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## ARTICLE II.

## THE DURATION OF FUTURE PUNISHMENT.

BY REV. EZRA P. GOULD, PROFESSOR IN NEWTON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

THE question as to the duration of future punishment must be decided, first, by the meaning of words. This is the first, and also the most prominent, part of the discussion, not only because interpretation is at the basis of theology, but because this has been the point selected for attack on the doctrine of eternal punishment. The attacks have been made by believers in the Bible, and they have addressed believers, and the starting-point has therefore been the Scriptures. The ground taken by them has been that the words *aiōn* and *aiōnios* do not necessarily mean *eternity* and *eternal*. There is no question that these terms are applied to the punishment of unbelievers; and the only chance, therefore, for those who oppose the doctrine is to throw doubt on their accepted meaning. What we are to substitute for eternity or eternal they do not tell us, being themselves somewhat in doubt—whether age-long, belonging to the age, or simply aeonian. The latter seems to be preferred by some of them, as it leaves the question in that admirably unsettled state which they think so desirable as the attitude of Scripture toward such a subject. All that concerns them is to show that the idea of eternity as an endless period is not necessarily involved.

Starting, then, with the ordinary Greek use of the word *aiōn*, we find that it means primarily the lifetime of an individual, corresponding in this to the secondary meaning of the Latin *aeuum*, with which it is etymologically connected; then any period in the lifetime, such as youth or old age; and then an age or generation. These meanings all belong

together, as referring in some way to the lifetime of man, and are largely poetic. It is also noticeable that they are used mostly in reference to the period in which anything occurs, instead of the space of time which it occupies. For its second general meaning, belonging mostly to prose, instead of poetry, the word signifies *eternity*, corresponding in this to the primary meaning of *aevum*. And in this sense it denotes generally the duration, not the temporal location, of an event, in such phrases as τὸν αἰῶνα, εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα, δι' αἰῶνος, etc. Thirdly, we have the meaning *age* or *era*, which is very rare, if it is found even, outside of the New Testament.

In regard to the adjective αἰώνιος, it is to be noticed, in the first place, that it always denotes *duration*, lasting through an aeon, not belonging to it—the latter being a modern discovery which has not yet been localized outside of the imaginations of its discoverers or inventors; and secondly, that it takes over from αἰὼν the meaning *eternity*, *perpetuity*, and itself means *eternal*, either strictly or hyperbolically, as, for instance, αἰώνιος μεθῆ, in Plato.

In the New Testament the range of meaning of αἰὼν is narrower. The first group of meanings, referring to the life of the individual, is not found. The meaning *age* or *era* is found in Matt. xii. 32; xiii. 22, 39, 40, 49; xxiv. 3; xxviii. 20; Mark iv. 19; Luke xvi. 8; xx. 34; Rom. xii. 2; 1 Cor. i. 20; ii. 6, 8; iii. 18; 2 Cor. iv. 4; Gal. i. 4; Eph. i. 21; ii. 2; vi. 12; 1 Tim. vi. 17; 2 Tim. iv. 10; Tit. ii. 12; and Heb. ix. 2; in all of which it denotes this age of the world or of mankind, as distinguished from the future age, following the judgment; in Matt. xii. 32; Mark x. 30; Luke xviii. 30; xx. 35; Eph. i. 21; and Heb. vi. 5 to denote that coming age; and in Heb. i. 2; xi. 3, by metonymy, for the world itself, which belongs to this present age; the local, as that is the temporal, stage of the present state of things. Where the word is used with the prepositions ἀπό, ἐκ, πρό, to denote past time, periods since which or before which anything took place, the meaning is probably the same, viz. the age or ages of this world. So in Luke i. 70, ἀπ' αἰῶνος; John ix. 32, ἐκ τῶν

αἰώνων; Acts iii. 21; xv. 18, ἀπ' αἰῶνος; 1 Cor. ii. 7, πρὸ τῶν αἰώνων; Eph. iii. 9, ἀπὸ τῶν αἰώνων.

So far the word does seem to have a variable meaning. But when we come to that use of it with which we have specially to do—that with the preposition *eis* to denote duration,—the preposition in this case denoting time for which, not up to which, a thing lasts (see Winer, 396),—unless the cases in which future punishment is referred to are exceptions, the word means *eternity*, and the phrases mean *forever*; sometimes hyperbolically, but in far the greater number of cases strictly. The only instances of the hyperbolic use are Matt. xxi. 19; Mark xi. 14, in the curse pronounced on the barren fig-tree; in John viii. 35, where Christ is speaking of the abiding in the house of the servant and the son; xiii. 8, “Thou shalt never wash my feet”; and in 1 Cor. viii. 13, “I will eat no flesh forever”—four cases in all, and all of them cases in which there is an obvious limitation in the nature of the subject. But as we go through the enumeration of the other applications of these phrases, let us notice carefully how the nature of the subject in each case necessitates the meaning *forever* in its strictest sense. They are used in Luke i. 33; Heb. i. 8; Rev. xi. 15, of the enduring of Christ’s kingdom; in Luke i. 55, of the mercy of God; in John iv. 14, of the satisfaction given by the water of life; in John vi. 51, 58; viii. 51, 52; x. 28; xi. 26, of the eternal life of the Christian; in John xii. 34; Heb. vii. 24; Rev. i. 18, of the existence of Christ; in John xiv. 16, of the abiding with the disciples of the Holy Spirit; in Rom. i. 25; ix. 5; xi. 36; xvi. 27; 2 Cor. xi. 3; Gal. i. 5; Eph. iii. 21; Phil. iv. 20; 1 Tim. i. 17; 2 Tim. iv. 18; Heb. xiii. 21; 1 Pet. iv. 11; v. 11; 2 Pet. iii. 18; Jude 25; Rev. i. 6; v. 13; vii. 12, in doxologies ascribing praise, honor, glory, etc. to God or to Christ forever; in 2 Cor. ix. 9, of the righteousness of the good man; in Heb. i. 18, of God’s throne or dominion; in Heb. v. 6; vi. 20; vii. 17, 21, of the priesthood of Christ; in Heb. vii. 28, of the eternal perfectness of Christ, compared with the infirmities

of human priests; in 1 Pet. i. 23, of the eternal word of God; in 1 John ii. 17, of the will of God; in ii. John 2, of the abiding of the truth with Christians; in Rev. iv. 9, 10; v. 14; x. 6; xv. 7, of the eternity of God; and in Rev. xxii. 5, of the reign of the saints — fifty cases in all. And these are all unambiguous cases; there is not in any of them any possible limitation of the absolute eternity of the duration denoted by *εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα* and its equivalents.

When we come, therefore, to the cases in which these expressions are applied to the future punishment of the wicked, we have a very strong presumption that here, as elsewhere, they mean forever. We find no other meaning, either in or out of the New Testament. The only modification of it is not another meaning, but simply a hyperbolical use of the same. Even this is very rare; there being, as we have seen, only four cases of it in the New Testament. And these are cases in which the limitation is suggested by the nature of the subject, which is so obviously limited in its duration that there is no ambiguity. And so we come to these passages containing statements of the duration of future punishment, with the presumption created by an invariable use of these marks of duration in favor of the ordinary interpretation of them. And the only question is, whether there is anything to overcome this presumption. The first passage is Matt. xii. 32; Mark iii. 29, where the sin against the Holy Spirit is spoken of. As we read it we certainly find no limitation of the "never be forgiven." But we do find that our Lord fixes the meaning by adding, "neither in this age nor in that to come"; and the duration of that coming age is assured by the fact that it is the age for the reward of the righteous. And in Mark iii. 29 he adds still farther that the man "is guilty of eternal sin." These things throw strong light on the "never be forgiven," and emphasize it, and remove the possibility of supposing that it is said hyperbolically. In the Epistle of Jude we have a scathing description of a certain class of sinners, closing with the solemn words, "for whom has been kept the black-

ness of darkness forever." Any one who examines the passage carefully will find, to be sure, no such amplification of the word "forever" as in the passage that we have just discussed. But neither will he find any mitigation of the language, but much to strengthen the idea conveyed in it of the utter hopelessness of the case. Besides these, there are two passages in Revelations (xiv. 11 ; xx. 10) in which the phrases *εἰς αἰῶνας αἰῶνων*, *εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν αἰῶνων* are applied to the punishment of the wicked. Here, again, there is nothing peculiar to change the meaning which these phrases have acquired from their use to describe the eternity of God, of his throne, his word, and his will, and the eternal life of the Christian — that invariable meaning which throws the heavy burden of proof on those who would discredit the doctrine of eternal punishment. On the other hand, it is significant that the punishment of the wicked is in these passages connected and identified with that of the devil and the beast and the false prophet, and contrasted with the reign of the servants of God, the unending duration of which is told in the same words (cf. xx. 15 ; xxi. 5). The result of our examination of all these passages is to find nothing that suggests hyperbole, which would be the only reason for rejecting the obvious meaning of the phrases in question. And there is certainly no apparent limitation in the nature of the subject, i.e. in the existence of men, to modify the meaning, as in the other cases where it is applied hyperbolically.

The case of the adjective *αἰώνιος* in the New Testament is in some respects even stronger. This word means *everlasting*, with only three exceptions, unless the cases in which it is applied to future punishment are exceptions. These exceptions are the phrases *χρόνοις αἰώνιοις* (Rom. xvi. 25 ; 2 Tim. i. 9), and *πρὸ χρόνων αἰώνων* (Tit. i. 2), in which the period of the duration of the world is spoken of. But even in these cases Meyer and Grimm are so assured of the meaning of the word itself that they translate it *eternal* — *ewig* and *initii æterni*. And I have no doubt

that the word is used in these passages, not with any idea of a different meaning, of which there is no trace elsewhere, but in the same way as we speak of the everlasting hills, leaving the obvious limitations in the nature of the subject to suggest themselves.

It is a very suggestive fact that the most frequent use of the word *αἰώνιος* in the New Testament is to describe the eternal life of the believer. The argument from this to its meaning in the contrasted phrases, "eternal death," "eternal punishment," etc., is obvious and irresistible. The word is found in this connection in Matt. xix. 16, 29; xxv. 46; Mark x. 17, 30; Luke x. 25; xviii. 18, 30; John iii. 15, 16, 36; iv. 14, 36; v. 24, 39; vi. 27, 40, 47, 54, 68; x. 28; xii. 25, 50; xvii. 2, 3; Acts xiii. 46, 48; Rom. ii. 7; v. 21; vi. 22, 23; Gal. vi. 8; 1 Tim. i. 16; vi. 12, 19; Tit. i. 2; iii. 7; 1 John i. 2; ii. 25; iii. 15; v. 11, 13, 20; Jude 21. Equally convincing, of course, are the passages where it is used of the everlasting habitations of the righteous (Luke xvi. 9); of the eternal weight of glory (2 Cor. iv. 17; 2 Tim. ii. 10; 1 Pet. v. 10); of the eternal unseen, as opposed to the temporal seen, things (2 Cor. iv. 18); of the house not made with hands (2 Cor. v. 1); of the everlasting consolation (2 Thess. ii. 16); of the everlasting salvation (Heb. v. 9); of eternal redemption (Heb. ix. 12); of the eternal inheritance (Heb. ix. 15). That is to say, the word *αἰώνιος* is used in the New Testament seventy-one times, and of these fifty-five are places in which the eternal state of the righteous is described. It is used, beside, of the everlasting God (Rom. xvi. 26); of the eternal Spirit (Heb. ix. 14); in a doxology ascribing everlasting power and honor to God (1 Tim. vi. 16); of eternal judgment (Heb. vi. 2), an expression which is significant, as indicating that the judgment is to make final distinctions and awards; of the eternal covenant (Heb. xiii. 20); and of the everlasting gospel (Rev. xiv. 6).

Now, this review of the uses of *αἰώνιος* seems to be simply conclusive as to its meaning. More than almost any other

word in the New Testament, if we may judge from these applications of it to eternal things, it has one fixed meaning, without any secondary or derivative sense. And we do not have, therefore, to choose among various senses that one which will best fit the context, but simply to see whether anything in a particular passage — as, for instance, those in regard to future punishment — modifies or changes that one meaning. These passages are Matt. xviii. 8; xxv. 41, 46; Mark iii. 29; 2 Thess. i. 9. The first contains our Lord's advice to his disciples to cut off any member that is a temptation to them sooner than be cast into the everlasting fire. The language used here is probably figurative, as is almost all the language used to describe the future state. But the figure does not extend to the notation of time. When Christ speaks of fire as the punishment of the wicked, he is employing a material object to describe a spiritual, which is of the nature of fire. But there is no such figurative element in the word *αἰώνιος*; the same word being equally applicable to both the figurative and exact descriptions of the future state. And there is nothing else in the passage to modify the meaning of *αἰώνιος*. If it means everlasting elsewhere, as it certainly does, then it has that meaning in this passage.

The passage (Matt. xxv. 41, 46) is in the well-known description of the judgment; and in it we have two very strong and positive confirmations of the assumed meaning of the word *αἰώνιος*, which is used there to denote the duration of future punishment. First, that the eternal fire is that prepared for the devil and his angels, making the punishment of the wicked, therefore, the same as theirs; and there is certainly no intimation in the Scriptures of anything except eternal hopelessness for them. There is no provision made for mercy to them; and the wicked, having rejected in the time allotted to them the provision that has been made for the human race, are left, therefore, at the end, in the condition of those for whom no provision has been made. But secondly, and, if possible, stronger still,



there is the fact, the strategic importance of which in this inquiry cannot be overestimated, that the reward of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked are put on precisely the same footing. Both stand or fall together as final, irrevocable, eternal facts. "And these," we are told, "shall go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." That is, eternal happiness and eternal hopelessness are put into such connection with each other, by identity of language on one side, and sharpness of contrast on the other, that they cannot be made separate issues; they stand or fall together. Nor is this the conclusion from this verse alone; but this verse simply sums up in two contrasted statements the indisputable teaching of the entire passage, of which it is so far the natural and inevitable conclusion, that if it were not there expressly it would be there by sure inference and implication. Nor is this all. This verse sums up not only this description of the judgment, but the entire testimony, as to these contrasted states of the righteous and the wicked, of the New Testament. Let those who think that the Bible gives an uncertain sound on this subject know that, so far as they make the future state of the wicked uncertain and doubtful, by so much exactly, *pari passu*, they are undermining the scriptural basis for the hope of the righteous that theirs is a fixed state.

The question before us is not the single one of the future state of the wicked, so far as its scriptural side is concerned, but the wider question whether there is any such thing as a fixed state for either righteous or wicked—whether the state of moral beings with free wills is not to remain forever open and undecided. And the reason of this is clear and simple. The word *αἰώνιος* is used in the New Testament seventy-one times, and of these fifty-five denote the duration of the future state of the righteous. Evidently, then, whatever reasons we have, outside of this word, for believing that state to be fixed give a meaning to this word used to denote its duration, and go over with it to confirm solidly the equal duration of the contrasted state to which the same term is applied. Or,

the argument may be stated in this way : Here are two states of being described in the New Testament, corresponding to the division of mankind into two classes, the righteous and the wicked ; one of which states is generally admitted to be eternal. But the same term is employed in the New Testament to describe the duration of both. Now, if the duration of this state is eternal, then the word used to describe its duration means eternal. And if it means eternal in describing one state, then it means eternal in the other case also. I have seen no attempt to meet this argument ; and yet it is the key to our position, which must be carried by the restorationists, or their whole attack fails.

This argument is simply a branch — the most important branch — of the general argument from the use of the word, which may be put in the same way. This word *αἰώνιος* is used to express the duration of the being of God and of the Holy Spirit, and of the power and honor belonging to God. All of these are admitted to be eternal ; and this invariable use of the word with things admitted to be eternal shows that the word means eternal, and all the laws of the parity of reasoning require that this meaning be admitted when the word is applied to future punishment.

The passage (Mark iii. 29) in regard to the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit we have already considered in its bearing on the meaning of *εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα*. But the change in the Textus Receptus from *αἰωνίου κρίσεως*, *eternal condemnation*, to *αἰωνίου ἁμαρτήματος*, *eternal sin*, requires farther attention. It is one of the best attested results of modern textual criticism, having the most convincing external and internal evidences. The meaning of the clause as it stands is, *but is guilty of eternal sin*. This is susceptible of two interpretations, either that the sin is itself eternal, involving the idea of the final permanence of sinful character, or that the sin is eternal in its consequences, as in the phrase "eternal judgment." The latter is more probable, for several reasons, but principally on account of the contrast with the forgiveness accorded to all other sins. In either case, the

bearing of the statement on future punishment remains unchanged. The grouping of this passage to emphasize strongly the hopelessness of the case described has already been noticed; but it will bear re-statement. Most persons will admit that the basis of an "eternal hope" is the chance of forgiveness. And if this is removed, hopelessness takes the place of hope, and condemnation is final. But that is just what this passage does; it says that a certain sin has not forgiveness. I know that this is said of only one sin. But, in the first place, this sin is supposed by some first-rate interpreters to be the sin committed by all who remain finally impenitent. And secondly, the weight of the argument is not affected by this; since we have to do, not with the class of persons described, but with the duration of their punishment. This is proved to be eternal; and as the language used is that employed to denote the length of the punishment of all unbelievers, this is also eternal. The "no forgiveness" here shows what the Scriptures mean when they anywhere speak of eternal punishment.

The next passage reads, "Since it is a just thing with God to repay affliction to those afflicting you, and to you who are afflicted rest with us, in the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with the angels of his power in a flame of fire, taking vengeance on those who know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus, who shall suffer the punishment of eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his power" (2 Thess. i. 9). Here, again, there is nothing to mitigate the force of *αἰώνιος*; but the word with which it is joined confirms its ordinary meaning. The fate of those who know not God is called *destruction*, *δυσθρος*, a term which is employed to denote the total loss, ruin, the utter wreck of an object.

Really this is exegetically a most hopeless and baseless departure from established opinion. Its Biblical foundations are in the sand. And one of two closely connected results, it seems, must follow its acceptance. Either men who receive it at first on supposed Biblical grounds will be led to a

loose and careless exegesis, that would swamp us with all kinds of strange doctrine; or they will be led to a partial or complete, tacit or open, rejection of the Bible as the supreme authority in religious opinions. The acceptance of a doctrine so plainly unscriptural as this of restoration can have, it would seem, no other result.

What is said about the strictly exegetical branch of this subject must be largely a re-statement of what has been said in other treatises on the same topic. But there is another branch of the subject comparatively fresh, viz. what is the relation of the doctrine of eternal punishment to the other generally received doctrines of the church, and what, therefore, would be the effect of its rejection? And this is a question of very great importance, as well as freshness. For, while the truth of any religious doctrine does not rest on our ability to adjust it to the general system of religious truth, yet the confirmatory strength of such fitness or adaptability is very great, and equally so the doubt thrown on any position lacking this confirmation.

In view of what has been said already in regard to the exegetical side of this inquiry, the *first* relation to be considered is, the bearing of this question on the authority of the Scriptures. What difference, it may be asked, does the holding of either one opinion or the other, on this question, make in the authority of the Scriptures, since both sides maintain that authority, and both appeal to the Bible in support of their view? Let us see. In the first place, it is very evident that the change in the views of evangelical Christians on this subject is not, in the first instance, the result of a fresh examination of the Scriptures, but rather, the product of the *Zeitgeist*, seeking to support itself by Scripture. Those who are in the movement would probably confess this, and an examination of the Scripture testimony, such as we have made, reveals it. Every event must have an adequate cause; and observers of events will recognize in the spirit of the times just that tendency which would produce this; and, on the other hand, students of the Scrip-

tures will see that at least their more obvious sense is rather an obstacle to be overcome than one of the producing causes of the change. In itself this does not invalidate a belief. It is the history of many a truth that its genesis was in the movement of the human mind, and its scriptural confirmation came only afterwards. The question that concerns us in regard to the relation of a religious opinion to the authority of the Scriptures is, whether it finds a sufficient support and confirmation in Scripture, or continues to be held on extra-scriptural grounds, with only a show of Biblical confirmation. If the latter be the case, then its acceptance and propagation weaken just so much the authority of the Bible. Now, we have seen already that this is not a nicely balanced question, decided by a slight plurality of evidences, which may at some time be overcome, but that the scriptural grounds of Canon Farrar's "Eternal Hope," and of Mr. Whiton's possible unendlessness of eternal punishment, are really weak and insignificant. And it requires no prophetic eye to see the consequences of the Christian's believing anything—even one thing—in spite of the Bible. For that is where it ends. We venture to say that no one of the recent converts to restorationism would be bold enough to say that the doubt of the old doctrine came into his mind, or could remain there, simply as a question of interpretation. And if he did say so, it would be sufficiently disproved by the fact that the doubt never has been entertained of the equally doubtful scriptural doctrines of the eternity of God and of the everlasting reward of the righteous. Take away the repugnance of men to the doctrine, and you remove the doubt. Of course, in any case in which there is room on scriptural grounds for not only an honest, but a plausible, difference of opinion, persons may hold either the one or the other side of the question without endangering the authority of the Word. But this cannot be shown to be the case here, and, sooner or later, the dangerous results will come, the conflict between the divine word and individual preference or opinion will follow.

In this connection, there is one aspect of the present controversy that ought not to be overlooked; and that is, the difference between the attitude of many who are seeking to throw doubt on the doctrine of eternal punishment, and of avowed restorationists. Some of these men, and conspicuously Mr. Whiton, do not really deny the doctrine of eternal punishment,—endless punishment, if you will,—they only doubt it. And they say that the Scriptures leave it in doubt. The word *αἰώνιος*, according to them, may mean endless, or it may not; and so the language employed is ambiguous, and leaves the whole question open, so that we may find at the judgment that the state of impenitent men is final, after all, or that it is limited and changeable. The peculiarity about this is, that the doubt arises not from the silence of Scripture, but from its ambiguity. It does say something on the question, and the language does have a single meaning; the only difficulty is in finding out that meaning. And another peculiarity is, that this is, apparently, not supposed to be a temporary difficulty; they seem to expect a permanent state of doubt on this question. We submit that this is an anomalous case in the method of Scripture utterance, and its correctness is very doubtful.

In the *second* place, this doctrine has obvious relations to the great doctrine of the atonement. For if there is to be a restoration of lost men in the future state, it must be through the forgiveness of sins. There can be only the two ways pointed out by the apostle Paul of obtaining God's favor,—by works and by grace,—and of these the only one possible to sinners is the way of grace. There can be nothing in the future state to change the conditions of this problem, since they are fixed by the past and unalterable fact of sin. So that the only way, there, as here, of restoration to God's favor, is through the forgiveness of sins. The argument by which this is proved in the Scriptures is inherent in the nature of things, and independent of circumstances. But if restoration is through forgiveness, then it must be also through the work of Christ. This is so patent as to need no

proof. That Christ is the one sacrifice for sins, the only name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved, is the undeniable doctrine of the New Testament. And even if it were not stated, this would still be the inevitable inference from the facts. For we are given plainly to understand that God did what he had to do in order to save men. This costly sacrifice of the only-begotten and well-beloved Son was not a gratuitous offering to secure that which might have been purchased at less cost. Christ's prayer, "Father, if it be possible," was evidently not a prayer that might have been answered, but was not. And his constant utterance about the passion was, "Thus it is necessary." Moreover, when he suffered, it was once for all; there remained no farther sacrifice for sin. If men are to be saved here or hereafter, therefore, it must be through the atonement of Christ. Now, here is one of the places where the doctrine of restoration finds its path obstructed by an insurmountable obstacle. A careful and candid reader of the New Testament will see many things pointing to this one conclusion, that there is a limit in time to Christ's mediatorial work, a period when his work of saving men will be completed. We have not time now to stop and examine all these. And we do not need to; for there is one passage whose language is so unmistakable that it will stand alone. In 1 Cor. xv. 23-28 the apostle says, in regard to the resurrection: "But each in his own company: Christ, the first-fruits, then those that are Christ's at his coming. Then is the end, when he delivers up the kingdom to God and the Father, when he has brought to nought every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign till he has put all enemies under his feet. As a last enemy will death be brought to nought. For all things he put under his feet. But when he says that all things have been put under him, it is plain that it is except him who put all things under him. And when all things have been subjected unto him, then also the Son himself will be subjected unto him who subjected all things to him, in order that God may be all in all."

Now this passage teaches expressly that the mediatorial reign of Christ is to come to an end whenever, and because, his work has been accomplished. Of course, if any part of his work remained, if there were more souls to be saved, the agencies of the mediatorial kingdom, and the reign of its king, would be continued. Now, when is this time of the end? This is the important thing to be learned from the passage. The statement that "he must reign till he has put all enemies under his feet," has led some to see the doctrine of restoration in the passage. But the time when this is said to be accomplished puts that out of the question; since it is stated to be the time of the resurrection and the final judgment. This is evident from the general context, and specially from the statement that the last of the enemies to be subjected to Christ before his own subjection to the Father is death, the subjection of which is, of course, accomplished at the resurrection. Instead of being, therefore, a time for the final reunion of men under the reign of Christ, it is the time of their separation into righteous and wicked, the condemned and the acquitted. The mediatorial reign and work of Christ end, therefore, with men unsaved, and so forever hopeless, since their only hope is in Christ.

There is only one escape from this conclusion. It may be said that it is at the very basis of the doctrine of restoration that the punishment of sin is limited, and that the work of Christ is intended to save us from that punishment, whatever it is; but that, when that punishment is finished, the guilty person comes out from under it without the necessity of forgiveness or atonement. Certainly, on the assumption that the punishment of sin is not eternal, there might be room for this supposition, if the person during his stay in prison had ceased to be a sinner. But as long as he remains a sinner he is incurring fresh guilt, and rendering forgiveness and further atonement necessary, which is, as we have seen, impossible after the judgment, when he is put into prison. But may there not be a change effected immediately on his entrance into prison? We wish to exhaust all the



possibilities of this question. Certainly not, according to the testimony of Scripture. We are told in Rev. xxii. 11 that at that time of judgment the decree goes forth: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still." And furthermore (vs. 15), that outside the city of God "are the dogs, and the sorcerers, and the fornicators, and the murderers, and the idolaters, and every one that loveth and maketh a lie"; of which, certainly, the natural interpretation is that that is their present character. But, aside from this testimony of Scripture, such a change at such a time supposes two utterly incongruous mixtures of events. First, that immediately after the separation of the righteous and the wicked the difference between them is obliterated. And secondly, that immediately after the consignment of the wicked to their place of punishment the sin that brought them there is removed, and they are henceforth to suffer as righteous beings who have been unrighteous, as those who at the same time enjoy the favor of God and suffer his wrath. Now this last state of things involves an incongruity which I believe to be utterly foreign to the government of God. That government evidently seems to provide for the adjustment of the inward and the outward state of men in such a way that the two shall harmonize with each other.

It is not only true that regeneration and justification, sanctification and final redemption are made to go together, so that if the man is to be justified or finally redeemed he must be at the same time regenerated or sanctified; but they go together in such a way, they are so indissolubly connected in God's government and in the nature of things, that neither can there be regeneration or sanctification without justification or final redemption. Suppose, then, that you carry the state of probation over into the state of retribution, it seems very plain that it would have to be on the condition that the state of retribution should cease as soon as the man emerged from his sinfulness, which is the only state in har-

mony with that of retribution. But, as we have seen, this would require that the work of Christ, which, in fact, ceases at the beginning of this period, should be extended into it. Or, if you suppose that the sinner emerges from his state of sinfulness immediately on his entrance into the state of retribution, then the punishment ceases when it begins, and the judgment becomes a farce.

Let us go over this ground once more, in order to be sure of the position taken, as it seems to be of the utmost importance. The key of the position is the fact that Christ's mediatorial work comes to an end with the resurrection and the final judgment. The only way, then, through which hope of final restoration can come in is to suppose that the punishment of the sins committed here is a fixed and limited quantity, and that it expires by limitation. But this supposition takes account only of the sins committed here, and leaves out of view altogether the moral state of men under condemnation, and, unless that is a sinless state, it makes more to be provided for by the atonement, which has also expired by limitation. What is the moral state of men undergoing future punishment, therefore? It is not a state of neutrality. The Scriptures are very positive in their statement that there can be no such thing as neutrality towards the moral law. There is a for and an against, but nothing between. Is it a state of righteousness? The Scriptures seem to teach that it is not. But, beyond their statements, there is the impossibility that it should be; since that involves the incongruousness of men whose present state is righteous suffering the extreme penalty of the law. Or, rather, it involves a contradiction in terms. The supposition is, that there is a change at the beginning of the punishment, by which the sinner becomes righteous, while his punishment continues. But there is a very essential and heavy part of the punishment that ceases, in the nature of things, with the end of sinfulness. It is not the whole of punishment that men are under God's displeasure and wrath; but it is certainly an important element in the punishment, and the

cause of all the rest. And this, of course, ceases with the change from sin to righteousness. "I love them that love me," says God. Now let the sinner only know this, and hell will immediately become a place for the heroic and patient endurance of suffering by those who submit lovingly to God's will, with the great darkness lit up by the radiance of God's love, and the scarcely inferior light of one of the sublimest moral spectacles in the history of the universe. And yet this supposition, which involves us in endless absurdities, is the only alternative on which restoration can be based. For if the moral state of men under condemnation is one of continued guilt, then, supposing that the punishment of sins committed here comes to an end, there must still be provision made for the sins of the future state, whereas the only possible provision ceases at the judgment.

But this question has intimate connections not only with the doctrine of justification and the mediatorial work of Christ, but with the doctrine of regeneration and the work of the Spirit. The question of human salvation has the two sides, How shall men be delivered from punishment? and How shall they be saved from sin? And to prolong the probation, as the doctrine of restoration does, is simply to carry forward these two questions. It is not necessary, of course, to discuss the question whether men need to be saved from sin. The doctrine that "except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of heaven" has its roots in the nature of things, and can never cease to be true. And the impossibility of man's accomplishing this himself remains equally true. Now, what has been said in regard to the work of Christ in saving man applies equally here in regard to the work of the Spirit in delivering man from sin; because these two things go together, and constitute together the one work of salvation. The object of the one work of Christ is sometimes represented on its legal or justifying side, sometimes on its moral or sanctifying side. In one place we are told that he is "set forth as a propitiatory sacrifice; . . . that God may be just and the justifier of him that believeth-

in Jesus"; and in another place, that he "gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a people to be his own, zealous of good works." It all belongs to the one great work of salvation; and the statement that Christ is the one Saviour of men applies equally well to the moral cleansing and the legal justification of sinners; so that the close of Christ's work, the end of his mediatorial reign, is to cut off all hope, not only that men may receive pardon, but that they may be regenerated, as well. Therefore, supposing that men have expiated their sins by punishment, the necessity still remains that they be prepared for the kingdom of heaven by the washing of regeneration, which is rendered impossible by the closing up of the work of Christ, including both the salvation and the purification of his people.

We shall find this conclusion confirmed, if we examine the subject in its details. The Spirit is the agent in regeneration. But he is the Spirit of Christ, sent by Christ, sent to testify of Christ, to take the place of Christ, procured for men through the intercession of Christ, and given to us as the first-fruits of Christ's work and the earnest of our final salvation. Evidently there is no such thing as severing the work of Christ and of his Holy Spirit. The Spirit works for Christ, with Christ, and in Christ, for the salvation of men.

Then, as to the means employed by the Spirit for the regeneration of men, his work is to prepare the hearts of men for the reception of the truth, and he works only in connection with the truth. The agent in both regeneration and sanctification is the Spirit; the instrument employed is the truth. We are told that we are "born again not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God living and abiding." And our Lord prays for his disciples, "Sanctify them in the truth; thy word is truth." But what truth? Peter tells us that it is the word preached to us as gospel; and our Lord tells us that he is not only the Way and the Life, but the Truth. And as we read in the New Testament we become convinced that this is a very comprehensive and

far-reaching saying — that the truth summed up in Christ, in whom all fulness dwells, is the very fulness and end of the truth. When God manifested himself in Christ he manifested himself in all his glory. And specially we are made to feel this, that, as the work of Christ is God's only way to save men, so the truth of Christ, the gospel in which God shows all his heart to men, is the storehouse of his infinite resources to draw men to himself and to righteousness.

But again, the Spirit not only works through the truth of Christ, he works through the personal Christ. It is in Christ that we die to the world and rise to newness of life; in Christ that we live to God, and Christ himself lives in us; we are members of Christ's body; he is the Vine, and we are the branches; it is only as we abide in him that we bear fruit; it is Christ Jesus that has laid hold of us that we may lay hold of the prize, forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forth unto those that are before, and so pressing towards the mark; we are raised with Christ, and our life is hid with Christ in God. That mystic phrase "in Christ" tells the Christian the source of his inner life, and the fruitful cause of whatever is good in his outer life. Thus in every way the work of the Spirit, the Christian life, is made to centre in Christ, and we are made to feel that the only secret of a righteous character and a true life is in him. And hence when his work closes, as it does close at the time of the resurrection and the final judgment, there is an end with it of human hope.

But the question before us, whether all men are to be finally saved, or some finally lost, has an important connection also, which possibly has been overlooked, with the scriptural doctrine of the resurrection. We are told in Rom. viii. 10, 11 that "if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness. And if the Spirit of him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he who raised up Jesus from the dead will also quicken your mortal bodies, because of his Spirit that dwelleth in you." And in vs. 23, that "we who have the first-fruits

of the Spirit [appositional genitive] . . . . groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our bodies." And in 1 Cor. xv. 42 sqq., that the body "is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a psychical body, it is raised a spiritual body. . . . . And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall bear also the image of the heavenly." Now, these passages tell us two or three very important things having a direct bearing on the question before us. First, that there are two parts of our salvation, corresponding to the two main divisions of our human nature — the regeneration of our spirits, which is accomplished here; and the redemption of our bodies, which is to be accomplished at the resurrection. Secondly, that this redemption of our bodies is to constitute a large part of our final salvation; the apostle using that as the equivalent of the well-known term "adoption." Thirdly, that this redemption of our bodies is to consist not only in their resurrection, but in their glorification. They are to be made incorruptible, glorious, powerful, spiritual. Fourthly, that while the resurrection is common to all men, this glorification of the body is for Christians only — for those to whom God has given the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Here, then, is a most important part of the salvation of men, which is clearly connected with the resurrection or the time of final judgment and separation. Now, the doctrine of restoration has to face two alternatives here, either of which is fatal to it. This redemption of the body being a part of the final salvation, the doctrine of restoration leaves some on whom this change is still to be wrought after the resurrection. And in that case death is not conquered, except in part. Or if, as the New Testament teaches, death is conquered then, and the resurrection is completed, then some are left finally with unglorified, unspiritualized bodies, and therefore hopeless as regards one thing which is represented in the New Testament as an important part of the final salvation.

We might expect that this question would be related to the scriptural doctrine of the judgment. There would certainly be no doubt of such connection between the two as would prove fairly decisive if the phrase in common use, "the last judgment," were a scriptural expression. And while it is not to be found, it can be shown to be in accordance with Scripture, which in several ways implies that the judgment is final. In the first place, that judgment is said to be in accordance with the deeds done in the body. Certainly, says the restorationist; but that does not prevent another judgment, not this time on the deeds done in the body, but on those done outside of the body, after this life. It is my doctrine that the moral state of man as a free agent, with the possibility of change, continues, and that there may be, therefore, at some time, another judgment, reversing the decisions of this. Very well; all that we can ask of such a person in the interest of consistency is that he hold impartially both sides of this statement. If the good and the bad are both included in the denial of this finality of the judgment, we will at least allow its self-consistency. But that is just what its advocates persistently refuse to do. They admit—nay, they strenuously maintain—that the decision at the judgment on the basis of the deeds done in the body is final on the side of the good. And the language in regard to the good and the bad is so exactly parallel and identical that that admission is fatal to their theory.

But this fact that the judgment is according to the deeds done in the body has still another bearing on the present question. It is often asked why the judgment does not include the intermediate state, which, so far as time is concerned, is so much more important than the earthly life, in the case of all except the very last generations. And it is certainly a very difficult question for those who believe that destiny remains an open question until the final rescue of all men from the dominion of sin and evil. If the remedial agencies are to be kept at work, and probation is to be continued for this purpose, why, during all this long period

between death and the judgment are they inactive, or at least ineffective? That they are so is evident from the glimpse that our Lord gives us of the intermediate state, and of the great gulf fixed there between the righteous and the wicked, and from the fact with which we are now dealing—that the judgment is according to the deeds done in the body. We might suppose, from the assumption underlying, either consciously or unconsciously, the doctrine of restoration,—viz. that the reality of punishment would so open the eyes of men as to lead to the change in life and character which other motives have failed to produce,—that in the long time which is given that motive to work out its results during the intermediate state, at least some change might have been made, which would alter the verdict on the deeds done in the body. But no; the judgment of all alike is on that ground. And so out of this great intermediate epoch, furnishing as it does so exact a parallel to the state of men after the judgment, comes another confirmation of the doctrine of the church in regard to the finality of the judgment—another solemn voice, proclaiming, “All hope abandon, ye who enter here!” which Dante writes in sombre colors over the gate of his Inferno.

Another reason for believing that the judgment is final is that Christ is the Judge. If the statement were simply that he is the Judge on this occasion, then, inasmuch as his office of Judge is evidently a part of his Messianic authority, resulting from his relation to men as both Saviour and Sovereign, and this sovereignty ceases at the judgment, we should not expect another judgment presided over by him; but, on the other hand, there might be another by the Father, into whose hands Christ has redelivered the authority given to him. But it is certainly extremely improbable, in view of the peculiar relations that Christ holds to the race, that there will be any judgment of men except by him. And we have the distinct statement (John v. 22) that “the Father judges no man, but has committed all judgment unto the Son.” And this, taken in connection with the close of his Mes-



sianic reign, shows conclusively that there is no judgment after the general judgment, and that that is therefore final.

Our task in answering this question ought to be finished when we have examined the scriptural evidence in regard to it. But there is no use in attempting to disguise the fact that there is an immense repugnance in the minds of men to the doctrine of eternal punishment, to which is due the ease with which very slender proofs of its untruth or doubtfulness are received. And a good deal of wise and profitable work may therefore be done in this direction of removing or lessening that repugnance. Wise and cautious it will have to be, or it will defeat its own purpose. There are treatises on the reasonableness of endless future punishment that are as repellent as the doctrine itself. We will close this discussion with only two considerations on this branch of the subject, that may prove helpful.

In the first place, a very large part of this sentiment against eternal punishment is based on the supposed injustice of it. Men say, or think, there is certainly a limit to sin; but this doctrine puts no limit to the punishment of it. And this objection, in its crudest form, is simply this: Thirty to seventy years of sin, and endless punishment — an equation of which the two members are by no means equal. There is certainly a show of reason in this that it will not do to overlook. In some senses there is a limit to sin. There are degrees in sin, one man's sin being greater than another's; and degrees imply limitations. There is comparative ignorance, lessening the guilt of sin; and there is the sin of the heathen, which does not involve the rejection of Christ, and is therefore of a different quality from the sin of men in Christian countries. There are sins which may be forgiven; and there is the sin against the Holy Spirit, which will never be forgiven. And, of course, there is the apparent limit of time to the life on earth. But is there no limit to the punishment? Yes; there are the few stripes and the many stripes, corresponding to the different degrees of accountability, and probably, also, to the different degrees of sin.

Hell is not, therefore, the place of indiscriminate torture that some representations might lead us to suppose. But with all this, the terrible fact remains that there is no limit to the time of punishment. And this certainly seems to leave sin and punishment in the following relations — the sin limited in degree, and apparently in time; and punishment limited in degree, and unlimited in time. Now, there may be other ways of relieving this statement of its difficulties and inequalities. But is there any so direct, and affording so immediate relief, as to show that the inequality is unreal just where it appears in the statement? You may remove it by balancing it with other inequalities not appearing in the statement. But that is not so simple or convincing as to show that the inequality is only apparent, and that is just what I believe can be done. In fact, we have already seen that there is just as much reason to suppose that character is permanent as that destiny is fixed hereafter; that the two go together, and therefore certainly may be to each other as cause and effect. Put over against "These shall go away into everlasting punishment," the equally solemn and significant "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still," and the apparent injustice and inequality of the relations of sin and punishment disappear from our statement.

This may seem to conflict with the statement that we are judged according to the deeds done in the body. But suppose that we put it in this way: Life is a state of probation, not only to decide what the future destiny of men is to be, but also to determine their future character — a period for the formation of character and the determination of destiny, and the latter only because it is the former. We have scriptural warrant for stating it in this way; and with this modification in the ordinary form of statement the difficulties in the doctrine are greatly lessened, while at the same time the decisive relation of this life to future destiny is retained. Now the statement is, Sin limited or varying in degree, and unlimited in duration; and punishment the same in both degree and duration. There is certainly reason to

believe, on scriptural grounds, that the punishment will be exactly apportioned in degree or kind to the sin; and the unlimited duration of the punishment is accounted for by the permanence of the sinful character.

But secondly, it may help us — it certainly will help us — to understand this doctrine of the punishment of sin to contemplate the sin itself. Scripture language is very sombre and solemn in its description of the punishment of sin; but is it any less so in its delineation of sin itself? Read it carefully, and see how, in the light of this revealing book, sin gradually looms up before you, becoming constantly bigger and blacker, and more fraught with unspeakable evil and wickedness, until you will almost cease to wonder at its punishment, and will be led to think that if you could only climb to the moral height from which God looks at it you would cease to wonder altogether.

Here are some indications of this scriptural estimate of sin that seem to me profoundly suggestive. First, that a single sin is pronounced sufficient to put a man under the curse — a declaration of the law which Paul uses in Galatians to show the utter impossibility that justification should be by the law, inasmuch as the universal consciousness of sin (some sin, at least) shows, in connection with this statement, the necessity of an atonement for all men, without any exceptions from comparative, though not absolute, sinlessness. Evidently, none of the ordinary human extenuating views of sin are going to account for this fact.

Secondly, in close connection with this, are the universal and fearful consequences of the one sin in which the history of our fallen humanity began, and which has spread its blight over the entire career and destiny of the race. The significance of this is not so much in the direction of the guilt, as of the blight, of sin. Once committed, it fastens itself with a deadly, indissoluble grasp on the sinner; becomes a part of his nature and his moral constitution; and so is passed on from father to son in the long succession of the generations and centuries, becoming instantly the one element

dominating all others, except for divine interposition, in determining the course of individual, social, national life. Evidently, this history of the world, showing the deadly fruit of one sin, must be pondered more deeply by men who deny the final permanence of sinful character, or weigh in the balances sin and its punishment, and declare the inadequacy of sin to account for eternal punishment.

Thirdly, the extraordinary means employed to remove the consequences of sin. Is the prevalent scepticism in regard to Jesus Christ surprising? Such an extraordinary irruption into human history of the superhuman and divine, — nay, of Deity itself; such facts as the incarnation, the crucifixion, the resurrection, and the ascension; and then the day of Pentecost, and all the eventful history of the apostolic church, must appear to thoughtful men stupendous certainly, and easily becomes incredible as the years go by and the spiritual blindness of men continues. What is the secret of it? Why does God introduce himself in this mysterious way into human history, and create a new centre about which it revolves? He tells us that it was necessary, in order to save a whole race of beings, created in his own image, from utter failure and ruin, and that the necessity of his interposition with such an array of spiritual power, the cause of this otherwise irretrievable disaster, was sin. And no superficial view of sin will enable us to meet the prevailing doubt of the historical truth of the incarnation.

Fourthly, the insensibility of the human heart toward God, and its almost unaccountable unwillingness to acknowledge and love him. It is the profound teaching of Scripture (see especially the first chapter of Romans and the words of Christ in the fourth Gospel) that the failure of the human mind to perceive God, and the perversion of his image in the religious beliefs of the world, is not primarily an intellectual, but a moral, blindness, the subtle working of the sin within us. And this moral weakness and perverseness work out their fatal results still, where the true idea of God has been made familiar to men by revelation, in the refusal of

beings made in the image of God to receive him and give him the rightful place in their hearts. The proof of God's being and nature is of a kind that men are constantly recognizing, and following without hesitation in other matters. And the materials of it are not recondite ; we are in constant contact with them in our daily life, as we come into relation with the world, with natural objects, with other men, with ourselves even. And our supreme obligation to love and serve him rests on grounds equally familiar, and is of the same stuff from which the ordinary laws of human conduct in other relations are made. When, therefore, the Scriptures tell us that this blindness and insensibility in the supreme realm of knowledge and of duty is not removed even by the revelation of God in Jesus Christ, except as men are actually made over spiritually by the Holy Spirit, and trace it all to sin, they are giving us another far-reaching and comprehensive proof of the deadly evil of sin.

This is simply indicating a line of thought that may be profitably followed. Men ought to study thoroughly the Scripture doctrine of sin, and observe with the utmost care and thoughtfulness the phenomena of sin in human life and history, in the business and politics and professed religion of our own country in the present time even, before they pronounce with any certainty on the punishment that it deserves from a just God.