

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

PayPal

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for *The Expository Times* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_expository-times_01.php

pdfs are named: [Volume]_[Issue]_[1st page of article].pdf

duces materials furnished to him in various ways, adding to them, no doubt, in many passages, some arrangement and colour of his own, but in the passage before us giving surely the exact words of his source. St. Paul, on the other hand, comes before us as a Church statesman, who has practical ends to serve in the Churches he has founded, and who holds very strongly a doctrine which he regards as the one and only gospel.' St. Paul, therefore, makes certain changes on the original tradition. The changes are made in the line of his doctrine, and in the interests of a fuller church service. The words 'took,' 'blessed,' 'broke' are here, but he omits the word 'gave'; for the worshippers are not required to carry their thoughts back to the Galilæan disciples. 'A cup' is changed into 'the cup,' and it is placed after supper, for it is no longer a part of the common meal, but a separate religious rite. More important, 'Take, this is My body' becomes 'This is My body for you,' a doctrinal change in accordance with 'my gospel.' And most important of all, the words 'This do in remembrance of Me' are added, whereby the simple family meal of St. Mark, in which no repetition or commemoration was thought of, is converted into a memorial observance on the part of the Christian Church after the pattern of the Passover.

Professor Menzies does not say that he himself believes it was St. Paul who converted the simple family meal of St. Mark into the Lord's Supper. He says it is the view that has found best support in Germany, and he quotes Weizsäcker, Jülicher, and Spitta in its favour. He says that it is a view surrounded with great difficulties, and that he has not yet determined to adopt it. But he says that in any case this controversy will never have any influence on the celebration of the Lord's Supper in our Churches. 'Whether the Lord founded the ordinance consciously or unconsciously, whether the words, "Do this in remembrance of Me," proceeded first from Jesus on earth or from Christ in heaven, He is the founder of the ordinance, and we shall use these words.'

But he also says that inasmuch as the New Testament lays down no strict ritual of the Lord's Supper, those Christians who appeal to the New Testament as the standard of their religion, 'are free themselves, and must allow liberty to others, to connect with the acts done in the ordinance such views and doctrines as appear to them most true and most in accordance with the spirit of their Master, so long as due regard is paid to reverence and order and charity.'

Dr. Petavel on Immortality.

BY THE REV. FRANK BALLARD, M.A., B.SC., HULL.

IF one should rush to interfere between two such disputants as Dr. Beet and Dr. Petavel, there would appear just cause for indictment on the ground of presumption. Inasmuch, however, as the letter addressed by the latter to the former was avowedly an 'open' one, it may be assumed that every Christian teacher at least was also desired to ponder its contents. I trust, therefore, that no apology is necessary for venturing to differ from some of the findings of the esteemed Continental divine who thus publicly asks an English professor to go 'one step further.' So many backward

steps seem to some of us necessary, before Dr. Petavel's standpoint could be reached, that just now, when many and vigorous attempts are being made to revive a heresy which the consensus of Christendom long ago dismissed as unworthy, any one may be forgiven a sincere attempt to contribute to truth upon a question of such grave importance.

The whole question of Conditional Immortality is confessedly too vast to be taken in hand in a few pages of a magazine. So inevitable was the reaction in the popular mind from the ghastly

monstrosities which formed a large part of evangelical appeals during the last century, that one cannot wonder at the number of those in almost all the Churches to-day, who think that they have found relief from the dire mysteries of eschatology's dark side in the doctrine of 'Life in Christ' as interpreted by Conditionalism. I have the greatest sympathy with such reaction, having felt it intensely myself years ago. It is only because close and prolonged examination proved the fair promise to be but a mocking mirage, leading to a drearier desert of contradiction and despair, that I am constrained to utter my respectful but profound amazement at the total surrender of his case against Conditionalism by one of our best known exegetes. When Dr. Beet avows, 'I do not find, either within or without the Bible, any clear disproof of, or serious objection to, Dr. Petavel's teaching,' I can scarcely credit the sight of my own eyes. To many minds the 'serious objection' to Dr. Petavel's teaching is emphatically twofold. (1) The absence of positive proof, as Dr. Beet rightly says. But when he concedes with this the absence also of disproof, he appears to me to overlook the most influential of all reasons for declining Conditionalism, viz. : (2) the presence of disproof so manifest and weighty, that, in spite of the estimable names which cluster around the doctrine of Mr. White, and the sincere vigour of the propaganda now proceeding on its behalf, it remains an insoluble problem how any trained Christian intelligence can for a moment entertain it.

I must ask pardon for suggesting that the position of Dr. Beet in his reply is not logically defensible. He has found in the Bible 'no serious objection to Dr. Petavel's teaching,' and yet, 'on these matters the Scriptures as I read them give no decisive judgment.' I fancy this will not satisfy Dr. Petavel. For it is the very soul of his 'teaching' that the Scriptures do give a 'decisive judgment,' and that on behalf of final annihilation. Surely it is a serious objection to refuse to acknowledge the main contention of an opponent. At all events here, in a few words, without pretending to embark upon the whole theme of Conditionalism as represented by its recent advocates, I wish to express my serious objections to some of the statements and attitudes adopted by the esteemed Professor who calls upon us to follow him in the direction indicated in his 'open letter.'

On p. 409, then, of this magazine for June, we are told that 'separated from the source of life, the sinner is advancing by a slow and funereal march towards eternal death,' that is, 'deprived of essential immortality, the soul cannot but eventually cease to be.' This is said, moreover, to be a 'main distinction' between 'the essential immortality of the soul and the ultimate extinction of the lost.' It is difficult to appreciate. Assuming the writer's perfect knowledge of English, it rather concedes the main point at issue. For we cannot conceive of any man's being 'deprived' of what he did not already possess. Whence it must follow that the sinner was in possession of 'essential immortality,' and was only deprived of it, as Washington was deprived of his hatchet, for his persistent sinfulness. But it would certainly seem to be the affirmation of the writer everywhere else, that a sinful man does not possess essential immortality. Which of these avowals is true? If the sinner is not 'essentially immortal,' (the word 'essential' is not mine) then he cannot, even gradually, be 'deprived' of immortality. If, however, he can be deprived of it, then he already possesses it, in spite of his sinfulness. It will require a powerful microscope to discover the distinction between such loss of essential immortality and ultimate extinction.

But these words demand further consideration, for they are fairly typical of Conditional fallacies. 'Separated from the source of life, the sinner slowly advances towards eternal death.' It is necessary to know what we mean. What 'life' is this, and what 'death'? What 'separation' is involved, and what does this 'slow march' betoken? Such questions must be plainly asked and definitely answered. That this 'life' cannot be physical existence is manifest. The sinner is no more separated from God, as the Author of his being, than the saint. If, however, we are here to understand spiritual life, as distinct from physical existence, then also the death to which its loss leads, must similarly be spiritual death. To call it 'eternal,' and signify thereby the extinction of being, is a pure *petitio principii*. Spiritual life is a quality of soul; personal extinction is the cessation of a quantity of consciousness, utterly irrespective of quality. It is therefore necessarily fallacious to argue from the one to the other.

Yet again. How can one who is 'separated from the source of life' advance in any direction?

If he be separated from life, he is dead. If he be living enough to 'advance,' then he is not separated from life. That he should be already separated from the source of life, and yet only gradually and eventually cease to be, is one of the illogical assumptions with which Conditionalism abounds. 'It is only a question of time,' says Dr. Petavel. But it will require a longer time than even eternity supplies, to develop cessation of being out of that spiritual depravity the very essence of which is persistence in the misuse of being.

Dr. Petavel endeavours to prove his contention by metaphors. 'Separated from its source the river cannot but dry up; separated from the tree the branch cannot but wither: both the river and the branch are gradually brought to nought.' Now on the next page Dr. Petavel strongly objects to Dr. Beet's metaphor of a 'ruin'—'because it is inadequate, being taken from the domain of architecture, while man belongs to the organic and spiritual world.' May we ask, then, if a river belongs to the organic world, or a tree to the spiritual? If not, then these metaphors of Dr. Petavel are quite as 'unsafe and inadequate' as he insists that of a ruin to be.

On p. 409, again, second column, Dr. Petavel affirms that a 'possibly indefinite perpetuation of the existence' of human souls is 'against the positive teaching of the New Testament.' He adds that, 'according to the explicit declarations of the Apostle Paul, God only is immortal (1 Ti 6¹⁶, Ro 1²³).' Is this, however, either what Paul said, or what he meant, in these passages? I submit that it is not. In 1 Ti 6¹⁶ ὁ μόνος ἔχων ἀθανάσιον is not adequately rendered by 'God only is immortal.' Nor is the inference at all warranted that because God only hath immortality, therefore men are only mortal. That this is a definite fallacy of the consequent, may be learnt even from the preceding verse, where the apostle speaks of God as ὁ μόνος δυνάστης. That no man is or can be a 'potentate,' would be just as fair an inference as Dr. Petavel's. Again, in Ro 1²³ ἀφθάρτου warrants no inference as to the exclusion of human immortality by reason of the Divine. The 'likeness of an image of corruptible man' rather, by contrast, suggests the 'let us make man in our image, after our likeness' of Gn 1²⁶. But if Dr. Petavel will have it that ἀφθάρτου means simply possessed of everlasting existence, I must remind him that then Conditionalism is flatly contradicted by the Apostle Paul in 1 Co 15⁵², where he affirms that the dead shall be raised ἀφθάρτοι. How universal is the resurrection intended, we learn unmistakably, not only from the apostle in the context, but also from Christ's own words in Jn 5²⁸.

The statement that in 1 Jn 2¹⁷ the Greek word μένει 'brings out nothing but the ontological notion of duration, in contradistinction with a blessedness which is only an attribute or a char-

acteristic of that endless existence,' is but an assertion all too typical of Conditional methods, unwarranted by the text, unsupported by the context, and contradicted by the whole trend of New Testament teaching. This attempt to reduce the robust antithesis of the apostle to a mere skeleton of continued colourless existence, is sufficiently rebuked by the employment of the same term in the same chapter, as well as in other places. Into the use, for instance, of this term μένει in vv. 27, 28 read the sense: 'Nothing but the ontological notion of duration,' and what is left us of the 'maturest thought' of the New Testament? Apply the same to the next chapter, vv. 15, 17, 24, or to such passages as Jn 14^{10, 17} and 15⁴⁻¹⁰, etc. It is a strange gospel indeed which has to establish itself upon the mere shells of benedictions which are essentially rich and full.

In the next paragraph we find a still more misleading assertion. It is certainly well that we should have from Conditionalism the acknowledgment that 'no doubt the only immortal God can render imperishable anyone or anything He pleases,' but I scarcely know how respectfully to characterize what follows. 'The writers of the New Testament have taken express care to limit His promise of doing so to those who "seek immortality."' The calm question-begging tone of this is only equalled by the falsity of the exegesis. That the writer well knows the Greek term in Ro 2⁷, we may, of course, assume. Is, then, Dr. Petavel prepared to assert that the ἀφθαρσίαν found here, is neither more nor less than a synonym for the ἀθανάσιον of 1 Ti 6¹⁶? If so, let us try it in Ep 6²⁴, where the same word occurs. 'Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in'—everlasting existence! Even the old version 'sincerity' was better than that, but the Revised more exactly renders 'uncorruptness.' Are we reminded of 1 Co 15? I am most willing that the word should there be faithfully interpreted by the total manifest meaning of the apostle in vv. 36-52. But if Conditionalism insists that 'it is raised in incorruption' means simply imperishable, seeing that 'immortality' is asserted as the rendering in Ro 2⁷, I can but point out once more that this settles the whole case against the Conditionalist, inasmuch as a few verses below we are categorically told that the dead, *i.e.* 'all that are in the tombs,' shall be raised—'immortal.' That, therefore, ends the controversy.

However, in order to do utmost justice to Dr. Petavel, let us proceed. The next passage referred to is 2 P 1⁴. Here again we are definitely given to understand that to 'become partakers of the Divine nature' is to become immortal. But why does Conditionalism quote the first half of a sentence to suit its purpose, and leave unnoticed the other half, which is not only inseparable but manifestly intended by the writer to make clear

what he meant by the former half? 'Having escaped from the corruption which is in the world by lust.' Can any words of human speech show more unequivocally that the writer was thinking of moral and spiritual quality, and not at all of duration of existence? Nothing would be easier than to confirm this from the rest of the New Testament. But it is surely superfluous to show that the likeness to their Master which Christians are ever urged to cultivate, is likeness in character, not continuation in being. I affirm deliberately that there is not one single passage which can honestly be interpreted as meaning the latter, whilst we all know that the 'new creation,' with its accompanying spiritual change, is insisted on everywhere.

Again, p. 410, 'All other beings are subject to the universal law of decay.' By way of illustrating this, we are reminded that it is said of the heavens, 'They shall perish, they shall wax old as a garment.' If, however, the thought of the writer here was that 'perish' simply meant annihilation, it is hard to see how that which was annihilated could at the same time 'wax old.' Moreover, seeing how emphatically the metaphor of a 'ruin' has just been rejected by Dr. Petavel, it is somewhat remarkable to find him endeavouring to substantiate the annihilation of human souls by appeal to 'architectural ruins.' The truth of the case is, that neither the heavens nor architectural ruins yield any fair analogy to human souls. Whilst as to 'all other beings,' the Bible contains no hint whatever of any comparison of them to men. So far as that moral and spiritual world with which the Bible deals is concerned, there might as well be no 'other beings' at all. To say, therefore, that 'human souls are not exempt from the operation of this universal and invincible law of decay' is after all only sheer assertion of the thing to be proved, under the guise of a false analogy.

Again, we are told that 'their ultimate extinction must be hastened if they are left to be preyed upon by sin as by a deadly disease.' Here once more it is quietly assumed that sin is an ontological disease affecting the quantity of a man's being, whereas everywhere in Scripture it is regarded as a spiritual malady degrading its quality. This might suit the modern materialist whose creed is 'Ohne Phosphor kein Gedanke,' but it is in no sense Christian.

'Considering the universal law of decay, want of proof as to immortality is presumptive evidence of ultimate annihilation.' This 'want of proof,' again, is simple assertion. It may be perfectly sincere on Dr. Petavel's part, but why should he thus sweepingly assume that, *e.g.*, all that Dr. Welldon has just written is absolutely false and worthless? To say nothing of the deep and strong convictions of scholars and thinkers throughout Christendom who cannot be quoted for number.

But about this 'universal law of decay,' which we have seen is only by false analogy universal enough to include the human soul? Decay of what? If sin be decay at all, it is, according to Scripture, moral and spiritual decay. By what right does Dr. Petavel represent such as gradual diminution in the quantity of being? With all respect, it seems to me that 'the *onus probandi* rests with' him to justify an assumption which is contrary alike to logic and to Scripture.

A little lower down on the same page (411, first column) we read: 'Its remains are no more a structure than the ashes of a bank-note that has been entirely burnt up are a bank-note. Passing now from the metaphor to the human relics, of which it is a symbol, what is there in the nature of things to prevent their ruin from becoming similarly the end of their existence?' I answer, in the writer's own words, this, that the metaphor employed is 'unbiblical, defective, inadequate, misleading.' A 'bank-note' it seems, is so utterly similar to a human soul that the degradation of the latter, through sin—that is, through wilful choice of known evil—must be on all fours with that which happens to a bank-note when it is burnt to ashes! As to 'the nature of things,' it is not a question of things at all, but of the nature of the human soul. It is pure assumption to liken the moral ruin of a human spirit to the consumption of a bank-note.

Again, we are asked why 'the wisdom of the Creator' should 'maintain the existence of useless human ruins?' 'How can you reconcile with the wisdom of God the endless maintenance of a worthless being?' Here we pass from assumption to presumption. It is going equally beyond revelation and the range of our faculties, to assert that impenitent souls hereafter will be 'useless' and 'worthless.' Moreover, it certainly is not the valid test of Christian theology that we should be ever able to reconcile this or that with the wisdom of God. A gnat bent on settling the quadrature of the circle would be a fair parallel. Has Dr. Petavel reconciled with the wisdom of God the existence of evil at all, or the dreadfulfulness of this world's present mystery of pain?

It does not follow that if human wrecks remain conscious hereafter 'thus would be restored the endlessness of torment.' For it is not 'torment,' in the old cruel repulsive sense, that a man should reap what he has sown; and the absolute endlessness of such reaping is beyond the vista of what is revealed to us in Scripture. That which can be revealed to the limited human mind concerning the nature and will of the God of the whole universe, is not sufficient, nor ever can be, to make us dogmatically sure of the possibilities of literal eternity.

One wonders, indeed, that 'so judicious and penetrating a mind' as Dr. Petavel's, 'should be

content with an untenable position.' Doubly and trebly untenable it is in very truth. For whilst the 'figment of an inherent and indefeasible immortality,' that is manifestly, a self-endowed and absolutely indestructible potentiality of being, is but a figment of the writer's imagination, disowned by all reasonable orthodoxy and set up only to be cast down, it is utterly illogical to argue the case of human souls in the infinitely distant future from a forced analogy to rivers, architectural ruins, and bank-notes. Whilst it is Conditionalism alone which really makes into a 'lie' the original warning, 'In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.' For even if, to oblige those Conditionalists who appear to be pledged alike to verbal inspiration and the literal acceptance of the opening chapters of Genesis, we take that first narrative as simple history, the one thing clear above all else is that those who then sinned did not then die, in the Conditionalist sense, inasmuch as they continued to live.

The rest of the 'open letter' with which we are dealing, concerns itself more especially with the well-worn theme of the significance of the words 'destroy' and 'death,' with their cognates. The calm way in which Dr. Petavel, after the fashion of Conditionalism, asserts that 'Paul did not believe in the essential immortality of the soul' and adds a 'therefore,' would be amusing if the theme were only less serious. But to track out every fallacy in these paragraphs would require many more pages than are at our disposal. When we attempt to summarize, the first thing to be noted is the concession that 'the word destruction does not always mean total and final extinction.' It is interesting to find this illustrated from the letter of a French officer, who wrote: 'If we are destroyed, I shall keep even beyond death the regret of our failure.' This may be commended, with Dr. Petavel's imprimatur, to Conditionalists of the Constable school. But the question to be settled is whether the term, as applied to the future of the impenitent, means, or does not mean, total and final extinction. All the interesting distinctions into 'comprehensive and relative,' 'culminative and putative' are in a sense irrelevant. And we must be permitted to decline the new commentary which asserts that the prodigal son was not 'lost,' it was 'only a case of supposed loss or death.' Also that Paul meant simple annihilation in 1 Co 15¹⁸. Or that the 'lost sheep' of the House of Israel were 'rather misled than lost.' Nor may we acknowledge that 'the withering of a corruptible crown cannot but bring the crown to an end in time'—therefore—the human soul must be withered to an end in eternity. And when it is remarked that 'sin has a tendency to extinguish even the intelligence of perverted men,' and that 'folly is only a few degrees remote from a complete extinction of the

intellect,' we can but pronounce it an utter fallacy of the consequent, to infer that, therefore, sin must also issue in the annihilation of the human soul. Not only does the logic limp, but the analogy breaks down.

But as to the production of evidence by quotation from Scripture, is it of any avail? I have before me, as I write, a carefully examined list of not less than a hundred and twenty passages where are found the Hebrew and Greek terms corresponding to the notion of destruction, such as are rendered 'destroy,' 'perish,' 'utterly destroy,' 'devour,' 'consume,' 'cut off,' 'blot out,' etc. But when one is informed that an 'array of quotations is a skein easily unwound when begun at the right end of the thread,' one knows that the significance of all such passages is settled to begin with. It is, therefore, useless to allege them. An example is supplied us in the reference to 2 Thes 1⁹. This, we are told, is 'slightly pleonastic, in order to accentuate the idea of an abiding and endless result, an unrestricted destruction. It is, therefore, a perfect synonym of our dialectical word annihilation.' The meaning of the apostle is thus brought out by reading annihilation in. Is this justified, even upon a *prima facie* examination? We are given to understand emphatically that *δλεθρον* means extinction. It is equally insisted that *αιωνιον* means everlasting, or endless. The meaning of the two terms together, therefore, is 'everlasting extinction.' But I submit that this is not even thinkable. If the destruction be everlasting, it is not extinction. If it be extinction it cannot be endless, seeing that the very essence of the notion of extinction is an end. To speak of it as a pleonasm, to aver that it is the 'result of the destruction' that is endless, is but a verbal evasion in order to avoid a logical consequence.

Very much the same applies to the employment of the term 'death.' Only here the fallacies of Conditionalism become even more conspicuous, by reason of the clear force of the antithesis with the term 'life,' as applied to human salvation through Jesus Christ.

Here again, however, it would be unavailing to produce a catena of texts. I, too, with Dr. Petavel, 'have taken into minute consideration every passage of the Bible in which the words relating to death occur, and have classified these passages.' My conclusion is the exact opposite of his. But as two only are here noticed, we will confine our attention to these.

In Ro 6²³ we are told that the meaning is 'absolutely unrestricted and exhaustive. Just as the physical death puts an end to all the sensations and all the activities of the body, so the perseverance in sin will ultimately put an end to all the feelings and all the activities of both soul and body.' That is to say, perseverance in evil

must issue in the loss of the power to do evil. Is this either Scripture or moral philosophy? Is it either experience or observation? I affirm that it is contrary to all four. We are told just above by the Doctor that 'there is for man a physical and spiritual death.' With this we shall all perforce agree. Now, however, we are given to understand that there is a third death—'absolute death,' the essence of which is extinction, 'whereof the physical and spiritual death are only forerunners.' But seeing that we do know that neither physical nor spiritual death mean human extinction, (for it is quite another thing to say that physical death puts an end to the activities of the body), we have to ask where and how this ontological change is wrought which makes the third death absolutely different from its 'forerunners.' As a matter of fact, it is the purest assumption to read this significance into the apostle's words. The rest of the chapter is quite sufficient witness to the unwarrantableness of the attempt to drag in here the notion of extinction hereafter. The death contemplated is spiritual, and the consequences are spiritual. Sin is indeed never a bodily act; the body is but the tool of the spirit, and the wages of sin must ultimately be spiritual. If we are sure of anything from modern science, we are that physical death was in this world before human sin, even as we also know that many of those who are least sinful, and—if there be any value in Christian faith at all, are actually forgiven—succumb, when we want them most, to a premature physical death.

To avow that 'the physical life has no more any existence if its feelings and activities have absolutely ceased,' is somewhat of a truism. But to infer that 'in a similar manner the life of a soul will exist no more when the second death shall have put an end to all its energies' is a double fallacy. For the last half of the sentence assumes the very thing to be proved, whilst the first half assumes that the life of the soul is in all respects similar to the life of the body. Which it is not.

But let us turn to the other passage quoted, in order that the truth may be elucidated by antithesis. It is not a question of gradualness at all, but of essence. Love may die gradually, even as a tree may. It does not follow that they are the same in essence. By contrast we may learn from Paul what he means by death—'but the gift of God is eternal life.' Is it a true interpretation to render this as everlasting existence? I, for one, earnestly protest that it is not. The passage quoted (1 Ti 6¹⁹) is unfortunate, to say the least. To regard 'the life which is life indeed' as meaning merely, or even mainly, that 'they may make sure of everlasting existence' is but a travesty of the ideal intended. Much more truthfully does Ellicott say, 'That life in Christ which begins

indeed here, but is perfected hereafter.' If, however, it be possible in human speech to make clear and fix for ever the true significance of any expression, one would have thought that, for all who acknowledge the authority of the Gospel and Epistles of John, the significance of the apostolic phrase in Ro 6²³ had been put past controversy. Amongst the last and most emphatic words of Christ recorded by the beloved disciple, we have (Jn 17⁸) these: 'That whatsoever Thou hast given Him, to them He should give eternal life. And *this is life eternal*, that they should know Thee the only true God, and Him whom Thou didst send, even Jesus Christ.' Nor can there be any doubt that it was with this in mind and heart that the apostle wrote also in his Epistle (1 Jn 5²⁰): 'The Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.' With these words as an incontrovertible starting-point, it would be easy to arrange all the occurrences of this potent phrase under four heads: (1) those which speak of eternal life as a present reality and possession, with no reference at all to continued existence after death; (2) those which signify a definite, qualitative, soul reality, in which quantitative immortality, or everlastingness, is both secondary and assumed; (3) passages with the double significance, the present spiritual life in Christ being always the main assertion; and (4) occurrences which, whilst manifestly future in their reference, yet undeniably assume all the present reality of spiritual possession. If the combined force of all these does not suffice to show by antithesis what is the New Testament significance of 'eternal death,' further discussion seems useless.

In conclusion, therefore, it is not the name 'Conditional Immortality' to which we object. It is that the doctrines thereby signified are not true, so far as that can be decided by full and fair exegesis of the New Testament. We may have, verily, quite as strong a revulsion of feeling against the ghastly things which have been said and taught under the doctrine of 'eternal torments' as Dr. Petavel. But how he or any Conditionalist can find 'relief' afforded, or any 'punishment tempered with mercy,' when the actualities and consequences of annihilation are faced, is past comprehension.

One might also be permitted to defer judgment until we know which really is Conditionalism, that represented by Mr. White in his well-known book, or that of Mr. Constable and others, which directly contradicts Mr. White in matters most essential, and was by him definitely stigmatized to me years ago as a 'crazy school.' Before men can take the 'step further' which Dr. Petavel so

earnestly and doubtless sincerely desires, they must know whether they are to accept Mr. Constable's dictum, that 'by having a soul, or being a living soul, in the case of man, the very same thing is meant as in the case of the lower creatures.' Or again, in other words, 'we affirm that the soul of man is nothing more or less than that animal life which he shares in common with the beasts.' It will, moreover, certainly be necessary to decide which is right—for they are diametric contradictions—for the assertions of the Constable school that 'death is the annihilation of man, his hopes, his thoughts, his life, himself,' so that after death the state of man is 'one of loss of all existence, both of soul and body'; and during the intermediate state 'the soul of every man has no existence'—or the emphatic denial of all this in chap. xxi. of Mr. White's book, summarized as it is in his own conclusion that 'the general doctrine of the Bible, that a spirit survives in man's death, seems to outlast all the attacks of its opponents.' When this is settled, we shall be in a position to estimate the logical consequences of either doctrine as regards ultimate annihilation.

To know Mr. White was to revere him; nor can anyone read the concluding sentences of Dr. Petavel's 'open letter' without being touched by the tender sincerity which glows in every line. But in our present state of being, at all events, neither sincerity nor zeal can ever be the test of truth. Some of the most mischievous mistakes and deadly errors in all religion and philosophy have been sincere. And when we read our venerable friend's avowal, that those who believe in human immortality

'seem to forget that Christ has called Himself the Bread of Life, the Water of Life, which are symbols not of enjoyment, or even of holiness, but of ontological maintenance and support,' we can but marvel that it should be possible to one so able and so good, to come contentedly to a conclusion which, the New Testament being its own witness, reduces the promise of present, fullest, and highest life to mere prolongation of future existence, eviscerates the doctrine of Christian holiness, puts man—whom even the Old Covenant declares to be 'little less than God'—on a level with the beast, and instead of relieving the dark mysteries of eschatology, makes them lurid and even ghastly with anticipations of Divine wantonness and despair worse than mediæval travesties.

We agree with Dr. Petavel that a 'reformed eschatology' is urgently needed for a more successful advocacy of the Christian faith, but as to Conditionalism—*non tali auxilio nec defensoribus istis*. Many, many steps, and those retrogressive, will have to be taken before the Christian world will be brought into line with those who, though moved by the best intentions, would jettison the dignity of manhood, contemning its deepest and highest instincts; would belittle the character of God; and make the creation of our race to have been only a Divine mistake, which redemption vainly endeavoured to retrieve. Our Conditionalist friends, therefore, must forgive us if, while we 'bear them witness that they have a zeal for God,' we add that it is 'not according to knowledge,' and decline to take even 'one step' in such downgrade direction.

Requests and Replies.

I have read with interest, in the last number of *The Expository Times*, Professor Hommel's article on the newly published list of early Babylonian kings, and his vindication of the biblical chronology, which he connects with it. I am at a loss, however, how to reconcile his view with a statement of Professor Sayce's in *The Expository Times* for January, p. 172. According to Professor Hommel, the Pharaoh of the Exodus was Amenophis II. (c. 1461-1436 B.C.); according to Professor Sayce, the question 'has been set at rest by Dr. Naville's excavations on the site of Pithom,' that Ramses II. (1324-1258 B.C.) was the Pharaoh of the Oppression, which would make his successor, Merenptah, the Pharaoh of the Exodus. Thus in the date which they assign to the Exodus, these two authorities differ by just two centuries; and a question which one affirms to have been 'set at rest' by the progress of

archæology, is by the other declared to be still perfectly open. Can any of your readers tell me how I may reconcile these apparently contradictory opinions?—INQUIRER.

The following is Principal Rainy's reply (published with his permission) to a private request of an old pupil for guidance towards the best literature on the Lord's Supper:—

FOR the patristic and mediæval views, which are not perhaps essential to your object, but with which still one should be acquainted, I don't know that one need go beyond Gieseler, who is reliable. But I understand you want to keep to the Reformation and post-Reformation discussions. For what precedes that, Baur's *Dogmengeschichte* may be