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necessary to invite a foreigner to occupy it. But Berlin will not long stand alone in its possession of this inviting department of research. Neither will Germany always have to import, during its inevitable expansion, competent and coveted teachers. Professor Lehmann will soon be supported by colleagues, stationed at other strategic centres, who are native to the land of his adoption. For, as I ventured to declare some years ago: 'There is no other country in the world which is so well fitted to enter, and without delay, upon the task of imparting systematic instruction in this subject. . . . Where can one find the University equipment—in individual scholars, in the aggregate of a highly trained staff, in libraries, etc.—equal to that which Germany to-day possesses? . . . As long as Germany postpones the founding of separate chairs for giving instruction in the History of Religions, she will never do herself credit in any attempted comparison of religions.'[1] The first step, however belated, has at last been taken. All must hope that, before very long, Comparative Religion will likewise be accorded official and adequate recognition.

[1] Cp. *Comparative Religion: Its Genesis and Growth*, pp. 512–516. Edinburgh, 1905.

The Great Text Commentary.

PSALM XIV. 1.

'The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.'

IT is probable that when the Psalmist wrote these words he was alluding to no imaginary case. He was not fancying what men might do, but was speaking of what they actually did, when he described a man as saying in his heart, 'There is no God.' There were Atheists in his days, practical Atheists at least, as there have been in all days, and probably ever will be; and the general bearing of the Psalm from which the text is taken, teaches us pretty clearly the judgment which he formed of them. You will observe, that from the expression of the first verse of the Psalm, 'The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God,' the Psalmist at once goes off into a description of the abominably wicked lives of those who said so.

The folly spoken of in the text is (so to speak) representative folly: the Atheism of which the fool was guilty, was nothing peculiar to himself; on the other hand, he only said in his heart that which millions of others have said more or less distinctly: he represented the ignorance of some, and the fear of others, and the guilty wish of many more; and when the Psalmist wrote the text, he put into the mouth of him whom he describes as *the fool* that which is in reality the characteristic folly of mankind. As the knowledge of God may be said to comprehend all knowledge, so to say *There is no God* may be described as comprehending all folly.

This Psalm was one of Queen Elizabeth's delights, probably it expressed her view of the stormy and ungodly age in which she lived, with promise of better things to come. She turned it into verses beginning, 'Fooles, that true fayth yet never had,' and ending with 'Prayse to God.' As this was printed in 1578 it is easy to see that she meant, by her version of the sixth verse, her Romish enemies:

> 'How can that cruell sort be good,
> Of God's dear folcke whych sucke the blood?'[1]

As a young lad I worked in a large office. Having purchased during the day *The Smallest Bible in the World*, I was trying my best during a few slack moments to read its extremely small type with the naked eye. A fellow-worker having atheistic tendencies approached me and inquired as to what I was reading. I explained the nature of the book, and asked him if he thought he could read the small text without the aid of a glass. At the time we were in a room alone. Opening the book by chance he began to read. Slowly at first, but more confidently as his eyes got into focus, he read out these momentous words: 'The—fool—hath—said—in—his—heart,—There—is—no—God.' He stopped for a moment as if in difficulty with the next word. 'Well?' said I inquiringly. Turning round, he gazed for a moment into my eyes with a strange pleading look, and then, handing me back the book, he left the room without saying a word.

We may consider—

1. The Fool.
2. What the Fool says.
3. How he says it.

[1] C. L. Marson, *The Psalms at Work*, 29.

I.

The Fool.

The Hebrew word for 'fool' here is very interesting and instructive. It defines the Psalmist's attitude, and sheds a flood of light on the intention of the Psalm. It means properly 'withered,' being the word which occurs in the First Psalm, where it is said of the godly man that he is 'like a tree planted by the streams of water, that bringeth forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also doth not *wither*.' And so the fool here is one whose soul is withered, shrivelled, and atrophied, and if you glance over the Psalm, you will see what it is that has wrought the mischief. It is not intellectual aberration, but moral depravity—the blight of uncleanness, the canker of corruption. 'They are corrupt, they have done abominable works; there is none that doeth good. They are all gone aside; they are together become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.' It is this that withers the soul; and it is the man whose heart has thus been eaten out of him that says and thinks that 'There is no God.'

'Fool,' the usual rendering in A.V., R.V., is inadequate and confusing; the Heb. *nabhal* was in many respects a very different character from what is ordinarily understood in English by a 'fool'; and the rendering at the same time obliterates the distinction between this and the other words which are correctly represented by 'fool.' The fault of the *nabhal* was not weakness of reason, but moral and religious insensibility, an invincible lack of sense, or perception for the claims of either God or man. The term is thus applied to Israel, unappreciative of Jehovah's benefits (Dt 32^{6}), to the heathen (v.^{31}, Ps $74^{18.\ 22}$), to the man who cannot perceive that there is a God (Ps $14^{1}=53^{1}$). Isaiah states explicitly what he understood by the *nabhal*: he contrasts him (32^{5}) with the 'noble' or 'liberal' man, and adds (v.^{6}), 'For the senseless man speaketh senselessness, and his heart worketh naughtiness, to practise profaneness, and to utter error against Jehovah, to make empty the soul of the hungry, and to cause the drink of the thirsty to fail'; the description is that of a man who is at once irreligious and churlish (cf. 1 S 25^{25}). The word occurs besides, 2 S 3^{33} 13^{13}, Job 2^{10} 30^{8}, Pr $17^{7.\ 21}$ (second clause) 30^{22}, Jer 17^{11} Ezk 13^{3}. The corresponding subst. *senselessness* is used of acts of profanity (Jos 7^{15}), churlishness (1 S 25^{25}), and immorality (Gn 34^{7}, Dt 22^{21}, 2 S 13^{12}, and elsewhere).[1]

'The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.' When I was stationed in Bury (Lancs) it was my privilege to attend a series of lectures under the auspices of the Bury Popular Lecture Society. These lectures were given by men who were interested in some special subject, or were travellers, musicians, etc. One of them was by a Mr. Jones who had scaled some of the world's loftiest peaks. He declared that no man could go and stand where he had stood and say 'There is no God.' He had heard of one mountaineer who had ascended half-way up a dizzy height. He there wrote upon the rocks the words, 'There is no God.' He then continued his ascent and went on until he reached the top. When he saw beneath him range after range of snow-clad summits, there came over him a sense of awe, and on his descent he wrote over what he had previously written, 'The fool hath said in his heart.'

An animalcule in my blood
Rose up against me as I dreamed,
He was so tiny as he stood,
You had not heard him, though he screamed.

He cried, 'There is no man!'
And thumped the table with his fist,
Then died—his day was scarce a span,—
That microscopic atheist.

Yet all the while his little soul
Within what he denied did live,—
Poor part, how could he know the whole?
And yet he was so positive!

And all the while he thus blasphemed,
My (solar) system went its round;
My heart beat on, my head still dreamed—
But my poor atheist was drowned.[2]

II.

What the Fool says.

'The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.'—And the fool, as we have seen, is a vile man, morally degenerate. Why does the vile man say, There is no God? Because that is what the vile man wishes to believe. The wish is 'father to the thought.' In that familiar phrase we express a profound philosophy. Our wishing is the father of much of our thinking. Our desires colour and determine many of our judgments. I wish that a certain thing may happen. That wish will not travel alone. Let it continue, and it will drag the judgment after it. I shall come to *think* that the certain thing *will* happen. The wish may become an assumption. Let the wish be strengthened and intensified, and I may come to judge that the certain thing *has* happened. The wish may become an assumption; the assumption may become a conviction.

[1] S. R. Driver, *Parallel Psalter*, 457.

[2] Richard Le Gallienne.

> He who has deepest searched the wide abysm
> Of that life-giving Soul which men call fate,
> Knows that to put more faith in lies and hate
> Than truth and love, is the true atheism.[1]

I. What reasons does the Fool give for saying that there is no God? At the present day one reason surpasses and practically obliterates all other reasons. Events, it is said, occur automatically, according to laws inherent in their own nature. There is, therefore, no room for God and no need for Him. Men say they have discovered, or they have heard and read, that the great natural forces of the universe act in certain defined and invariable methods or sequences, which are somewhat questionably named 'the *laws* of Nature.' And these laws, so at least they suppose and affirm, leave no room for the free play of a creative and governing Will. If they admit the possible existence of God, it is only that of a God who, ages and æons ago, set these great natural forces in motion, but who has ever since left them to work out into their due results, according to the invariable methods which science has discovered and formulated. 'There is no God,' they say; or, 'There is no God who can so use and so vary the use of natural laws as to answer the prayers, or minister to the wants, of individual men.'

This argument has often been met by arguments of a superior force. It has been shown, for example, how the freewill and activity of man perpetually modify the action of natural laws, how he employs these laws for ends of his own, and compels them to produce results other than those which Nature, left to itself, would have produced; how he works *his* miracles, taking a weed and by culture developing it into a flower; putting a tree into a stove, and so inducing it to bear earlier and richer fruit; using a drug to arrest or modify the natural course of a disease. And it has been asked, 'If man, by serving Nature, can thus rule her; if, by a wise obedience and a skilful use of her laws, he can control and modify their action, why cannot God—if there be a God, and He be immanent in Nature—so use its laws as to work even greater miracles than these?'

To those who conceive that the reign of law necessarily excludes the free play of will and intelligence, we affirm, that just as the strictest observation of its rules leaves full scope to the intelligence and will of man, so the laws of nature, which cannot be broken, may and do leave full scope to the Divine Intelligence and Goodwill. God both is, and is not, bound by the laws which He Himself has decreed: that is to say, if for the welfare of the universe He is bound to observe them, to observe them does not bring His will into bondage, nor restrict Him to an absolute uniformity in the choice of the means by which His end is to be reached. He moves freely through those laws, using them at times in the methods we call 'natural,' and at times in the methods we call 'supernatural,' because as yet we do not understand them, nor comprehend the whole scheme and course even of physical forces and laws.

A man would have as little meaning without a God as a child without a mother. You will find it useless to *argue* with a sceptic about God—arguments help so little—and you cannot demonstrate the Unseen in black and white. But before a man says there is no God, ask him if he can explain away the miracle of a mother. He will not be able to do it, for he cannot explain away himself. And when you have got him to realize the miracle of motherhood, he will not be very far from believing in a God.[2]

In Westminster Abbey lies the dust of one whom all men venerate as a Prince of Science. 'I do not know what I may appear to the world,' were Sir Isaac Newton's words shortly before his death, 'but to myself I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the seashore, and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me.' Parted from Sir Isaac Newton's grave by but a few yards lie the mortal remains of another student of Nature, whose name is hardly less famous in the Calendar of Science. In his later years we are assured that Charles Darwin 'attained to the condition of agnosticism.' To his cautious and reverent mind, as to Newton's, the crude dogmatism of the Atheist was repulsive. By the side of Darwin lies the great astronomer, Sir John Herschell, of whom one who knew him well said that of all the scientific men of his acquaintance he was "supremely at the head for knowledge, simplicity, and humility." His private life, we are told, 'was one unbroken tenor of domestic affection and unostentatious piety.' Walk westwards from the graves of Newton, Darwin, and Herschell, and you will find, but a few yards distant, the stone which bears the name of the illustrious geologist, Sir Charles Lyell. Of him we have this testimony from the pen of Dean Stanley. 'From early youth to extreme old age it was to him a solemn religious duty to be incessantly learning, constantly growing, fearlessly correcting his own mistakes, always ready to receive and reproduce from others that which he had not in himself. Science and religion for him were not only not divorced, but were one and indivisible.' Quite recently another leader of science has spoken in that reverent and humble spirit, which is common both to true

[1] Lowell.

[2] T. R. Barnett, *The Finest Baby in the World*, p. 55.

science and to sound theology. 'Scientific thought,' wrote Lord Kelvin, 'is compelled to accept the idea of Creative Power. Forty years ago I asked Liebig, walking somewhere in the country, if he believed that the grass and flowers which we saw around us grew by mere chemical forces. He answered, "No, no more than I could believe that a book of botany describing them could grow by mere chemical forces."'[1]

A garden is a lovesome thing, God wot!
Rose plot,
Fring'd pool,
Fern'd grot—
The veriest school
Of peace; and yet the fool
Contends that God is not—
Not God! in gardens! when the eve is cool?
Nay, but I have a sign;
'Tis very sure God walks in mine.[2]

2. What reasons can be given for the Existence and Moral Government of God?

1. There is the fact that science, when most willing to deny God's hand, is compelled to admit its presence, or at least the possibility of its presence. Science deals only with phenomena, with the shows and appearances of things; and it is compelled to assume a substance, a reality, a force, underlying all these phenomena—what the schoolmen call a *noumenal*, under or behind the phenomenal world—which it has not grasped, and cannot hope to grasp.

'The whole order of nature,' recently wrote Professor Ray Lankester, 'including living and lifeless matter—man, animal, and gas—is a network of mechanism, the main features and many details of which have been made more or less obvious to the wondering intelligence of mankind by the labour and ingenuity of scientific investigators. But no sane man has ever pretended, since science became a definite body of doctrine, that we know, or ever can hope to know, or conceive of the possibility of knowing, whence this mechanism has come, why it is there, whither it is going, and what there may or may not be beyond and beside it which our senses are incapable of appreciating. These things are not "explained" by science, and never can be.'[3]

2. The existence and presence of God is demanded by the history of the race. God is a God of history. A God of history, a God revealing His purpose through facts, a God drawing the facts into ever clearer correspondence with His purpose—that is the God whom we arrive at. He is still a God here and now, alive in the facts before our face, even as we, by our primal emotional apprehension of Him, insisted and required. But, according to our gathering and growing conception of His abiding reality, He is here and now, shaping the facts into a coherent order in view of what shall be hereafter: in view of what He desires the facts to become. His activity is immediate, actual, present, in form, in front of us; but it works on the top of the past; and it embraces the possibilities of the future.[4]

I saw the beauty of the world
Before me like a flag unfurled,
The splendour of the morning sky,
And all the stars in company;
I thought, How beautiful it is!—
My soul said, There is more than this.

I saw the pomps of death and birth,
The generations of the earth;
I looked on saints and heroes crowned,
And love as wide as heaven is round;
I thought, How wonderful it is!—
My soul said, There is more than this.

Sometimes I have an awful thought
That bids me do the thing I ought,
It comes like wind, it burns like flame,—
How shall I give that thought a name?
It draws me like a loving kiss—
My soul says, There is more than this.

I dreamed an angel of the Lord,
With purple wings and golden sword,
And such a splendour in His face
As made a glory in the place;
I thought, How beautiful He is!—
My soul said, There is more than this.

That angel's Lord I cannot see
Or hear, but He is Lord to me;
And in the heavens, and earth, and skies,—
The good which lives till evil dies,—
The love which I cannot withstand,—
God writes His name with His own hand.[5]

3. Belief in the existence of God is necessary for the individual and social life. The sense of responsibility which we have, the sense, namely, that we are capable of right and wrong, that it is our own fault if we do the wrong and reject the right, would not be strong enough to stand by itself, did not the thought of the righteous God and His law and His judgment come in to confirm and strengthen it; so that if the belief in a God is altogether overthrown, there is, at the same time, overthrown that which is in ninety-nine cases out

[1] H. H. Henson. [2] T. E. Brown.
[3] H. H. Henson.
[4] H. S. Holland.
[5] W. B. Rands, *Lilliput Lectures* (1897 ed.), p. 132.

of a hundred the strongest safeguard of morality, namely, the consciousness of God as a righteous ruler, one who will judge us according to the right or the wrong of that which we have done. In the vast majority of men the sense of responsibility, without which morality can scarce exist, would not survive the absolute extinction of all belief in the existence of a God, of a spiritual world, of a future state whose conditions are influenced by the lives we have lived here.

Underneath the floor of Westminster Abbey lies David Livingstone; just within the western wall is inscribed the name of Charles Gordon; all about you, as you walk through the great church, are monuments of goodness, and sacrifice, and service. What, you cannot help reflecting, is the spring of this distinctive and supreme excellence which, among so much and so varied greatness, attaches uniquely to these saints and soldiers of humanity? And you cannot but answer that it was, precisely, religion, faith in the Unseen, the coercive and continuous sense of obligation towards and contact with God. Of them all we might say what the sacred writer says of Moses, exposed to the seductions of the Egyptian Court. They, as he, 'endured as seeing him who is invisible.'[1]

4. And, above all else, man needs a Redeemer. We must take our choice between the vague Theism or vaguer Agnosticism, which is all that physical science can bring to us, and the Faith in God which Jesus Christ proclaims. There is the fact: here is the explanation. Is it adequate? What, let us ask, is, apart from theological technicalities, the essential Truth which the Trinitarian doctrine enshrines? It will suffice, for our present purpose, to distinguish two constituent notions of our belief. On the one hand, Trinitarianism includes the truth which philosophy, ancient and modern, has insisted upon, that the universe is everywhere indwelt by God, that God is immanent in phenomena, their source, their sustaining principle, their formative, inherent force; and while thus satisfying what seems to be an essential requirement of our reflective reason, Trinitarianism insists upon the correlative truth which has its perpetual witness in the human conscience, that God transcends the universe which He indwells, that He can best be conceived in that description of personality which is the category of the highest existence we know. On the other hand, Trinitarianism endorses, explains, and satisfies the 'thirst for God' which burns in the spirit of man. For God has made man for Himself; and in man moves His Spirit, for ever witnessing to an origin and a destiny which are Divine; and man, just in proportion to his goodness as man, comes to be more completely competent for fellowship with God, so that, in truth, manhood in its perfection is the true instrument by which God can be made known. Trinitarianism is the philosophic basis of the belief in the Incarnation; the Incarnation is, precisely, the climax of Divine Self-revelation, the declaration of God in and by Jesus Christ. To this cry of the Psalmist, 'My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?' Christianity answers by an appeal to the best in man, and then sets us in audience of the Best Man, who was also God. First, we are to recognize and confess the Divine within ourselves; then we are to recognize and confess the Divine in Christ. But Christianity not only authenticates the testimony within, but points us to the Christ without. To the yearning cry of the human spirit, stricken with fear and loneliness in the great solitude of being, aghast before the enigma of death and the veiled mystery beyond—the cry of the strayed child for the Hand of the Father in the night of desertion, 'My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God'—Christ makes answer in words of invitation: 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.'

[1] H. H. Henson.

III.

How he says it.

'The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God.' That is what the fool said, but it is the way in which he said it that revealed him to be a fool. There are souls that just whisper to themselves, 'There is no God,' and the secret utterance seems to chill their blood and fill them with benumbing fear. Repeated calamity comes upon a man. The floods are out. All his ways are broken up. The lines of his life are filled with perversity. Confusion reigns. He moves amid his desolation, himself confused and desolate, and now and again a thought sweeps across his heart with the chilling touch of a cold night-wind, 'There is no God.' Is he a fool, the fool of the text? He is eagerly

groping his way, as though feeling for some longed-for presence, like a blind man reaching out for some tangible support, and he touches nothing. He sighs in his failure, and whispers, 'There is no God.' But again he gropes: 'Oh, that I knew where I might find Him!' In his sorrow and calamity he is like a little child in the evening-time, lost amid the multitudinous windings of some great city, inquiring his way home. He is feeling his way to God; and if in the sense of a great vacancy his heart should fearingly say, 'There is no God,' it deepens his sense of orphanage, and fills him with an aching loneliness and pain. No; that is not the man of the text. He is seeking, and 'he that seeketh findeth,' and shall at length find himself at home with God. A heart that is as a beautiful garden, filled with the flowers of the Spirit, will exhale wishes full of sweet and pleasant influence. But a heart that is only a moral cesspool will exhale wishes of vicious and poisonous stench. As we are, we wish; as we wish, we think; as we think, we judge. This man of the text had the cesspool in his heart. He was ungodly at the core. He began to wish there was no God; and at last, with impious hilarity and with a note of unholy triumph, 'the fool said in his heart, There is no God.'

In the life of men and women, in politics, in morality, and in religion, all that gives to our existence colour and force, all that makes the individual value of each separate soul the deepest element, comes not from the head, but from the heart. In the individual preferences—of friendship, for example—that go so far to mould character and fix destiny, by what rational law shall we explain the principles of attraction and repulsion? How, for example, shall we account for the obvious fact that what men call their political opinions are so absolutely inconsistent with their views upon all other subjects; how, except that the so-called opinion is that of some soul which, by the magic of its personal electricity, has been able to touch others into sympathy? How often is it possible by dint of logic to argue a man or woman out of liking or disliking? 'The *heart* aye, is the part aye, that makes us right or wrong.' The state of heart is that which determines the wisdom or the foolishness of a human life.[1]

Professor A. B. Simpson tells how he was once asked by a brilliant lawyer for the best argument against infidelity. He was, he affirmed, a sincere seeker after truth. Dr. Simpson handed him from his library Bushnell's *Nature and the Supernatural*, and asked him to read carefully the famous chapter on Christ's resurrection, in which the argument is presented as a barrister would present a case to the jury. The young lawyer took the volume and promised to return in a fortnight and report his conclusions. He kept his appointment. 'I can never doubt,' he exclaimed to Professor Simpson, 'that Christ both died and rose again. That is proved beyond all question. But, for all that, I am not a Christian, and fear that I never may be; for I have discovered that, after all, the trouble is not in my *head*, but in my *heart*.'

1. We sometimes have conversation with young men who lament their loss of spiritual eagerness and religious relish, and the encroachment of a deep weariness in the worship and service of God. Every man knows when that most dangerous season begins. In nine cases out of ten it means that we are morally disordered, we have opened the heart to some insidious Antichrist. We are entertaining some unclean spirit, some secret sin, which is corrupting our spiritual taste, and rendering us incompetent to discern and appreciate 'the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him.' That is the first step in spiritual degradation!

2. But now follow on a step further. A man becomes possessed by this feeling of religious weariness. He loses his relish for the things of God. His prayers are just long yawns. What then? Then he begins sceptically to inquire about the use of prayer. A decision is easily reached that, for him at any rate, there is no use in prayer. But he cannot stop there. He needs must justify himself, and he finds the amplest and most comfortable justification in the more general statement that all prayer is useless, a vain farce, a mere baying at the moon. Along the line of intellectual inquiry some men have reached the conclusion that prayer is useless. Sin begets a deep spiritual distaste and weariness, and this distaste begets a sense of the uselessness of prayer.

3. One further step in this degeneracy will bring us to the conclusion. A man who has lost all belief in prayer to God will speedily pass to the judgment that there is no God to pray to. Here, then, is the range of spiritual degradation. It begins in folly; it ends in unbelief. The man begins by defying God; he ends by denying Him.[2]

Vice breeds atheism. It is the testimony of poor Robert Burns that

> It hardens a' within,
> And petrifies the feeling.

It eats the heart out of the man, withers his soul, and destroys his very capacity for God. 'Nothing,' says the late G. J. Romanes, 'is so inimical to Christian belief as

[1] J. Laing.

[2] J. H. Jowett.

un-Christian conduct. This is especially the case as regards impurity; for whether the fact be explained on religious or non-religious grounds, it has more to do with unbelief than has the speculative reason.

Will you pardon a somewhat unmannerly illustration of this grim truth? One evening, the story goes, in the course of the mess-room dinner at an Indian cantonment, an officer, flushed with wine, took to quizzing the chaplain of the regiment. 'I cannot believe in the Bible, you know. There are so many things in it which nobody could accept. Jonah and the Whale, for instance: what do you make of that?' The chaplain knew his man. 'Yes,' he retorted, looking him straight in the face, 'there are many things in the Bible which are difficult; but there are other things in it which are quite plain. The Seventh Commandment, for instance.' The quizzing ceased.[1]

[1] D. Smith, *Man's Need of God*, 103.

The Doom of the Lost.

By Professor the Rev. J. Agar Beet, D.D., Richmond.

The November number of The Expository Times contains a most valuable article on 'The Doctrine of a Future State,' by Dr. A. Plummer, author of well-known commentaries on several books of the New Testament. He rejects, as not taught in the Bible, and as misleading and dangerous, the doctrine of the endless suffering of the lost; and rejects also, as its underlying and supporting root, the doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul, *i.e.* the endless permanence and consciousness of all human souls. He also calls loudly and justly for a full reconsideration of the whole matter.

This article is an independent and strong confirmation of the teaching of my volume on *The Last Things*. Dr. Plummer's position is precisely my own, namely, that the various writers of the New Testament agree to announce the utter and final ruin of the lost; but do not assert their endless permanence and suffering. This conclusion he supports by expositions and arguments almost identical with mine; especially the references to, and quotations from, Plato, Cicero, Irenæus, Athenagoras, Tertullian, and Augustine. While gladly accepting this welcome confirmation, I shall in this paper supplement it by some account of the history of the discussion, and some practical remarks about the whole subject.

Until a time remembered by many still living, the theory current in all Churches was that the doom of the wicked will be endless suffering as terrible as the excruciating bodily agony caused by fire. This doctrine, common in all pulpits sixty years ago, no one dares to preach now. But comparatively few venture publicly to disown it; and still fewer propound something better in its place.

Yet for many years past there have been voices crying in the wilderness and, with more or less wisdom, denouncing this popular error; *e.g.* a volume by the Rev. E. White, entitled *Life in Christ: Four Discourses*, etc., published in 1846, and a much larger one, with a similar title, in 1875. In these volumes the writer repudiated the above theory; and traced it, as does Dr. Plummer, to the doctrine of the Immortality of the Soul. This protest was accompanied, and as I think weakened, by an attempt to prove the ultimate extinction of the lost; and by some other doubtful arguments. The same teaching was ably set forth by the Rev. H. Constable, M.A., in a work entitled *The Duration and Nature of Future Punishment*, published in 1869, and frequently reprinted.

Soon after Mr. White's larger works, there appeared a small volume entitled *Future Punishment*, by Dr. C. Clemence, who enumerates theories: (1) Universal Restoration, (2) Annihilation, (3) Absolute Endlessness of Suffering and Sin, and (4) his own opinion, namely, that 'In Scripture the Duration of Future Punishment is left Indefinite.' By this last opinion, Dr. Clemence evidently means that the Bible is quite definite about the finality of the doom of the lost, but leaves open the possibility that they may ultimately sink into unconsciousness. Of the other theories, he says: 'We do not accept the first, for it seems to us *against* Scripture; nor the second, for it *distorts* Scripture; nor the third, for it *goes beyond* Scripture.' In other words, he anticipated the teaching afterwards set forth by myself and Dr. Plummer.

Dr. Clemence seems to me to have himself gone 'beyond' the teaching of the Bible, by saying that 'No human spirit reaches the crucial point of its