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and
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Light on a Dark Subject.

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The Bible and Eternal Punishment.

By A. P. Barton.

Theologians and creed-builders have always held the dogma of post-mortem reward and punishment as a basic principle in doctrine. They have known nothing higher as an incentive, or restraint, to conduct than the hope of reward and the fear of punishment.

Both, as motives, appeal only to the selfish and sensuous side of man, and are entirely unworthy a child of the Good, which is Love, that "seeketh not her own."

And yet, they have called their teaching after the Christ who said: Take no thought of the morrow, Do good and lend, hoping for nothing again.

He who aims to so square his life as to merit a good, easy state beyond the mystic river, or to follow Truth for any consideration external to Truth itself, is just as selfish as he who is honest (?) because "honesty is the best policy."

And the punishment taught by the orthodox expounders of scripture is merciless, purposeless, everlasting and administered extraneously, like a cruel master would torture his helpless slave for his own vindictive gratification—or "glory," as they have called it.

This they have held in direct contravention of the teaching of the holy man whom they pretend to worship as God incarnate, and who taught that punishment is but

the harvest of one's own sowing of error, is inherent in conduct, retributive and remedial. "With what measure ye me mete, it shall be measured to you again," and "When ye pray, say, Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us," he said. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap," said his Chief Apostle. "And, as a sound is followed by its echo, and a thing by its shadow, so are all your actions, good or bad, followed by their reactions," said Guatama, the Buddha, 600 years before.

But the Ecclesiastic teaching has been that the least infraction of what the creed-builders said was the law, or a passive failure to secure regeneration after their prescription, from a supposed native depravity, would result in the damnation of hell.

This they have described as unspeakable torment, in a place seething with either literal or metaphorical fire, * amid never-ending, relentless and entirely purposeless tortures of the most revolting, sickening diabolism mad-house delirium ever conjured up. All this they have said, was premeditatedly, and for his own glory, conceived and provided by a tender, loving Father, for a large majority of his dear children.

The Roman Catholic Church has framed an hypothesis of retrieve from certain intermediate chambers of this place, but the orthodox portion of the Protestant church, has left no loop-hole for escape to the "unconverted," dis-incarnated soul.

*Spurgeon says it is literal fire, in every respect like our flames, except that it will not consume.

Many have taught that little babes are cast into the lake of fire, because Adam and Eve, some 6000 years ago, ate certain tempting fruit which God had placed in easy reach and told them to abstain from.

And they have said that God and we, "the elect," would take great pleasure in seeing them writhe, notwithstanding some of them would be our own innocent children and parents and companions and lovers.

The people have never really believed this hideous doctrine; yet it is preached very vigorously from hundreds of pulpits to-day, and called gospel—glad tidings! But the most of them do think that the bible teaches it, and this has done more than any other thing to bring the bible into disrepute.

If any should think that I have overdrawn the picture,

I will respectfully refer them to some descriptions of, and declarations about hell and its torments to be found in vol. 17, page 275, of Spurgeon's Sermons; and in a sermon preached a few years ago before the students at Xenia, Ohio, by Rev. Wm. Davidson, an eminent preacher of the Presbyterian denomination, which sermon was published in pamphlet form and turned loose upon a long-suffering people; and in a book written especially for children—just think of it—for children! by J. Furniss, a Roman Catholic, of England. These I have, but they are too terrible to reiterate. And I would advise any one with "mortal mind" nerves to not read them. They describe hell as "literal flame," relentless torment, "red-hot oven," etc., and describe God as the tormentor, delighting to trample them down and stain his garments in the

blood of the victims. The same, or similar, blasphemous, soul-blighting utterances may be heard from many orthodox pulpits to-day.

And they said that the bible teaches this terrible doctrine. If it did teach such heinous things about God and the future, any man who should allow it to be read in his family before it should be thoroughly expurgated, would be recreant to his duty as husband and father. Little wonder people get sick and have trouble and night-mare so long as they are made to believe God is such a fiend as these preachers describe him to be.

Such preaching as this is much more pernicious in its effects than the worst anarchist harangues Chicago ever heard.

The reason of the wide-spread disbelief of the doctrine

of hell as taught by the church, is not that the people have found out that the bible does not teach it; for most of them, hoodwinked by theologians, who stand upon seventeenth century creeds, think that it does. But through their natural sense of right and justice, they instinctively know that it is not true. Their intuitional faith in the essential goodness of the universe, tells them that everlasting torment, for even the very worst man on earth, would be unreasonable and unjust—utterly purposeless and entirely subversive of the teaching that God is our Father, infinitely good and all-powerful.

The two ideas are irreconcilably inconsistent. The suffering of one soul forever would be infinitely greater than the sum total of all finite misery; for the latter would have an end, while the other would go on *ad infinitum*.

Besides, the doctrine is unreasonable. And men *will* refer questions to their God-given reason, although they have been told that they must not reason about church dogmas, else they would all be reduced to an absurdity.

And reason goes on something like this: Either "the damned" go on sinning forever and *cannot* repent, thus ceasing to be morally responsible, or else they may repent; and, if they may, they surely do. Thus, God is punishing either those who are not responsible, or those who have ceased to sin. In either case the punisher could not be good.

The doctrine is unreasonable because it supposes manichæism, or an infinite dualism of opposing forces, incessantly warring against one another throughout the uni-

verse, the evil outweighing the good, in this world about nine to one.

If this were true, the physical cosmos would not stand fifteen seconds.

“If one small atom were to stray,
All nature would hasten to decay.”

Any force opposing the universal law would cause anarchy.

Everlasting punishment would be purposeless. All finite suffering may work reform and purification; but from infinite torture no good could possibly come. It would be neither reformatory nor preventive, and the people would tolerate no human penal code which had a purpose short of these. The doctrine supposes that God

creates his children without their volition, and then damns them for his own “glory,” or gratification; and this, too, according to one branch of the church, often without giving them the power to escape, being predestined to be lost! One orthodox writer has said, “God keeps them alive forever in order to torture them forever.” What a grand God that would be! No being short of an inconceivably wicked fiend could be guilty of such a purpose.

So the people have concluded, through both intuition and reason, that God could not be a good and loving Father, such as Plato and Jesus described him to be, and tolerate such things.

The very ripple of childish laughter, the happy homes and universal love of country, home and life, give the lie to the monstrous teaching

Many of the churches' highest teachers have not believed it. Origen said that no matter how low any moral being has fallen, a way to return is always open to him. That even the devil may, in time, regain the highest position in the angelic hierarchy. That God is able to heal the damage done to any part of his works.

St. Thomas is reported to have said, "In so far as the devil has being, he is good."

St. Augustine says: "All substance is either God, or from God. All nature, in so far as it is nature, is good." This grand old teacher further says that hell is simply a lower state inchoate, or imperfect being, and explains that "infant damnation" is only a *levis tristitia*, or gentle sadness, and that "all positive suffering in hell is probably temporal."

But, you say, what about the frequent recurrence of the terms "devil," "satan," "hell," "eternal," "punishment," "damnation," etc., in the bible?

Let us see what about them. I will begin with the general statement that,

The doctrine of perdition, or the damnation of souls, as taught by orthodoxy, is not sustained by the bible.

I shall undertake to prove this by establishing these three propositions:

1.—The bible writers never knew, or dreamed, of a place of torment commonly called hell, nor of a tormentor called the devil.

2.—The bible does not teach that punishment for sin is relentless, arbitrary and everlasting, but that it is intrinsic and remedial, without reference to duration.

3.—The New Testament teaches final and complete restoration of all things in Christ.

Moses was reared as a son of Pharoah's daughter, and was certainly familiar with the teaching of those learned priests of Isis and Osiris to whom Pythagoras, Herodotus and Plato were wont to go for instruction. These taught a very positive doctrine of a future state.

But, although Moses is accounted the supreme lawgiver of Israel, and is supposed to have learned directly from the mouth of God his full will and prescience as to their conduct and destiny, yet concerning a post-mortem state of existence, Moses taught them nothing. Either he did not believe the doctrine of the Egyptian priests, or else he failed to receive any revelation from his God on the subject.

The Pentateuch, commonly called "the five books of Moses," whether written by Moses or Esdras, locates all rewards and penalties in this world's incarnation, and is entirely silent as to any state beyond, and respecting immortality.

James Freeman Clarke, in his "Ten Great Religions," says, "Moses taught nothing concerning a future life, and there is no passage in the Old Testament which teaches this important doctrine." Mr. Wm. R. Alger, in his "Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life," has very conclusively shown this fact.

The Children of Israel knew only this incarnate life; and although they knew about angels, they had never heard the myths about devils, and demons and hell—as a place of torment—until they learned them from the

Persians, during the Babylonian Captivity, which ended about 536 B. C. They seem, also, to have imbibed their ideas of a future state during this time, from the teachings of Zoroaster.

In the "Authorized Version," or King James' "translation of the Old Testament—the one in common use—the word "devil" does not occur. The plural "devils," is used five times, and in every instance refers to idols, or images, set up to be worshiped; as, for instance, Lev. 17:7, "And they shall no more offer their sacrifices unto devils."

"Satan," which is a Hebrew word, (Heb. *Sathan*,) derived from the verb which means "to lie in wait, to oppose, to be an adversary," occurs in four places in this version of the Old Testament, and in no respect is the individual described like the devil of modern concept.

The word occurs in many other places in the Hebrew Old Testament, but our translators saw fit to transfer it to the English in but four instances. In all the others they translated it by its meaning.

Job's satan was an angel of God, having right to a seat in the councils of the sons of God, and having neither the power nor disposition to harm even one of Job's camels, until specially commissioned by "the Lord" to try the quality of Job's righteousness by affliction. He has not a point of the characteristics of the ecclesiastical devil.

Cruden defines the word satan thus: "Contrary, adversary, a party in a process, an enemy, an accuser."

We read at 1 Chron. 21:1, "And satan provoked David to number Israel," and at 2 Sam. 24:1 "the Lord," is charged with the same offense, with the explanatory "sa-

tan" in the margin. At 1 K. 11:14 we read, "And the Lord stirred up an adversary (*satan*, in the original) unto Solomon, Hadad, the Edomite;" and verse 23, "And God stirred up another adversary (*satan*, in the original,) Reson, the son of Eliadah;" and 1 Sam. 29:4; "And let him (David) not go down with us to battle, lest in the battle he be an adversary (Heb. *satan*) to us;" and Num. 22:22, "And the angel of the Lord stood in the way for an adversary (Heb. *satan*) against him (Balaam)."

And in many other instances does the word *satan* occur in the original Hebrew, where our translators were compelled to render it by its meaning instead of transplanting the word itself. In the references I have given you, we have the Lord, Hadad, Reson, David and the angel of the Lord, called *satan* in the original.

About 260 B. C. a council of seventy learned men, under Ptolemy Philadelphus, translated the Hebrew Old Testament into the Greek language. This version is called the Septuagint. Wherever these translators found the word *satan* in the Hebrew, with the article before it, they rendered it by the Greek "*diabolos*," and the same idea of adversary etc., was also represented by the Greek "*diabolos*," in the New Testament, and afterward translated into the English by the word "devil." So, you see, the "devil" of the New Testament, is the same as the "*satan*" of the Old Testament, one who is adverse, or contrary, or false. John in the apocalypse, pictures the idea as a deception. (Rev. 12:9; 13:14; 19:20; 20:10.)

But in some places our translators could not get "devil" out of "*diabolos*," so they were compelled to translate

it by its meaning. For instance, at 2 Tim. 3:3, we read "Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, (*diabolous*, in the original) incontinent," etc., and at Titus 2:3 we have "The aged women, likewise, that they be in behavior as becometh holiness, not false accusers, (Greek *diabolous*,) not given to much wine" etc., and at 1 Tim. 4:11, we find, "Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers (Greek, *diabolous*,) sober" etc.

This word, *diabolos*, is translated "devil" some thirty times in the common English New Testament, while the plural form "devils", occurs about sixty times, and is from an entirely different word, "*diamonia*," which signifies bad tempers, deafness, epilepsy, and the like.

The English word *hell* is from the Saxon verb *helan*, "to cover, or conceal," and intrinsically contains no idea

of a place of torment, and never did smell of fire and brimstone in its Saxon home.

The Hebrew word, *sheol*, the abode, or world, of those who have become invisible, or, more literally, of that which is in darkness, hidden, or obscure, occurs sixty-three times in the original Old Testament, and is translated in the Septuagint sixty times by the Greek word, *hades*, and the same idea that attended *sheol* in the Old Testament, is represented by *hades* in the New Testament. So we must go to the Hebrew *sheol* to find the meaning of the New Testament *hades*.

Sheol, in many places, as Gen. 37:35; 42:38; 1 Sam. 2:6; 1 K. 2:6, and Job 14:13; 17:13, 16 etc., is translated into our English (common) version, by the word "grave," or "pit."

If our translators had so rendered it, or by kindred terms, in all cases, they would have retained the sense of the original much better than to render it "hell," as they did sixty times in the Old Testament. And the same is true of *hades* in the New Testament.

But this would have spoiled their pet dogma of everlasting torment, since they would then have no place to put it.

They could not well have old Jacob declare his intention of going down to the abode of the damned, when he spoke of going down to *sheol*, or make David speak of Joab's hoary head going down to hell in peace, so they, in all such dilemma's, said "grave," or "pit," for *sheol*. But wherever they could, they gave us hell. In many cases they have done so where the rendering is palpably

wrong. For instance, they make David say, (Ps. 139:8,) "If I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there;" and make Job 11:8, read, "It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than hell," etc., and Amos 9:2 prophesy, "Though they dig into hell, thence shall my hand take them."

In these and some other cases, the word *sheol* conveys the thought of antithesis, or opposite from the upward, and should be translated "bowels of the earth," or "the depths."

Dr. Wm. Smith, L. L. D., D. C. L., at one time classical examiner of the University of London, and a very high classical and biblical authority, says of the word "hell," "This is the word generally, and unfortunately, used by our (bible) translators to render the Hebrew *sheol*. It

would, perhaps, have been better to retain the Hebrew *sheol*, or else, render it always by 'the grave,' or 'the pit.'

Our Revised Version retains the word *sheol*, and has not the word *hell* in it. Thus the Old Testament becomes a pretty respectable book, with neither *devil* nor *hell*, nor everlasting punishment, in it, from the first of Genesis to the last of Malachi.

So we find our translators have played fast and loose with these and other words, in both Old and New Testaments, to accord with the tenor of fixed dogmas.

The word "*hades*" occurs eleven times in the original New Testament, and in ten of these it is rendered in the Authorized Version by the Saxon word "hell;" and theologians have taught that this means a place of everlasting torment.

The one exception where it is not translated "hell" is at 1 Cor. 15:55, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave (*hades*) where is thy victory?"

"To translate *hades* by the word 'hell,' as it is done ten times out of eleven in the New Testament," says Wilson "is very improper, unless it has the Saxon meaning of *helan*, 'to cover,' attached to it."

This meaning perfectly corresponds with the meaning of the Hebrew word *sheol*, and none of them, intrinsically, or derivatively, contains the slightest allusion to a future place of punishment.

The word *Gehenna*, which occurs twelve times in the Greek New Testament, is simply the Greek way of spelling the Hebrew "Ge Hinnom," the valley of Hinnom. This valley was also called "Tophet" — "detestation, or

abomination." It was a deep and narrow ravine southwest of Jerusalem. On its southern brow Solomon erected high places to Moloch, whose horrid rites of burning innocent babes were celebrated here many years. Here Ahaz and Menasseh made their children "pass through the fire." And here Sennacherib's army of 185,000 men were slaughtered in one night.

Josiah, King of Judah, about 640 B. C., in order to put an end to the fiendish practices of Moloch worship, covered the place all over with human bones and filth. Then the City used it as a general cess-pool for the deposit of sewage and dead animals; and they kept a perpetual fire burning there to consume the debris and expel the effluvia. "Gehenna, then, as occurring in the New Testament," says Wilson, "symbolizes death and utter

destruction, but in no place signifies a place of eternal torment."

At Mark 9:43—50, the word translated "hell" is *Gehenna*, or the valley of Hinnom. Here Jesus, quoting Isaiah 66:24, is reported to say that the worm does not die and the fire is not quenched in the valley. Isaiah refers not to a punishment of the soul hereafter, but to the utter physical destruction in the valley of Hinnom, which would overtake "the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me." In fact, Isaiah was only writing a sort of dirge on the destruction of the Assyrian army in this valley. So Jesus, in using the quotation, merely intends to illustrate the physical and temporal results following sensuous license.

So we find that in every other place where the word oc-

curs in the New Testament, it only serves as a figure of temporal destruction, and has no bearing upon the soul in eternity, and no hint of a post-mortem state.

At 2 Pet. 2:4 the Greek, "Tartarus" is translated "hell." Peter here evidently refers to the Homeric myths. Homer says that Tartarus is a deep and sunless abyss (no fire) closed in by iron gates, and describes Zeus as hurling those gods who rebelled against him, Kronos, the Titans, et al., into this place. To say the least, neither Homer nor Peter intimates that mortals are ever sent there.

Then there is no hell, in the sense of a future place of everlasting punishment, in the New Testament.

Next we come to consider the words rendered "eternity," "eternal," "everlasting," "forever," "end of the world," etc., by our bible translators.

We get an altogether wrong notion of eternity when we regard it as an enormous and inconceivable accumulation of time. Eternity means outside of time, without any reference whatever to duration, in the realm of Spirit; and "eternal punishment" means that which is not arbitrary or external, but intrinsic, or esoteric, and self-retributive.

Eternity is the word commonly used in our New Testament to render the Greek *aion*, and the adjective, *aionios*, our translators have rendered "eternal," "everlasting" etc., seemingly at random, although these words are not at all kindred in their esoteric meaning. Clarke says, "You might as well attempt to produce thought or love, by adding up millions of miles of distance, as, by adding up millions of years of time, to get any idea of eternity.

Eternal life, in the language of scripture, has nothing to do with the future or the past."

The noun, *aion*, occurs about one hundred times, and the adjective *aionios*, about seventy-five times, in the Greek New Testament. Our translators have given *aion* thirteen different meanings in our New Testament; such as "world," "always," "forever," "age," etc. The fact is, it has no equivalent in the English, and some translators have simply transferred it and its adjective, as others did "satan" and "sheol." Others translated the adjective, *aionios*, "age-long;" but it never did mean everlasting.

In the New Testament, it is applied to life (Gr. *Zoe*,) forty-five times, to fire, (*pur*) three times and to glory, three times. It means in all cases, in the realm of Spirit, as contradistinguished from the external, phenomenal

sphere of existence. Eternal (*aionion*) punishment, is that preservative, remedial retroaction of conduct and thought which attends man through his spiritual nature, and the idea of duration is not connected with it. Just as soon as you make it mean duration, it becomes temporal, and, hence, must have an end.

Since error bears its own seeds of suffering, man is punished just so long as he is guilty. He, therefore, fixes the duration of his suffering himself. Eternal, (*aionion*), punishment, being in the soul consciousness, is necessarily a self-correction, and, therefore, inevitably leads to repentance, and for this reason, cannot be everlasting.

Eternal (*aionion*) life is spiritual life, as distinguished from mere animation. These words of Jesus: "He that believeth in me *hath* eternal (*aionion*) life abiding in him"

and, "This is life eternal, (aionion,) to know thee, the only God," any one may readily perceive have no allusion to duration in them. The suffering of Peter, when he repented of his dastardly denial of Jesus, was eternal, and hence, corrective and saving. The remorse of Judas, which led to self-destruction, was not eternal.

At Matt. 25: 46, we read, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal."

Here the translators have rendered *aionion* "everlasting" in one place, and "eternal" in the other. This is quite unwarranted and misleading: for, as we have seen, "eternal," as a translation of *aionion*, never means everlasting.

The Greek *Kolasin*, here rendered "punishment," oc-

curs in but one other place in the New Testament, 1 John, 4:18, "Perfect love casteth out fear, because fear has torment." (*Kolasin*). The LXX has it, "Stumbling-block." The idea conveyed here is that of annoyance, or confusion, and not of punishment for sin.

The two expressions, aionion punishment, and life aionion, refer to the soul's wandering away from the Father, and its at-home-ness with the Father, here contrasted, and which is so beautifully illustrated by the parable of the prodigal son. He was in eternal (aionion) punishment, in the far country, while the Father loved him and yearned for his restoration all the time, and when he returned—repented—gladly ran to meet him and gave him a most loving reception—was not angry at all, any of the time, nor wished to stain his garments in his blood, as

Mr. Davidson represents God as doing with his wayward children.

In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, it is said of Dives that "he lifted up his eyes in hell, (*hades*, or under world,) being in torments."

The word here translated "torments," (*basanois*,) means intense suffering, but contains no hint of everlasting punishment. Dives is not in the condition of the orthodox damned, at all. He is deeply repentant and loves his brethren, and exhibits a much more Christian compassion than even Abraham is here credited with. Could a good Father torture such a soul forever? There could be but one purpose in so doing: vindictiveness on account of his having been rich.

Olshausen, a very eminent orthodox commentator, and

one of the most orthodox of them, says of this parable: "Rightly to understand the whole delineation, we must, above all, keep clearly in view, that it is not everlasting salvation, or commendation, which is here described, but the middle state of departed souls, between death and the resurrection. In our parable there is no possible reference to the everlasting condemnation of the rich man, inas much as the germ of love, and of faith in love, is clearly expressed in his words." We see in this parable and elsewhere the great Nazarene prophet's indorsement of the teaching of Guatama, the Budda, that to be wealthy, while so many thousands are perishing for want of bare necessities, is the blackest of all crimes. We find a marked similarity between these two great teachers in many other respects.

In the parable of the ten virgins attending the marriage feast, Jesus evidently refers only to the two classes responding at that time to the invitation he was giving the people to accept his doctrine, and so be prepared for the coming of the Spirit (bridegroom) on the day of pentecost. The one class is prepared with the oil of the understanding of his words, while the other fails to receive the illumination of rejoicing for want of the acceptance of his words in the faith. We see the fulfillment in that wonderful illumination which came on the day of pentecost, to the faithful ones who "were all with one accord in one place." This was the coming of the bridegroom presaged in the parable. The parable of the talents, which follows in the same chapter, refers to the conduct of the people between that time and the second coming.

Jesus says immediately following this parable, "Now when the son of man shall come in his glory, and all the angels with him, then will he sit upon his glorious throne, and all the nations (Gr. *ta hethna*—the heathen) will be assembled before him." Paul repeats this prophecy. Is not this glorious university of inspiration, and salvation through the "angels"—ministering words—now upon us? And there is surely no hint of vindictive damnation in it all.

The 41st verse of this chapter reads, according to Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott, "He will then also say to those at his left, Depart from me, you cursed ones, into that aionian fire prepared for the adversary and his messengers."

Now fire is symbolical of purifying by suffering; and "aionian fire" is the soul-distress resulting from the de-

parting, or imagination of separateness from God, always attending that selfishness which refuses to minister to "one of the least of these my brethren."

The words, "Cursed ones," or "ye cursed," refer to the same fact of self-induced separation, and the result is really a blessing, for the "aionian fire" works purification and redemption. If Peter had not suffered from this fire, he would never have been the grand Apostle he became. It was a blessing to him.

In fact, Jesus and Paul and James all forbid cursing under any condition; and the most learned Commentators declare that wherever the Hebrew word commonly translated "curse" in the Old Testament, is described as an act of God, it should be rendered "bless." And it is actually often so translated, as at Gen. 33: 11; Judges 1: 15;

1 Sam. 25: 27; and 2 K. 5: 15. God cannot curse, but only blesses. Let it read, "Depart from me, (as the inherent fruit of selfishness,) ye now to be blessed, or redeemed into that soul-fire of purifying, prepared to destroy such adverse error and its results."

The word translated "punishment" in the last verse of this chapter, as I stated before, is *Kolasin*, and its meaning bears out the same idea of correction, restraining and restoration. It is from the verb *Kolazo*, which signifies pruning, as of a tree or vine; to restrain, or repress as a charioteer restrains his horses. Is there any everlasting damnation in this? No! Then why not give this phrase, *Kolasin aionion*, its true rendering of spiritual restraining, or the pruning, as of a vine, so beautifully referred to by Jesus at John 15? "Every branch *in me* that bear-

eth not fruit he taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit he purgeth, (or pruneth,) it that it may bring forth more fruit."

At Matt. 10: 28, the word translated "soul" is *pseucha*, and has no reference to the Spirit. It corresponds with the Hebrew *nephesh*, mere existence, or animation. This same word is translated elsewhere in the New Testament, variously, as "mind," "us," "you," "heart," "heartily," and is twice applied to the beasts. The adjective derived from this noun is rendered "natural," and "sensual." So you see this scripture makes no reference to the Spirit of man at all, but only to his physical life. "In all the 700 times where *nephesh* occurs (in the Old Testament,) and the 105 times of *pseucha*," (in the New Testament) says Wilson, "not once is the word immortal, or immortality,

or deathless, or never-dying, found in connection as qualifying the terms."

In the 20th chapter of Revelation, John reveals what he saw in spirit—the establishing of the supremacy of Spirit over all mortal and material things, when "death and hades" (the grave) should be destroyed, and "the beast," (sensuousness) and the "false prophet," (lying) should be "cast into the abyss,"—shown to be no reality—and *anything* (Gr. *tis*, incorrectly translated in common version "whosoever") that does not pertain to life—"was not found written in the book of life (Zoas),"—evanishes with the adversary (unbelief), sensuousness, and that which "maketh a lie," deceives, and "a seal is set upon them and they shall deceive the nations no more." It all means the salvation of men, and not their damnation.

Is not the fulfillment of this vision now at hand? Are not the delusions of sense and the false claims of materiality being now removed, "cast into the bottomless pit," so that the Spirit child shall no longer be deceived by them?

In some cases our translators have been compelled to give *aionion* a different meaning from their usual rendering, to avoid the ridiculous. For example, 2 Tim. 1: 9, reads, "Who hath saved us" etc., "according to his grace which was given us in Christ Jesus *before the world began.*" (Gr. *Pro Kronon aionion.*) The same rendering of this phrase occurs again at Titus 1: 2. To give it their usual rendering, it would read, "before eternity," or "before everlasting time began," which would be absurd.

We find also at Matt. 13: 40, and 24: 3, *suntelsias tou*

aionios, translated "the end of the world," and 1 Cor. 10: 1 has *tela ton aionion*, rendered "the ends of the world." Consistently with their usual practice they should have given us here, "at the end of forever," and "the ends of eternity have arrived."

The truth is, *aionion* never did mean everlasting, and never had any reference whatever to duration, and the original New Testament is also entirely free from the God-dishonoring, degrading, blighting, pagan doctrine of everlasting damnation of the souls of men.

The words "damnation" and "damned" do not occur in the Old Testament at all. "Damnation" is found eleven times in the New Testament as a translation of the Greek words *Kriseos* and *Krima*. These words are rendered "judgment," or "condemnation," by most modern trans-

lators. *Kriseos*, as used at Matt. 23: 33, Mark 3: 29, and John 5: 29, is rendered by the word "transgression" in the Vatican manuscript. Greisbach uses *amarteematos*, (sin, or transgression) in the margin. Grotius, Mill and Bengel prefer this reading. It is also the reading of the Coptic, Armenian, Gothic and Vulgate versions. The other word, *Krima*, means punishment, or judgment.

The word "damned" occurs three times in our common version, as a translation of three different derivatives from the verb *Krino*, to separate, to judge, to choose.

But not one of these words carries with it any of the modern signification of the words "damnation," and "damned."

In a recent sermon Archdeacon Farrar said: "There would be the proper teachings about hell if we calmly and

deliberately erase from our English Bibles the three words, 'damnation,' 'hell' and 'everlasting.' " Yet I say unhesitatingly—I say, claiming the fullest right to speak with the authority of knowledge—I say, with the calmest and most unflinching sense of responsibility—I am standing here in the sight of God and my Savior, and it may be of the angels and spirits of the dead—that not one of those words ought to stand any longer in our English Bible, for in our present acceptance of them they are simply mistranslations."

When Jesus used the language found at Matt. 7: 13, 14, about the "wide gate and broad way," and the "straight gate and narrow way," he evidently referred merely to the fact of his time, as he observed it, and as we observe it now, as a fact of our time, that there were then, and

are now, so few who will listen to his Spiritual doctrine and enter into Spiritual light and understanding; and he did not refer to the mystery of a future state. In like manner, when he said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit," and "Blessed are they that mourn," he did not mean that these were good conditions to be in, but that, since he had overcome such limitations and preached deliverance to the poor, these are blessed, or happy, for "theirs is the kingdom of heaven," and "they shall be comforted." Matt. 8: 12 reads, "But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." No one claims that this means hell. We are agreed that it alludes only to the giving of the Christian gospel to the Gentile nations, on account of the rejection of Jesus by the Jews. Matt. 22: 13 refers to

the same thing, as stated plainly by Jesus at Matt. 21: 43.

Matt. 13: 41, 42, 43, literally reads, "The son of man will send forth his messengers, who will gather out of his Kingdom all scandals (Gr. *skandala*) and anything working lawlessness, and they shall cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be the weeping and the gnashing of the teeth. Then the righteous shall shine as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father." Here again we have the purifying from all mortal states, through this universal gospel referred to. Those who receive it not are in "the outer darkness" and there is sorrow and vexation until they repent. The outer darkness is the state of carnality and spiritual blindness in which most of the world have been until now. But the messengers are now going forth

by thousands and are fast gathering up the delusions and casting them into the furnace of purifying fire.

None of these passages refer to everlasting punishment. On the contrary.

The New Testament is full of the teaching of a complete final restoration of all things. I can cite but a few references here.

Jesus unmistakably teaches it in the parable of the prodigal son, and in that of the good shepherd who left the ninety-nine sheep in the fold and sought the one astray *till he found it and brought it back*. He says he will go after it "*until he find it*," and concludes, "Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish." And at John 10: 28, 29, Jesus says further about these sheep, "They shall

never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father is greater than all: and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."

Paul, (Eph. 1: 9, 10,) says that Christ "hath purposed in himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth." And at Rom. 11: 32; 1 Cor. 15: 24; Col. 1: 20; Gal. 3: 22, and many other places, he clearly holds the same thought.

At Phil. 2: 10, he says, "At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth," literally, "the underground ones." Bretschneider says this "refers to things infernal, or souls in hades, or the underworld." Dewette says, the three terms here mean "angels, living men and the dead."

At 1 Cor. 15: 22, Paul says, "As in Adam *all* die, even so in Christ shall *all* be made alive." The "all" is surely as inclusive on the one side, as on the other. What right has any theologian to say that no human being escapes from the first, "*all* die," while only a few are included in the last, "*all* be made alive?"

But we must remember that our older translators were bound hand and foot by an unreasoning, dogmatic theocracy, and were under the menace of such a cruel, dominant Ecclesiasticism that they would not have dared, had they so desired, to allow a version of the bible to come from their hands clean of the doctrine of perdition. But they were the Ecclesiastics themselves, and used every means possible, even to the extent of bald interpolations, to make the bible sustain the dogmas of the dominant

church. Many instances of this have been discovered by later and freer translators. So, to sum up, we have found:

1.—That none of the Old Testament writers ever heard of such a thing as the theological devil, or of such a place as the orthodox hell, and the book is entirely clean of both conceptions.

2.—That the Old Testament teaches nothing whatever about a future state, and that the *sheol* never had a tinge of everlasting punishment in its meaning, and should never be translated "hell," unless we retain the meaning of its stem verb *helan*, "to cover, to conceal."

3.—That the New Testament *hades* and *diabolos* caught their significance entirely, through the Septuagist translation, from the Old Testament *sheol* and *satan*, and

do not any more signify a place of everlasting torment and its boss fiend, than do these.

4.—That the entire doctrine of demons, and the emigration of souls to a distant place, or places, is a transportation from Babylon, that city whose name is a synonym for wickedness and woe.

5.—That the word translated “eternal,” “everlasting,” “world,” “age,” “always,” etc., to suit established creeds, by our English translators, never did mean everlasting, or have any thought of duration in it; and that the passages in the New Testament where it is used in connection with suffering, have no reference to any sort of hell, according to its common significance. And,

6.—That in all the bible there is no damnation or damned, and absolutely no support for this monstrous,

blasphemous dogma: but that this book's esoteric teaching glows with the faith of ultimate triumph and restoration, and sings with the music of Love's evangel: “On earth peace, good will toward men,” and “They shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord.”