fall, however, mercy was in the ascendant. For to the creature, fresh from the

sin of Eden, the promise was made that "the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." Furthermore, altars were prepared, and Abel, with others of like spirit, offered sacrifices thereon, which the All-Holy was pleased to accept. Again, Noah, a preacher of righteousness, faithfully warned the wicked, while the flood approached. And when that destruction was over, a knowledge of the way of life lingered with the patriarchal family that were spared. And had the posterity of Shem, Ham, and Japhet been faithful in their generations, no syllable of truth would have been lost to any part of mankind. Then again, God raised up prophets and leaders, and the light shone for all who were willing to behold it. And once more, when the fulness of the times had come, God sent his only begotten Son, born of a woman, made under the law, a Redeemer for every one who desired to be saved. In addition, this Christ, the Saviour of sinners, commissioned ambassadors to go forth and to preach the glad tidings to every creature. Yea, they were commanded to go into all the world and to offer life to every one of every age and in all conditions.

And if it be inquired why God made man at all—foreseeing, as he did, the creature's fall and consequent destiny—it can be responded that here is question that it is as incumbent upon the objector, as on the believer, to answer. Man is here, sins, suffers, dies. These are facts, and how will the sceptic explain them? When the objector's God—whoever he may be—created man, was such a creator ignorant of the things that must follow? If so, what will the universe come to, managed by a head so unfit? But if that Creator, whom the objector worships, knew all things beforehand, then why did he bring man into existence to sin, suffer, and die? To sin and suffer without a remedy, to die without a hope!

But let us ever bear in mind who it is that sits in judgment on the ways of the Almighty. It is the sinner himself. And will self adjust the "wavering balance" rightly when self is at stake? Will the thief, for instance, pass sentence on theft, when self is accused? Will self condemn murder, when self is the criminal on trial?

We meet—every one of us—two facts in the way, that no force can destroy or annul. In the first place, transgressors suffer here, and suffer because sin bites and stings. Secondly, there is a voice within, that declares that peace can never come until iniquity be put away through atonement for, and forgiveness of, the same. And where is there the slightest intimation in the Scriptures or out of them, that the creature will find those or either of them, in any world but the present?

And if the “propitiation” provided for the soul this side of the grave be rejected, what awaits the creature beyond? Must not each spirit go to its own place? And if there be no hell, then why did Christ appear? Why was he made under the law? To what end was he crucified? Surely, if none are to be saved thereby, the crucifixion of Jesus was the refinement of cruelty. But to save from what? is the question. From sin? Was it to do this, that Christ came? Then his mission was a failure, for ALL SIN and come short. Was it to save from punishment? Then we behold a failure again; for the whole race is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward. Was it to save from death? Failure is still manifest, for all men die. “There is no discharge in this war.” Was it to make eternal punishment impossible? This very impossibility, according to the theory of “general mercy,” already existed in the essential nature of Jehovah. Eternal punishment and divine goodness are so antagonistic that for one to exist is the inevitable destruction of the other. Why, then, did Christ come? Whom did he come to save, and FROM WHAT?

The soul that sinneth shall die. Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the Book of the Law, to do them. For God will by no means clear the guilty. Against these solemn decrees the mind of man has ever rebelled. Cain, THE FATHER OF RATIONALISM, held to a religion without faith, murdered Abel, and then, under the just judgment of God, exclaimed, “My punishment is more than I can bear.” And the transgressor in every age has been heard to say that the “revealed way of the Lord is not equal.” For the soul in ruins vindicates its wrong-doing by charges of injustice and partiality brought

against another. "The fathers have eaten sour grapes and the children's teeth are on edge." It is in vain that the Almighty declares that the son shall not bear the iniquities of the father; neither the father the iniquities of the son—the unbeliever persists in saying "the way of the Lord is not equal."

Unsanctified reason struggles to discredit Revelation, to undermine authority, and to fill with rash fallacies the mouth of the detractor. Scepticism is embodied and reëmbodied in diversified creeds. Jehovah is a terror to evil-doers, and hence the wicked do not like to retain God—the God of the Bible—in their knowledge. Any scheme, however wild, improbable, or absurd, is preferred, provided it banishes correction and unfetters the spirit in its practices of lust. But God does not leave himself without a witness, even in the heart of the vilest and most obdurate. For there are accusing thoughts, which, ever and anon, stir the conscience and testify to the record that "the wages of sin is death."

And what is sin? Is it not "any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God?" And since sin "utterly indisposes, disables, and makes opposite unto all that is spiritually good, and wholly inclines to evil and that continually," since it is a total corruption of man's nature, is not death the inevitable result? For what is spiritual life but the converse of this? In a normal state there is no conflict between mind and body on the one side, and God's commandment on the other, for all are very good. But sin is a paralysis. Yea, it is a spell that eradicates good and inaugurates evil. And it is of the nature of lust, when it has conceived to bring forth sin, and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth DEATH. There can be no exception to this rule. Were it otherwise, law would cease to be law. Look, for example, at the leper. The disease that infests his body is incurable from the start. For from the crown of the head to the soles of the feet, the vitals are involved. Hence, sooner or later, without divine help, destruction is sure. Through weary days, the frame of the sufferer weakens and fails from the burden and horror of a putrefying disease. And as leprosy deals with the body, so sin deals with the soul. In both cases, the sources of

life are irretrievably destroyed. And with neither the one nor the other are there any needed forces from WITHOUT, to make death certain.

The wages of sin is death. It is vain to suppose that effects can be removed while the cause still abides. And as death is the only possible offspring of sin, nothing can initiate life that does not before hand extirpate guilt. The idea, therefore, of mercy without expiation, or forgiveness without redemption, is simply contradictory. For sin and its wages, either here or hereafter, are indissolubly conjoined. And as the leper can never be pure while the leprosy remains, so the sinner cannot be healed while a "venomous disease infects his vital blood." Moreover, in any scheme of "general mercy," the sentence of the judge must be one and the same for the innocent and the guilty. Under this plan, the vilest transgressor needs neither penalty nor sacrifice to satisfy justice. The Holy God, in the final day, will treat with equal favor the righteous and the wicked. In his eye, according to this plan, it will be unessential whether the law is obeyed or its sanctions contemned. For "general mercy" abrogates authority, blends virtue and vice, and levels in the dust the very throne of the Almighty. Worth has no reward and iniquity goes unpunished, while "evil is called good and good evil." And with government thus overthrown, mercy descends into cruelty and righteousness is turned into wrong, while the pure dwellings of the saved in glory must be identified forever with the foul haunts and habitations of the vile. And, of necessity, from rectitude so perverted and associations so antagonistic, would emanate a gloom, in the blackness of whose dread shadows the just and the unjust would alike be confounded.

Hence, "general mercy" for the offenders becomes special vengeance to the upright. For let it be remembered that no scheme of rationalism that looks to "general mercy," ever accepts, much less proffers, any method of redemption from without. The sinful and sinning soul is thrown back upon its own energies wholly. What it is to be, must be developed out of self. But, given the factors, leprosy in the one case and sin in the other, and leave out all superhuman checks and interworkings, and the

issue, in the end, is as irreparable as doom. It is not more infallibly certain that gravitation holds worlds to their orbits, and every creature, animate or inanimate, to its place, than that "THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH." So long as the malady is uncured, the worm must do its work. And it is this spiritual incompatibility between falsehood and truth that fixes the soul forever to its lot. And thus, in the deep nature of things, the occupant of one place cannot pass to the abode of the other. There may be changes, but the bad only become worse; and wider and deeper grow the developments of sin, as the everlasting ages roll. And ever and forever the dead soul, amid the thickening gloom, beholds the extent and magnitude of its irreparable loss.

Nor does the objection hold good, in the meanwhile, that the disposition, nature, and allotments of man were encompassed from the beginning by inflexible necessity. True, in one sense, all died in Adam, and mankind, without exception, are conceived in sin and brought forth in iniquity, and go astray from the womb speaking lies. But man, in the first place, was a voluntary agent, and what Adam did in the garden and what we do now is the result of a freedom that cannot be made more free. Nor does it answer to say that death reigned from Adam to Moses and has ever reigned, even over those who sin not after the similitude of Adam's transgression. For under this economy of the Almighty, no detriment arises to those who are incapable of being called by the ministry of the word. For infants dying in infancy are made partakers of the great salvation through Christ, and without faith. The death penalty of the future is meted to those, only, who sin wilfully.

And if it be asked why each person born into the world was not placed upon trial for himself, it can be responded that through the federal relation, only, does salvation seem possible to any individual of the race. For if none died in Adam, neither can any be made alive in Christ. Besides, if our first parents, with the society and surroundings of Eden, failed to obey, is it not certain that every child born of this guilty fallen pair would have departed from the commandment? For such opportunities for obedience as were granted to Adam could never have been assigned

to any of his seed. God created the first man in righteousness and true holiness, and everything in the garden corresponded thereto. But if in spite of all, Adam fell, can it be doubted that his posterity, without exception, born of sinful parents and encompassed by sinful habits, would also have sinned and come short? But had the soul been put upon trial for itself alone, and fallen, then, likewise, must life have come only through self. For the destruction of representation on the one side, destroys it fatally on the other. And after trial, in such form, to each member of the great household of Adam, "dead" as all must have been "in trespasses and sins," there could have remained—the federal headship gone—nothing but a "certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries!" For since the fall of Eden, "by the deeds of the law there can be" no flesh justified in God's sight. "All sin, all go astray. There is none righteous, no, not one." And yet the Scriptures say: "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them." And since it is indubitably sure that righteousness cannot come by the law, the only conceivable prospect for the lost is to draw nigh to Jesus under that "new covenant" which abolishes the death inherited from the first Adam, and bestows eternal life upon the believer, through Christ Jesus, the second.

Christ, therefore, is our only hope. It is he that hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us. "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of another, shall many be made righteous. 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." And thus "the righteousness of God, without the law, is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets, even the righteousness which is by faith in Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe. For there is no difference, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus—whom God hath set forth to

be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God ; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, that he might be just and the justifier of him that believeth." Here, then, are the plan, providence, and compassion of God, over against the rebellion and folly of man. "God concluded all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord, and who hath been his counsellor? And who hath given to him and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For OF HIM, and THROUGH HIM, and TO HIM, are all things ; to whom be glory forever. Amen."

Let the reader hold fast to the thought that this DEATH is not simply physical and temporal, but also spiritual and eternal. Nor is it needed in the argument—though manifestly true in itself—to assert that the inequalities of the present DEMAND an adjustment in the future. It is obvious to all that the deserving, in our world, often suffer, while the vicious escape or are rewarded. Nor can it be responded, fairly, to this acknowledged fact, that in the very act of doing right, the just man is fully compensated, while the wrong-doer ever smarts under the dread consciousness of guilt. For the agonies of the wicked under remorse only verify the premise. For if sin be a bitter thing in this earth, why should it cease to be a bitter thing in that world which is to come? If God is not too merciful to punish the culpable IN TIME, why shall he be too merciful to visit with this vengeance the same guilty soul in that eternity that approaches? Ah! only demonstrate the existence of sin, either in this world or the next, and ITS WAGES are sure. And what if the pure in heart do always possess an inward consolation, is the fulfilment of God's covenant with the righteous a credit that the graceless offender can appropriate to himself? Can A vindicate his own robberies upon the plea that B always makes the losses good? Does not the LAW still hold its claims?

But if the "thrones" are to be set, how can it be otherwise
VOL. XXIX., NO. 4—15.

than that the awards of "That Day" shall correspond exactly with the character and antecedents of the party to be judged? And if this principle be correct—and who dare deny it—then when the sinner appears before the Judge, the only sentence possible in the case is that fearful one, "Let him that is filthy be filthy still." And hence that wild threnody of despair, which shall echo through the dark bosom of hell forever, is the logical consequence of iniquity whose germinal was in time. Even while we write the sinner is condemned. Execution has been stayed, and only because "that grace of God that bringeth salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lust, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." But only let this heavenly lure be gone, and the soul is lost forever. For the only LIVING thing within the sinner is the still small voice of grace which entreats him to awake. Allow THIS to depart, and all else is death. Look at the corpse. It is cold, pulseless, and without breath. The members—hands, feet, etc.—are physically the same, but that which gave them power and motion has departed. THE LIFE PRINCIPLE IS GONE! So long as the spirit remained the body was alive, but no sooner does the inward occupant flee than corruption sets in. This is what men call death. So much for the body. Turn now to the soul. It has already sinned and come short. The whole head is sick and whole heart faint. Why then is not the sentence speedily executed? The answer must be that the breath of the Almighty within delays the retribution. But when the Holy One withdraws, as he will in eternity forever, then "the worm that dieth not and the fire that is not quenched" shall begin straightway their direful work.

Mankind, in their legislative enactments, unwittingly it may be, justify the ways of God. The mandate, "whoso sheddeth man's blood by man shall his blood be shed," is recognised by human courts. Body for body is the verdict, even where the creature sits in judgment on the creature. But yonder at the "Throne" the soul shall be tried for SOUL-MURDER. Now if sin has its wages in the present world, with man as judge, shall not sin get its award in the next world where Jehovah sits in judg-

ment? If body death is just when the body is destroyed, is soul death too great when soul murder is made out? And besides, there arises to view once again that antagonism between virtue and vice which is inherent and unconquerable. For evil and good can never be agreed. And hence in the awards of eternity the righteous is simply admitted to that for which he has tastes—to that for which he is fitted—to that which corresponds with the yearnings of his nature. The wicked, on the other hand, is assigned to his own place—to the only place in the universe for which he is prepared. Society, as constituted at present among men, ejects from its bosom the defiled and offensive, and this when the infection complained of is only a disorder of the body. Look at the leper. “The priest shall pronounce him utterly unclean. And the leper in whom the plague is, his clothes shall be rent, and his head bare, and he shall put a covering upon his upper lip, and shall cry, Unclean, unclean. All the days wherein the plague shall be in him he shall be defiled; he is unclean; he shall dwell alone. Without the camp shall his habitation be.” This law of the leprosy was enacted for the physical protection of a community of earth; but upon a moral arena, and in the very presence of God, is it not monstrous to suppose that there shall exist the LICENSED interminglings of purity and filth? that the world that now is will empty its reeking dens into the golden streets of the Holy City, and while the morally unclean defile with their plague-spots the fair residence of the saints, no authority shall obtain to banish the leper and force him to dwell without, alone in his habitation? Are we to witness in the heavenly world a spectacle at which humanity revolts even upon earth? For let it be remembered that the difference between the sinner in heaven or in hell is one of LOCALITY only, and not of CONDITION or ESTATE. EVERYWHERE the wages of sin is death.

The man of science with telescopic gaze sweeps the heavens to ascertain the law which moves and binds and governs these uncounted worlds in the immensity of space. Do the same principles of attraction exist and regulate THERE which are the bond of material union HERE? To the depths of this vast abyss

is matter essentially the same ; and does the mechanism—the metes and bounds of every shining orb—point with inexorable logic to an all controlling, never deviating MIND? And do these very heavens so declare the glory of this one “incorruptible God, who is over all blessed forever,” as to exclude the bare possibility of another who works independently, according to the counsel of a diverse but co-equal will? If the keen scrutiny of science so reveals (and who shall deny that it does?) throughout the wide circle of the spheres, is not the conclusion analogically irresistible, that he who allows no change in the order, essence, and harmony of the material universe also ordains ONE MORAL LAW to bind all intelligent creatures, wherever they exist, and however remote their abodes? This WILL of the Holy and Omnipotent One is accomplished not only in the armies of heaven, but with equal sovereignty and power among the inhabitants of the earth. But if the Lord be the true God, “whose goings forth have been from old—the Most High that liveth forever,” whose law and dominion are immutable, infinite, and everlasting, and his kingdom from generation to generation,” then if death is the wages of sin in one world, DEATH MUST BE ITS WAGES IN EVERY OTHER!

The righteous man in the present life struggles with many adverse influences. Sense and materialism oppose. Another law in his members wars against the law of his mind. But when the justified soul goes up to glory, it leaves behind all that encumbers. The felicities of the redeemed shall never more be fettered by sin. For carnal motions cease, and the pious spirit enters an arena for which it has yearned and whose blessed communings are infinite joy. On the contrary, the sinner meets the bar of God with innate guilt, unwashed, and “passion raging like a sea.” The heart desperately wicked, and with every expedient for purification far in the background, appears before a Judge who cannot look upon sin, and that “will by no means clear the guilty.” And even if the trial were renewed many times over, the sentence must be the same, for “the wages of sin is death.”

And in this view it will be seen that hell is no creation of the Bible, but a great and awful fact that existed antecedent to all revelations! Its necessity is illustrated every day and every hour

in man's habits and in that nature of man that lies deeper down than habit. And while Jesus Christ brought life and immortality to light in the gospel, he did not unfold for the first time the doctrine of retribution. For in unregenerate souls of every land and clime, even where the gospel has not gone, the dread intimations of conscience point with assurance to the revelation of the righteous judgment of God. And even when the refractory dream of some future haven of rest, the heritage which they seek is not a kingdom of purity and peace, but simply a refuge from punishment and an inheritance of lust.

But how preposterous the hope! For the sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law, and these two will be present, whether the soul ascends up into heaven or makes its bed in hell. Solitude and darkness, a dwelling-place in the uttermost parts of the sea, cannot divide the spirit from its guilt nor exile the offender beyond the limits of law. God's prerogative is without bound. Anywhere in the universe man's sin shall find him out. The more therefore it is considered the deeper grows the thought that the wages of sin is death—that the soul has in itself the seeds of everlasting woe.

Although the argument, for the most part, has been based upon the essential qualities and consequent recompence of sin, yet it needs to be solemnly considered that in correspondence with this, the nature and justice of God demand for the transgressor a righteous retribution. For Jehovah's law is immutable, and he who is infinitely just can by no means clear the guilty. A God of love who is also a God of purity, must have a part in the punishment of sin. The Holy One of eternity expelled Adam from the garden, sent the Deluge when he saw the wickedness of man was great in the earth, destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah with fire and brimstone, visited Pharaoh with plagues, and slew the first-born of Egypt. He put a mark in the forehead of Cain, struck Ananias and Sapphira dead for lying unto the Holy Ghost, and many a time sent the sword and pestilence on the earth. "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."

And now, if God is compelled to limit or soften the punishment

of transgressors in eternity, by the same process of proof it could be demonstrated that it is obligatory on him to cut short the inflictions of time. It could be shown—by the theory referred to—still farther, that mercy and justice demand it of Jehovah that he should force upon the uncounted millions born and living in sin, altars, sanctuaries, and light. But by this method, too, the mighty Sovereign of the universe sitting on his august throne is not only stripped of his prerogatives before the armies of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth, but sunk to a level even below the commonest judge among men. For in looking around us we behold legislatures enacting statutes, human judges expounding them, and juries deciding upon the guilt or innocence of the accused. But the great God, who ought to combine in his person the authority of these three, is, according to the new theology, not allowed to exercise the functions of either. It has come to this, that the creature not only claims to be the judge in his own affairs, but undertakes to lay down rules for the regulation of the Almighty. Man not only virtually denies that the Judge of all the earth will do right, but ventures to inquire of the Creator, “Why hast thou made me thus?” Nevertheless, theorise as men may, suffering has existed for ages within the human soul and without, and still exists. But if God allows suffering to be present in one world, who dare say that he will abolish it hereafter in all others. On the contrary, if death be the wages of sin here, does not analogy teach that death must be the same wages hereafter? The change of venue does not alter the principle involved. For, as before stated, the removal of the body or soul from one locality to another makes no essential alteration in its condition or state; just as the leper, transferred from a dungeon to a king’s palace, will bear along with him the same whited spots. The difficulty, either with sin or an incurable disease, is to be found not in the mercy of the physician or judge, but in the desperate nature of the maladies themselves.

Nor can any fairly object to this. For the household, society, and the state, are constituted in the idea of censure and award. To abolish punishment would be to break down parental

authority, to open every jail, to throw wide the penitentiary, and to uproot the gallows. It would be to turn loose upon the community the thief, the debauchee, and the assassin. The only terror to desperate evil doers would be gone, and no man's property, honor, or life, could be safe. That sense of security which now pervades the public mind would be exchanged for abiding apprehensions. The gentler members of our household would not dare to go abroad, while the very sanctuary of home would be constantly in danger of the inroads of the desperado. But, thank God, a little wisdom is still left in the land. Legislatures enact laws against crime, and juries do not think that sorrow on the part of the thief, or of the keenest remorse in the soul of the murderer, are sufficient of themselves to make atonement for the outrage. On the contrary, courts, composed of men, not only condemn but punish the criminal. Every practical and sensible man understands how utterly futile and visionary would be the effort to control the vicious by the golden rule of love. Whenever there is law there must be annexed a penalty for disobedience.

But if an earthly court punishes the offender, can it be expected that the infinitely perfect Governor of the universe will allow the culprit to go free? yea more, to receive the transgressor, the murderer it may be reeking in gore, into the company of the glorified and pure? Ah! that this cannot be, we have distinct and oft-repeated warnings.

There is the account of the "rich man who died and was buried, and in hell lifted up his eyes being in torment." Besides, between this lost soul and the saved a great gulf had been "fixed." In "the last day," God, we are told, shall separate the righteous from the wicked, as the shepherd divides the sheep from the goats. To those on his left hand the Judge will say, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels." With not a whit more clearness does the Bible declare the safety of the righteous than it unfolds the danger and doom of the wicked. If the one is to enter into eternal life, the other is to go away into eternal punishment. "Aionion," as every scholar knows, is the word used to describe alike the duration of blessed-

ness and the period of suffering. And if it be taught by this word that the wicked are to be cast away only for "an age long," or for a season "something above and beyond time," then the happiness and glory of the redeemed must be limited to the same term. It is thus seen that we cannot raise the guilty to heaven without at the same time unsettling the foundation of the justified and saved. And such are ever the inconsistencies and folly of error, especially in those attempts of the wise of this world to improve upon the teachings of the Scriptures.

And with what shadow of justice, after all, can the transgressor complain that punishment awaits him for sin? Does he not disobey wilfully? Is there not an inward monitor that confesses to the commandments of the Lord, that they are right and true? Is there a human being on the earth sunken so low who does not acknowledge the excellency of virtue and the sting and anguish of sin? Is it not because the hearts of the children of men are fully set in them to do evil, that any refuse to conform to the precepts of the gospel? Does not nature even utter her voice? There are the heavens which declare the glory of God and the firmament which showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, night unto night showeth knowledge. The Almighty speaks to us in the foundations of his mountains and in the valleys which are spread forth. Bounties and beauties without number unfold the goodness of God, while the volcano, pestilence, and storm are intimations of his wrath. And to these things, which are seen, heard, and felt, even by the savage, correspond the sure words of an inspired prophecy. For in the Scriptures we meet mercies manifold, but mingled with threatenings. Jehovah first exhausts the treasuries of his grace. He gives his only begotten Son to die and redeem the wicked. He sends the Holy Spirit to convince men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He not only provides a ransom for the "chief of sinners," but commissions living teachers to go into all the world and disciple the nations, offering salvation to every creature without money and without price. The preacher is bidden to proclaim it the wide world over, that Jehovah is willing to save to the uttermost; that the blood of Christ cleanses from all sin; that God takes

pleasure in the death of none, but solemnly avers, by his life, a desire that the wicked should turn and live.

And now, after such gifts, sacrifices, invitations, preparation, forbearance, and love of God the Father and his only begotten and well beloved Son, shall a sinner that refuses the offer and despises the mercy go free, without punishment and without reproof? Shall earthly courts sentence and execute the culprit who has trifled with human rights, and the soul that has outraged every law, contemned God's compassion, trampled upon a loving Saviour, and murdered itself, be allowed to escape? If so, how appalling the thought: a God insulted, his statutes derided, the blood of his co-equal scouted, and yet no arm in the universe able or willing to avenge! It cannot be. Let the wicked therefore beware when God riseth up. For when he visiteth, what shall the sinner answer?

In conclusion, what shall we do? In view of a bare possibility of eternal doom, would it not be wise in the soul to make its peace with God? The strife is unequal. "Let the potsherds of the earth contend with the potsherds of the earth, but woe to him that contends with his Maker!" With the blood of Calvary flowing, why should any perish? "Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else." "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." Only "be ye willing and obedient" and "I, even I, am he that shall blot out thy transgressions for my own sake, and will not remember thy sins." O sinner, BELIEVE and BE SAVED.

VOL. XXIX., NO. 4—16.