

THE PRESBYTERIAN AND REFORMED REVIEW

No. 8—October, 1891.

I.

ETERNAL RETRIBUTION.

THE question of the future and eternal destiny of man will not rest from discussion. One does not wonder at this. The thought that a single man, still more that multitudes of men, because of their deeds in this short life, should be lost eternally, is one which is so awful to contemplate, that it is not strange that not merely rationalistic expositors of Scripture, but also not a few truly devout and spiritual men, have ever protested that it is impossible that this should be the real teaching of Scripture. Accordingly, such have eagerly laid hold of every word here and there which might of itself seem to warrant a larger hope, and have earnestly sought to show that the passages which, to the ordinary reader, seem to declare the doctrine of the eternal doom of many are susceptible of a different interpretation.

By those who contend for the belief in the final universal restoration of all rational beings to holiness and happiness, it is assumed that this is a necessary logical corollary from our affirmation of the infinite perfection of God. For it is insisted that if we believe in a God who is infinite in knowledge and wisdom, power, love and righteousness, then we must logically admit that it is impossible that He should have allowed any creature to come into being, by whom He foreknew that the gift of life would be so abused as to issue in endless sin and misery. Whatever force there may be in this presumption considered in itself, it will be observed, in the first place, that it wholly overlooks the powerful counter-presumption which is furnished by the fact of the uniformly hardening power of habit. For character, to all appearance, tends to fixedness

so rapidly and surely that, as a general rule, long before a man reaches the usual limit of earthly life, permanence in type of character is attained. How then shall the case of the impenitent become more hopeful when, in the coming ages, decades shall have become centuries and millenniums?

But this alleged presumption will be totally nullified if it be shown from Scripture that there is any class of sinful beings for whose restoration God has made no provision. For, evidently, if this be revealed in the case of any, then it is certain, whether we can understand the mystery or not, that the eternal ruin of some creatures must be somehow reconcilable with the infinite moral perfection of God, and the force of the asserted presumption is broken, since it demands nothing less than a restoration which shall be absolutely universal. Now, as a matter of fact, the Scriptures do teach, formally and explicitly, that for a whole class of sinful beings God has made no provision for salvation. Basal to the revelation of the Word on this point are two propositions. First, that there is no forgiveness of sin without the atoning sacrifice of the Son of God; of an atonement made by the sinful person himself, the Scriptures know nothing. Secondly, it is also clearly taught that such atonement must be made by One suffering in the nature of those for whose sin the atonement is made. As for the first of these propositions, it is formally taught in Heb. ix. 22, that the principle of the Mosaic law, that apart from shedding of blood there is no remission of sin, applies in full force to the defilement by sin of those "heavenly things" of which the earthly were the "patterns." So also Paul declares (Gal. iii. 21), that "if there had been a law given which could make alive, verily righteousness would have been of the law;" and further (Gal. ii. 21), that "if righteousness is through the law, then Christ died for naught." The sacrifice of the Son of God is, therefore, declared to be a necessary condition of the forgiveness of sin.

As for the second of the above propositions, it is no less formally taught that for an atonement by the Son of God to be applicable to the case of a sinner, it was necessary that it should be made in the nature of those for whom the atonement was designed. It is written (Heb. ii. 17) that, in order that Christ might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, "it behooved him in all things to be made like unto his brethren, so as to make propitiation for the sins of the people;" and that, therefore (vs. 14, 15), "since the children are sharers in flesh and blood, he himself also in like manner partook of the same; that through death . . . he might deliver all them who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage." And then follow (vs. 16) these de-

cisive words, which in explicit terms exclude the fallen angels from the purpose and scope of Christ's redemptive sacrifice: "For verily not of angels doth he take hold, but he taketh hold of the seed of Abraham." If anything could add strength and clearness to this teaching, we have it in the fact that the context even specially mentions the prince of these fallen ones, and declares the purpose of the death of Christ as regarding him to be, not his final salvation, but "that He might bring to naught him that hath the power of death, that is the devil."

Surely these words must fairly be regarded as dogmatically teaching that in the saving work of Christ there is no provision which should meet the case of the fallen angels, and so put them even in a salvable condition. Hence it follows that in the fallen angels we have a class, numerous and important, to whom, according to the Scripture, the atonement of our Lord is inapplicable, and who are, therefore, of necessity excluded from any hope of future restoration; a fact which harmonizes with those significant words of our Lord (Matt. xxv. 41), that "the eternal fire" to which some of the children of men shall be condemned, was, in a peculiar and special sense, "prepared for the devil and his angels."

It is another assumption upon which the advocates of the doctrine of a universal restoration unanimously insist, that in the government of an infinitely good and loving God, all punishment must in its essential nature be disciplinary and remedial, intended and adapted, therefore, to bring all who suffer, sooner or later, to a loving and penitent surrender of the will to Him. This assumption, however, cannot be justified either in the light of experience or of Scripture. For, so far as our observation extends, there is no evidence that suffering has a general and necessary tendency to purify character. Even more frequently its manifest effect is the direct opposite, and it rouses in the suffering person a revolt of will even more intense than before, against the God who has sent or permitted the suffering. As for the testimony of the Scriptures, when we look into them, we are at once confronted with the fact that whereas the sufferings of God's people are everywhere declared to be for their sanctification and are referred to the love of God, those which overtake the impenitent are referred instead to God's wrath and no certain saving issue is ever attributed to them.

It is indeed true that this last statement has been denied. Reference has been made, for example, to Hab. i. 12, as an illustration of the contrary, where the Babylonian invaders are said to have been ordained for the correction of impenitent Israel. But the passage is not pertinent to the argument. The reference of the prophet is not to individuals as such, but to Israel collectively, as the chosen people

of God. It was for their *national* correction, as being the chosen people of God, that the Chaldean visitation was sent, and it was effective in delivering them from idolatry. But when the reference is to others than the chosen people, as will be illustrated further on, even such temporal judgments are not represented as remedial, but as retributive.

To the same effect is cited also* Ps. lxii. 12, where we read: "Unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy; for thou rewardest every man according to his work." But this is no more to the point. The words do, indeed, teach that the punishment of men according to their deserts is an illustration of the divine mercy; but the question remains, "Mercy towards whom? Towards him who is punished, or towards others?" To hang a murderer may be properly regarded as not only an act of justice, but also an act of mercy; not to the criminal, however, but to the community which by the execution of the penalty is delivered from the curse of his presence. The thought which we derive from this passage is quite different from that of the restorationists. Rather do we find here a hint that instead of the divine mercy requiring the salvation of all, it may as probably demand the eternal exclusion of incorrigible sinners from the blessed kingdom of God.

Most plausible, to those who are not careful to examine assertions, is the reference which Mr. Jukes has made, with others, to the Lord's use of the word *κόλασις*, in Matt. xxv. 46: "These shall go away into eternal punishment" (*κόλασιν αἰώνιον*).† As to this word *κόλασις*, he tells the reader that it "is always used for a corrective discipline, which is for the improvement of him who suffers it." In a foot-note he then quotes Archbishop Trench as having declared this to be the classical use of *κόλασις* as contrasted with *τιμωρία*, although adding that "it would be a very serious error to attempt to transfer this distinction to the words as employed in the New Testament;" on which last words of the archbishop he then remarks: "To such shifts are even learned and good men driven by their traditional views respecting endless punishment." But these citations and comments of Mr. Jukes are themselves more open to criticism than the statements which he quotes from Trench. In the first place, he has omitted in his citation to notice the words, "for the most part," which rightly accompany and qualify the remark of Trench regarding the classical usage of *κόλασις*; and, in the second place, he has omitted to notice the passages in the writings of Josephus and the Apocryphal books to which Trench refers, as justifying his remark regarding the use of *κόλασις* in Hellenistic Greek.

* In *The Restitution of All Things*.

† *Ibid.*, pp. 129, 130.

That Trench was right in the intimation that not even in classical Greek was the word *κόλασις* and the cognate verb used only of discipline which is for the improvement of him who suffers, is plain from Euripides, *Helen.*, l. 1172, *θανάτω τῶν κακῶν κόλαζομεν*,* where it is evident that since the *κόλασις* spoken of was death, it could not have been "for the improvement" of the man who suffered. As for the usage in Hellenistic Greek, which is the essential point in the argument, the passages to which Trench refers, as also others in the Septuagint, are decisive. Thus, in 2 Mac. iv. 38, this word *κόλασις* is used of the execution of the murderer of Onias. In the Wisdom of Solomon, xi. 5, it is said concerning Israel in the Exodus from Egypt, that "by what things their enemies were punished" (*ἐκκολάθησαν*) "by the same they were benefited;" and, again, vs. 14: "When they heard by their own punishments (*κολάσεων*) the other to be benefited, they had some feeling of the Lord." So (xix. 4) the destruction of the Egyptians in the Red Sea, which assuredly was not a discipline "for their improvement," is described as a *κόλασις*, thus: "The destiny whereof they were worthy drew them to this end . . . that they might fulfill the punishment (*κόλασιν*) which was wanting to their torments." In all these cases, evidently, the idea of corrective discipline for the improvement of the sufferer is in express terms excluded from the content of the word.

The words and phrases connected with the word *αἰών*, in the judgment of the present writer, have often been treated as if they were of more decisive bearing on the controversy than the facts regarding their usage will show. Thus, it is ever urged by restorationists as of great significance in regard to this question, that, *e. g.*, the phrase *εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα*, used so frequently with regard to the duration of future punishment, often denotes a limited period of time. That this is quite true is undeniable, but it proves nothing as to the duration of future retribution. For it is no less demonstrable that this phrase, and others in which the word *αἰών* occurs, do often denote, in the most unambiguous manner, duration absolutely without end. Thus in the *Timæus* of Plato, 38, C., *αἰών* means, and can only mean, "eternity." And that in the New Testament these words and phrases in many places can mean nothing less than endless duration, is no less incontrovertible.

This is clear, first, from the very nature of certain expressions in which one or other of these phrases is used: as, *e. g.*, 2 Pet. iii. 16, "To him be glory, both now and forever" (*εἰς ἡμέραν αἰῶνος*); Matt. xxi. 19, where it is said of the fig tree cursed, "No man eat fruit of thee henceforth for ever" (*εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα*); John, iv. 14, "Whosoever shall drink of the water that I shall give him, shall never

* Quoted by Prof. Beet in *The Expositor*, Sept., 1890, pp. 212, 213.

thirst" (*οὐ μὴ διψήσῃ εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα*); xiii. 8, "Thou shalt never (*οὐ . . . εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα*) wash my feet." The phrase *εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας* is illustrated by Rom. xi. 36, "To him be the glory forever;" and the reduplicated and intensified expression, *τοῦ αἰῶνος τῶν αἰώνων*, by Eph. iii. 21, "Unto him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations, forever and ever;" in both of which cases, surely candor must admit that the intention was to indicate duration without any conceivable limitation. Such indisputable facts as these certainly show it to be very unsafe to assume that these expressions have not the same meaning when they are used of future retribution.

The case becomes the stronger as regards the ordinary New Testament usage of these expressions when we note the contrasts which they are used to mark. Thus, in 2 Cor. iv. 18, "the things which are seen" are contrasted with "the things which are not seen," in that the former are "temporal" (*πρόσκαιρα*), while the latter are "eternal" (*αἰώνια*). How is it possible here to translate *αἰώνια* as "age-long," or to insist, with many, that the word *αἰώνιος* is properly "qualitative," denoting "that which is characteristic of the æons?" So, again, in v. 1 of the next chapter, the mortal body which we now have is contrasted in like manner with the "building of God," in that while the former may "be dissolved" (*καταλυθῆναι*), the latter is "eternal" (*αἰώνιον*) in the heavens." Will any one say that "eternal" here is an inaccurate translation? If another meaning be assigned to the word, what then becomes of the contrast which was so evidently intended?

If possible, more decisive still becomes the argument when we note the words which the New Testament writers have used as equivalent in meaning to one or other of these *aion* words. Thus, the word *ἀφθάρτος*, "incorruptible," is applied in 1 Pet. i. 23, to the Word of God, as being that (v. 25) "which liveth and abideth forever" (*εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα*). So, in Heb. vii. 16, 17, the fact that the priesthood of our Lord is "after the power an endless life" (*ζωῆς ἀκατάλυτου*), is proved by quoting Ps. cx. 1, that He is "a priest *εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα*." More than this, we have passages regarding future punishment in which the meaning of these words and phrases is most distinctly indicated by other expressions descriptive of duration, which utterly exclude any thought but absolute finality and irreversibility. Such, for example, are the words in the parable of the two debtors, Matt. xviii. 34, 35: "His Lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due. So shall also my heavenly Father do unto you, if ye forgive not every one his brother from your hearts." It is said, indeed, that the expression, "till he should pay all that was due," suggests a

termination of the punishment as possible; but such a thought is formally excluded by the previous statement (v. 25) as to the condition of this debtor, that "he had not wherewith to pay." Surely, he was not likely to be able to retrieve his fortunes while in the hands of "the tormentors!" So in Mark ix. 48, hell (Gehenna) is described as having its special terror in this, that "their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched." How can such words as these be fairly reconciled with the theory that the punishments of hell, sooner or later, have for all a happy ending in eternal redemption?

If anything could be more decisive than this, it is the language which Christ used in the account of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke xvi. 19-31), wherein Abraham is represented as saying to the rich man "in torments," "Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, that they which would pass from hence to you, may not be able." And of these solemn and profoundly significant words Mr. Jukes is only able to say that "the great gulf fixed, which severs those which once were nigh, but are now cast out, though utterly impassable for man, is not so for Him . . . who openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth."* Assuredly, more than this will be required to remove the impression which the Church in all ages has commonly derived from these words, that our Lord intended to be understood as thereby shutting out all hope from the rich and covetous Pharisees whom He was addressing, in case they, like that rich man, should go into Hades impenitent and unsaved.

A plausible argument has been elaborated by Mr. Jukes from the Old Testament type of the first-born, as illustrated by New Testament passages which intimate that this receives complete fulfillment in the Church.† His argument is worked out in the following manner. It is affirmed that it is revealed as the purpose of God "by some to save and bless others;" "by a first-born seed to save and bless the later-born." In proof of this, the Abrahamic covenant is adduced, wherein it was promised: "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." But, according to Paul (Gal. iii. 29), "the seed" in whom all the nations of the earth are to be blessed, is not merely Christ personally, but the Church collectively. But this, again, implies that the total number of those who constitute the "seed," should be themselves redeemed *before* becoming a blessing to all the nations of the earth; from which it is then inferred that after the completed salvation of that elect body which is called the Church, must follow through their ministrations, the salvation of "all the nations;" *i. e.*, of all the individuals of all nations in all

* *The Restitution of All Things*, p. 137.

† *Ibid.*, p. 31, *et seq.*

ages! This view of the matter is supposed to be confirmed by the type of the first-born in the Mosaic dispensation. The first-born, we are reminded, had the right to be priest and ruler over his younger brethren; also, if any of his younger brethren should have sold himself to a stranger or have forfeited his inheritance, it devolved on the first-born to redeem him and his estate; in order to which service he received a double portion of the paternal inheritance, and thus, a type of the elect, was blessed that he might bring saving blessings to others. This type, it is claimed, was fulfilled, first, in Christ, which none will deny; secondly, in Israel as a nation, which is also sufficiently clear; and, finally, it must be fulfilled in the Church as a collective whole, by means of which in an age or ages to come, salvation will, sooner or later, be mediated to all who have died in sin. In confirmation of this, we are reminded that Christ is called "the first-born" (Rom. viii. 29), as also Israel (Ex. iv. 22); while also in Heb. xii. 23, the Church is called "the Church of the first-born." But in each of the two former cases, the first-born implied an after-born. Christ is called "the first-born" with reference to the "many brethren" whom He redeems and brings out through death into resurrection life. In that Israel is called "the first-born" of the nations, it is implied that after Israel and by means of Israel, the other nations also are to be restored to the holiness and blessing of God's kingdom. Hence it is argued that when the Church is called "the Church of the first-born," it is herein implied, as in the other cases, that after the redemption of the Church of the first-born and by their ministrations others will be made partakers of the life eternal; since otherwise this title would have no significance.

Such is this plausible, but yet inconclusive argument. In general, it is to be remarked that to place against such formal and didactic declarations as the Scriptures present regarding the duration of future retribution, what are at the most but inferences, however plausible, from certain Scripture types, must, in the nature of the case, be a very unsafe method of ascertaining the teaching of God's Word. In the present instance, it is certainly quite possible to harmonize the Scripture facts adduced by Mr. Jukes with the usually accepted sense of the passages which speak of the duration of future punishment. How the reconciliation shall be made, will naturally depend upon one's eschatological beliefs regarding other and subordinate points. Thus, if with Bengel, Auberlen, Alford, Godet, and many others, one understand the Holy Scriptures to teach that the resurrection of the righteous will precede by a considerable interval that of the rest of the dead; and that the coming of the Lord, instead of marking the absolute end of human history, will only

end the present order and introduce a new dispensation of redemption, in which the Lord and His risen saints shall minister, with the outpouring of the Holy Ghost, the blessings of salvation to the nations who shall live in the flesh upon the earth during that dispensation; then it is evident that, if this be granted, herein one would have a complete answer to the above restorationist argument. For it is evident that such an administration of grace in a future dispensation, not to the dead of other ages in Hades, but to men like ourselves still in the flesh upon the earth, would satisfy to the uttermost all that could be justly argued from the above premises; since, on this supposition, it would be strictly true that relatively to the Church, technically so called, there would be a multitude "later-born" than the saints of this dispensation, so that the expression, "the Church of the first-born," even as interpreted by Mr. Jukes, would be abundantly justified. For surely when the restorationist introduces the thought that the "after-born" must needs include souls in Hades, he brings in more than is contained in his own premises. For in the fundamental promise which is urged in this argument, that in the seed of Abraham all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, if usage is to be allowed to determine the matter, the phrase "all the nations" cannot be held to include every individual even of all nations in the flesh upon the earth—still less every individual from every nation in all ages, the dead as well as the living. The very use of the word "nations" in the promise limits its comprehension to individuals in this present earthly life. There are no "nations" as such in Hades.

But if, with others, we reject all such schemes of eschatology as those of the above-named expositors and regard the present dispensation as final, even so we are not shut up to accept the conclusion from the above argument. For while it is indeed true that the phrase "the first-born" in many cases does imply the existence of an after-born, yet this is not a rule without exception. It is impossible, for example, to maintain this implication in Colossians i. 15, where Christ is called (R. V.) "the first-born of all creation;" since, if this principle is pressed here, we must at once accept Arianism, in direct contradiction to the clear representations of the New Testament. For if the word *πρωτότοκος* be taken in the strictly temporal sense, as is essential to the integrity of Mr. Jukes' argument, then Christ being the "first-born," the "later-born" in this case will be the whole creation. But fatal to this interpretation is the undeniable fact that the verb *τίκτειν* and its derivatives are never used in the Scriptures regarding the origin of the creation. Thus, to conceive of the creation as by the implication of this passage, in respect to our Lord, the "after-born," would be in opposition

to the uniform usage of Scripture. Even though, therefore, with Meyer, we so far retain the temporal reference here as to say that by the word *πρωτότοκος* Christ is represented as born before anything else came into being, we should still have to say that this word as used here, does not and cannot imply an "after-born." But, in consequence of the peculiar privileges accorded to the first-born among the Hebrews and other nations, it came to pass that, sometimes, from the word "first-born" or its equivalents, the temporal idea of priority, implying, as a correlate, posteriority in time, almost or wholly vanished, and the thought especially expressed by the word became that of dignity and precedence in rank, such as was characteristic of the first-born; in illustration of which Alford appositely cites Ps. lxxxix. 27, "Also I will make him (*i. e.*, the Messiah) my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth;" and also, premillennialist although he is, the very expression, "the church of the first-born" (Heb. xii. 23) upon which Mr. Jukes chiefly rests his argument; where in his judgment the phrase has no reference to priority in the obtaining of salvation, but only to the dignity and privilege, like unto that of the first-born, of all those whose names are written in heaven.* Evidently, whether one adopt this interpretation or not, it should be clear that one cannot confidently assume that we have in this phrase a hint of persons who shall be "later-born" into eternal life than the Church, and then base upon it an argument for the universal restoration of all impenitent souls and fallen angels to eternal holiness and happiness.

An argument for the future restoration of those who have died in sin has been based upon the words which we have in Ezek. xvi. 53, 55, promising a future restoration of Sodom and her daughters, in a time when "they shall return to their former estate;" as also analogous promises in Jer. xlvi. 47, that God "will bring again the captivity of Moab in the latter days;" and xlix. 6, that He "will afterward bring again the captivity of the children of Ammon." Concerning these passages we are told that they teach that "though these nations in the flesh were enemies, and as such received the doom of the old Adam, yet for them also must there be hope in the new creation." The exegesis which draws this inference is truly extraordinary. As regards all these and other similar passages which are quoted to the same effect, it is to be noted that the judgments of which these prophecies predict the reversal were not judgments having to do with the life to come, but temporal judgments falling upon these peoples in their national

* "There is here no distinction between first-born and later-born Christians, but all Christians are called *πρωτότοκοι*, because of their heritorship of the heavenly inheritance." Alford's *Greek Testament*, *sub loc. cit.*

capacity, and consisting in war and consequent subjugation and captivity. Surely the promises of restoration must be understood as correlated to the preceding threatenings. As the predicted captivity of Moab was not a captivity of individual Moabites in Hadean dungeons, in the world of the dead, but a national captivity effected by the Babylonian power, so must the restoration consist in a national deliverance from that captivity. This is the more certain, because the event has shown that the precisely similar predictions of the restoration of Israel had no reference to a spiritual restoration of individual Israelites who were slain in the wars with Nebuchadnezzar, but were fulfilled in a political restoration of the nation—and not even that of the whole nation—from the Babylonian exile. Surely this should compel one to infer that the promises, verbally similar, of restoration to other nations after the same wars and similar captivities by the same military power, should be understood in like manner. Nor is it any argument against this interpretation that we have no record of a restoration of Moab, or of Ammon, or of Elam. The records of that time are comparatively scanty, and for the mention of their restoration in the Scriptures there was no such reason as existed in the case of the restoration of the covenant people. Neither does the expression which is used in regard to Moab and Elam, *בְּאַחֲרֵית הַיָּמִים*, in “the end of the days,” “in the latter days,” properly and necessarily imply a far distant age. The expression literally rendered “the end of the days,” in Scripture usage denotes merely—to use the words of Orelli*—“the completion of the stage of development now proceeding.”† This end, the prophetic horizon, might be near or it might be distant. In this case of these prophecies, “the end of the days” was the end of the development of the kingdom of God in its relation to the Babylonian world-power. It is thus certain that in these predictions there is not a hint of a future restoration of the impenitent dead.

More plausible, and at first sight more difficult of interpretation, is the promise which is given (Ezek. xvi. 53, 55) of a restoration of Sodom and her daughters. We read, in an address unto Jerusalem, “I will turn again . . . the captivity of Sodom and her daughters, and the captivity of Samaria and her daughters, and the captivity of thy captives in the midst of them. . . . And thy

* *Old Testament Prophecy*, p. 116.

† So Orelli, commenting on the prophecy of Balaam, in Num. xxiv. 15–24, rightly remarks: “The end of the days, which to Jacob (Gen. xlix. 1) was the time when his sons would grow into tribes and dwell peacefully in Canaan, to this heathen seer is the time when the whole heathen world shall feel the powerful superiority of the kingdom of Israel.” *Old Testament Prophecy*, pp. 140, 141.

sisters, Sodom and her daughters, shall return to their former estate, and Samaria and her daughters shall return to their former estate, and thou and thy daughters shall return to your former estate." According to Hengstenberg, these words suggest "a continuance of the means of grace after death for those to whom on earth salvation did not present itself in its highest completeness; for the inhabitants of Sodom swept away by the judgment;" and, we may add, if so, not indeed *universal* restorationism, yet certainly a restoration of many of those from among the heathen who have died even in gross sin.

But, as in the case of the predictions of the restoration of Moab, Ammon and Elam, so here, with even greater reason, we have to insist that the restoration of "Sodom and her daughters" and that of Jerusalem, must be understood after the same manner. If the restoration of the former is brought about in the unseen world, and consists in the final salvation, among others, of those impenitent sinners who were destroyed in the fiery overthrow of the cities of the plain, then the restoration of Jerusalem, of which we here read, must be a similar restoration of individual impenitent inhabitants of Jerusalem in the days of Ezekiel. But if anything be certainly established by the general consensus of interpreters, it is that the restoration which the prophets promise for the Israelitish nation, is not a restoration of dead Israelites, but a restoration of living Israelites upon the earth through penitence for sin, to the favor of God. Whatever difficulty may be involved we are thus certainly compelled to interpret the prediction of the restoration of Sodom and her daughters after the same analogy.

Again, it is plain from the prophecies, fulfilled and unfulfilled, regarding the repentance of Israel, that the restoration spoken of by the prophets was not a restoration of the very individuals who had formerly sinned, but of their descendants who should be living and should represent Israel at the time when the restoration should take place. Parity of reasoning, therefore, requires us to affirm that the prediction of the restoration of Sodom and her daughters cannot prove anything as to the future restoration of the individuals which suffered in the overthrow of that city. According to the parallelism, one cannot insist that anything more is intended than the restoration of the descendants of the peoples described as "Sodom and her daughters." As for the phrase, "daughters of Sodom," it can only denote either the heathen peoples who were morally connected with Sodom as imitators of her peculiar sins, or else those peoples of Palestine who were ethnically or politically connected with the inhabitants of Sodom. On the former supposition, we then have here simply an intimation of a future conversion of the heathen

nations, connected after the usual manner with the future repentance of Israel. But one cannot say that even the latter and narrower sense of the phrase is certainly inadmissible. For that all of those tribes of which Sodom was the centre were exterminated in the overthrow of the city, the Scriptures nowhere assert, and it cannot be proved. And whether we can demonstrate it or not, there seems no weighty reason to doubt the possibility of that which some have confidently asserted, that the descendants of those ancient Canaanitish tribes exist in Syria under various names to the present day.*

But it may still be insisted that the restoration of Sodom itself is also predicted, of which city it is said that all its inhabitants perished in its overthrow, so that a restoration of the inhabitants of Sodom or their descendants is impossible. But to this it may be fairly replied that while this is true of all those who were actually living in the city at the precise time of its destruction, it is not true that all who were inhabitants of Sodom in Abraham's day were certainly destroyed. We read in Gen. xiv. of an invasion of the Pentapolis of Sodom under Chedorlaomer, king of Elam, and his allies, which resulted in placing Sodom and the associated cities under tribute for twelve years. And while it is not verbally asserted that on that occasion many of the inhabitants of Sodom were deported to Elam and elsewhere, yet such was so universally the custom in such cases, as in the second expedition of the same kings, narrated in the latter part of the chapter, that we may well take it for granted as a fact in this case also. Hence it is evident that we cannot say that certainly none who were inhabitants of Sodom could possibly have survived the destruction of that city, or that none of their descendants can have survived. The fiery judgment could only have destroyed those who were at that time actually in that part of the country.

Such considerations as these, if they are not of the nature of

* As regards the possible survival of peoples who might, even in a strictly ethnic sense, be regarded as the descendants of the tribes about Sodom, a tradition exists among the Santali aborigines of Eastern India, which has an evident bearing on that question. I have been informed by a missionary long resident among these people, that their tribal traditions represent them as having entered India from the northwest; and, in particular, embody the story, in its essential features, of the destruction of the cities of the plain, and the deliverance of Lot—whom they know as *Lutsa*—from a judgment by fire. As this, although by no means the only point of agreement of their tradition with the early records of Scripture, is the latest point in which coincidence occurs, the fact suggests that their ancestors may very probably have originally lived in the vicinity of the Dead Sea, and then, through the terror which the fiery visitation on Sodom and Gomorrah must have occasioned, decided to emigrate to some land which should be far from the scene of that awful calamity. Further suggestions on this general question will be found in Conder's *Tent Life in Palestine* and *The Asian Mystery*, by a Syrian Missionary.

demonstration, are surely sufficient to show that we are not, as some affirm, in this case, shut up to the conclusion that the words of Ezekiel cannot be understood of any restoration except a restoration of dead sinners in Hades.

But the passage which is doubtless regarded by most as presenting, at first sight, the strongest argument for a universal restoration of all sinful creatures to God's favor, is that which is found in Col. i. 20, where we read that it was the good pleasure of the Father that in Christ the Son should all the fullness (of the Godhead) dwell; and also "through him to reconcile all things unto himself, having made peace through the blood of his cross; through him, whether things upon the earth or things in the heavens." Here, we are told, we have language which formally excludes all limitation; the reconciliation takes effect upon *τὰ πάντα*, both "things in the heavens and the things upon the earth."

Space will not allow a review of the numerous interpretations of this passage. It is, however, very important to observe that its difficulties are not removed by assuming the universal restoration of all sinful creatures to be intended in this predicted reconciliation of all things. For, in this case, the fallen angels must be included; thus contradicting the explicit teaching of Heb. ii, that the blood of Christ had no reference to the fallen angels, nor, indeed, could have, inasmuch as He did not assume their nature. Furthermore, the restorationist still has to show, if he insists on giving the meaning usual in Hellenistic Greek to *ἀποκατάλλαξις*, how reconciliation in the ethical sense could be predicated of "things in the heavens;" as of the holy angels, who, having never sinned, need no atoning blood. We have, indeed, yet to see any interpretation of these words which is free from difficulty. Under such conditions wisdom suggests that, whatever explanation of the passage we adopt, we take care that it shall be one which shall be in harmony with the clearer representations of the Scriptures as to the application of the great reconciliation.

The following interpretation is suggested, not without diffidence, as a possible explanation of the passage. Although universal phrases cannot always be fairly pressed to their utmost literal meaning, yet, in the passage before us, the context requires us to give to the words *τὰ πάντα* the widest comprehension, as including all created existence, visible and invisible. For we read (v. 16), that Christ was "the first-born of all creation," because "in him were all things (*τὰ πάντα*) created, in the heavens and upon the earth"—the very words we have in v. 20—which words are then explained as comprehending "things visible and things invisible, whether thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers." Then, again, after this full

definition of terms, we read: "All things (*τὰ πάντα*) have been created through him, and unto him; and (v. 17) he is before all things (*πρὸ πάντων*) and in him all things (*τὰ πάντα*) consist." And then follows v. 21, declaring that He, in and through whom all things were created, and in whom all things consist, is the One also through whom it is the good pleasure of the Father "to reconcile all things (*τὰ πάντα*) to Himself." Certainly the *πάντα* of this verse must be coëxtensive in its reference with the *πάντα* in each of the previous four verses. But if so, then the "reconciliation" (*ἀποκαταλλάξαι*), which is affirmed of the *τὰ πάντα*, through the blood of Christ, must include (1) the material universe (*τὰ ὄρατά*); and (2) the immaterial and spiritual universe (*τὰ ἀόρατά*); comprehending, according to the Scriptures, the holy angels, the fallen angels, and all sinful men, whether penitent or impenitent. But how can it be affirmed of all of these?

That this word, *ἀποκαταλλάξαι*, regularly expresses elsewhere in the New Testament, a purely ethical conception, namely, a changing from enmity to friendship, must at once be admitted. In classic Greek, however, it has also a broader meaning, as, in general, the exchanging of one thing for another, as money, prisoners, etc. Now, the strictly ethical sense of the word is, in the very nature of the case, in this passage, inapplicable to two of the above three classes comprehended in the *τὰ πάντα*. In the first place, it is evidently impossible to apply the word in this sense to the case of the unfallen angels. A change from enmity to friendship is impossible where enmity has never existed. It is impossible, again, to apply the word in the ethical sense to any order of irrational or material existence on the earth or elsewhere, for in that sense the word can only be applied to moral agents.

Hence the necessity of the case compels us to understand *ἀποκαταλλάξαι* here in its more general and etymological sense, as denoting simply a change of the objects included in the *τὰ πάντα* from their present condition in relation to God, to another. Wherein such a change may consist, will be determined by the nature and condition of each object. As regards those from among sinful men who are saved, the change in their case is, no doubt, from a state of enmity to a state of friendship with God. In the case of the holy angels, of course, no such change can be thought of. But may we not conceive of their case in this wise? Because of the impenetrable mystery of the permitted existence and long dominance of sin, it is not too much to assume that even to the angelic mind an apparent cloud obscures the infinite perfection of God. For this reason, a theodicy became, even for them, a necessity. For such sinless and holy beings, a moral reconciliation is

indeed unneeded; but, if one may so speak, an intellectual reconciliation is an urgent necessity. They must sometime be enabled to see that God, notwithstanding his mysterious permission of sin, is eternally infinite in righteousness, goodness, love and power. This complete and glorious clearing again to angelic vision, of the infinite perfection of the Father, through the blood of Christ shed on the cross, will then be that "reconciliation" of "the things in the heavens" of which the apostle speaks.

And it is easy to see that in a similar sense may be taken the word as applied to all sinful and finally impenitent beings, whether angels or men. For God's present tolerance of sin presents to them the same difficulty, as to the holy angels, with the addition, indeed, that because of this partial obscuration of the real character of God, they have been the more emboldened to sin without fear. But these also, with all rational beings, will, in due time, be brought, through the Son of God, into the original and normal condition of all moral agents, in so far, namely, that they will come to a clear and unobscured recognition and confession of the absolute perfection of God. But this will not necessarily imply in them repentance and love to God, for how such a clear apprehension of the true character of God shall affect any one, depends altogether on his moral and spiritual character.

Finally, in this broader sense, ἀποκαταλλάξαι can even be applied to the irrational and inorganic creation. For however difficult it may be for us to understand the hints of Scripture upon the subject, they certainly teach that a curse is at present resting upon even the irrational and inorganic creation because of man's sin. To Adam it was said (Gen. iii. 17), "Cursed is the ground for thy sake." Paul declares (Rom. viii. 20) that "the creation was subjected to vanity (ματαιότητι) by reason of him who subjected it;" i. e., it came into a condition in which it could not realize the divine ideal, but remained in what Paul calls "the bondage of corruption." The material and irrational creation is therefore not at present in its normal state. But, according to this passage, an ἀποκαταλλάξαι is appointed also for this material order, comprehended in τὰ πάντα ἐπὶ τοῦ γῆς. It is to be brought out of its present condition, in which it does not and cannot attain the ideal of God in its creation, into another state, in which it shall realize that ideal perfectly. And this change of its present state for another and better, is precisely what is expressed by the word ἀποκαταλλάξαι in its application to the material and irrational creation. That this is to follow as a last result of Christ's atoning work, is distinctly witnessed by the words of the apostle Paul in passage just referred to, that "the creation itself also"—as well as ourselves who have

the first fruits of the Spirit—"shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God." In a word, then, the content of the phrase, as indicated by the context, compels us to deny to the verb ἀποκαταλλάξαι, that usual and more restricted meaning which it must have if the doctrine of universal restoration is to be proved from this passage.

These notes upon the solemn question of future retribution are far enough from being exhaustive, nor could it indeed be otherwise under the necessary limitations of a single review article. But they will at least serve as illustrations of the reasons which, as it seems to the writer, should compel the rejection of every form of restorationism, and the acceptance of the fact which the Scriptures seem to us so clearly to reveal, that the retributions of the impenitent in the life to come are unending.

At the same time, I cannot end this article without recording an earnest dissent from the way in which the doctrine has too often been presented. It is justly chargeable against many representations of this subject, that they lose sight in great part, or altogether, of the repeated and express teaching of the Scriptures that as in the rewards of the righteous, so in the retributions of the impenitent, there will be great differences. These, as those, will be distributed strictly "according to works." Not only so, but we have the plain words of our Lord that in the case of the servant who knows not his Master's will and does it not, the stripes will be "few;" few, let us mark, not relatively, but few absolutely. And if, as we have seen, the testimony of Scriptures does not allow us to hope that the exclusion of any from the glory of the resurrection kingdom will end, yet we must at least understand these words as teaching that inasmuch as the ignorant are many, so there will be an immense number for whom the retributions of eternity will be light, and existence will, in proportion, be tolerable. The importance of this one passage in its bearing on the question of the fate of the heathen is as momentous as it is evident. There is not a word of comfort here, indeed, for the sinner who goes down to death impenitent from Christian lands, in the full light of the gospel; of him, indeed, in the same verse, the exact opposite is affirmed, his stripes will be "many." But there is light in these words for others.

With these plain words before us, we must then, once for all, repudiate all interpretations which would require us to understand the terrible imagery of the burning lake, as descriptive of the future lot of *all* the impenitent. If we mistake not, in every case where such awful symbolism is employed, it will appear that the context, more or less decisively, determines its reference to

those who have sinned against the fullest light of a preached gospel, and thus come under the equitable law of the "many stripes." In Matt. xxv. 31-46, for instance, contrary to the impression of many, we have not, as in other places, a representation of the judgment of all, the living and the dead, but only of "the nations" who shall be found alive upon the earth at the time of our Lord's appearing. But the Scripture expressly teaches that by that time the gospel shall have been preached unto all nations. Those, therefore, who appear in that description, are those who have sinned against full gospel light. So also is it in that awful passage in Rev. xiv. 10, 11, where we read of certain who shall "drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is prepared unmixed in the cup of his anger," that "they 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 goeth up forever and ever; and they have no rest day or night;" perhaps the most terrific picture of eternal retribution which we find in the Bible. For is this declared as the fate of all those, without exception, who fail of the resurrection unto life? By no means; but only (vs. 9) of those "who worship the beast and his image." Now, whatever the symbol of the beast may mean, two things appear certain: that it symbolizes a power of transcendent and God-defying wickedness; and that its place in the series of visions is final; it is represented as the last form which human sin shall assume before the establishment of Christ's kingdom. It therefore synchronizes with the universal preaching of the gospel, which, indeed, is intimated in the words immediately preceding, concerning the other angel who appears, having the everlasting gospel to preach to "every nation and tribe and tongue and people." So here, again, the awful words are used only of those who sin most defiantly and against the clearest light.

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