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ARTICLE V.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE ANNIHILATION OF THE
WICKED.

BY REV. WILLIAM L. PARSONS, MATTAPOISETT, MASS.

THE Maker of the human soul, it may be granted, can, if he choose, terminate its existence. If annihilation be the appointed destiny of any of our race, the record of the fact will naturally be found in the Bible; and the question must be mainly decided on scripture grounds. The burden of proof, of course, rests upon those who affirm the doctrine.

Before considering the argument which annihilationists attempt to make from the Bible, we shall do well to take notice of the underlying fact, that their current reasoning is an assault upon the prevailing doctrine of future eternal punishment, which they assume to be inconsistent with the benevolence of God.

Mr. Hudson, their ablest writer, quotes a mournful strain from Mr. Barnes, in which he confesses that his mind is tortured with the fact "that the immortal soul should be allowed to jeopard its infinite welfare, and that trifles should be allowed to draw it away from God and virtue and heaven; that any should suffer forever—lingering on in hopeless despair, and rolling amidst infinite torments without the possibility of alleviation, and without end; that since God *can* save men, and will save a part, he has not purposed to save *all*; that, on the supposition that the atonement is ample, and that the blood of Christ can cleanse from all sin, it is not in fact applied to all; that, in a word, a God who claims to be worthy of the confidence of the universe, and to be a being of infinite benevolence, should make such a world as this, full of sinners and sufferers; and that, when an atonement had been made, he did not save all the race, and put an end to sin and woe forever."

The difficulty thus felt by Mr. Barnes, has burdened the minds of men of all schools in theology and philosophy; and they have sought, in different ways, so to vindicate the justice and benevolence of God, as to afford the relief which the human sensibility naturally craves from conclusions so painful as this picture presents.

One class of theologians resolves it into a question of divine sovereignty which, as yet, admits of no solution satisfactory to reason; and they demand that reason shall stand in awe and be silent before the sovereign majesty of God.

Another class justifies God on the ground of man's moral agency. They insist that God has made man in his own constitutional image, as his infinite benevolence dictated; that he has made the best possible provision for the salvation of moral agents; and, therefore, that if any reject life and persist in sin, and incur its penalty, there remains no good reason why the loyal subjects of God's government should be disquieted, as if God were unjust or cruel, or in any sense wanting in benevolence, in disposing of the finally incorrigible as the Bible declares he will.

Dr. Edward Beecher finds it impossible to admit that God, with an infinite sense and purpose of "honor and right," would allow immortal beings to begin an existence in such circumstances as encompass the opening of human life in the flesh, and as would inevitably overwhelm all men in sin, and expose them to its eternal and terrible consequences; and he resorts to his theory of pre-existence to make out his vindication of the divine government. He attempts to show that men began their existence in a previous world, where they became sinners under circumstances which clear God of all responsibility, near or remote, direct or indirect, for their sinfulness; and where they formed the characters which they develop here, and which justly expose them, remaining impenitent, to the hottest hell which the Bible anywhere brings to view.

Universalists attempt to escape the whole difficulty by substantially denying the fundamental fact that man's sinfulness is, or can be, such as to expose him to any future

or eternal punishment. They run riot through the Bible, and, with amazing exegetical ingenuity, make it teach, whether it will or not, that all men, alike and of necessity, are moving on in the one broad way which leads to life and glory. They deny the possibility of the sinner's continuing his rebellion, even should he choose to do it.

Annihilationists attempt to cut the knot by a still different theory. They simply deny that the facts are as Mr. Barnes represents them; and maintain that, when the Bible asserts that the doom of the wicked is eternal punishment, it means, not that they shall suffer without end, but that they shall be put entirely out of existence, so that suffering shall be forever terminated, and no ground be left for the charge against God of undue severity or cruelty.

Must we, then, consider the theory of annihilationists under the implied admission that the government of God needs any such vindication as they are kind enough to volunteer? We reply in the negative. We think God wishes no apology at our hands for making the condition of the incorrigible as miserable, through an endless state of existence, as the Bible teaches that he will.

What are the simple facts in the case?

1. We belong to a *moral* universe, of which God is the moral Governor.

2. His law is holy, just, and good. It adapts itself to all moral agents in his empire, and requires each man or angel to love the Supreme Being supremely, and his fellow man (whose interests are precisely equal to his own) as himself. It requires just that moral state, in other words, which, in the nature of mind and of things, is the immutable condition of the highest personal and general well-being of moral agents, and without which well-being is absolutely impossible, and which alone constitutes true virtue.

3. Every moral agent is endowed with the power of choice; and, so far as his constitution is concerned, is as free to choose right as wrong. God has supplied an infinite preponderance of motive to prefer the right to the wrong, the good to the evil, and laid it open to the inspection of

reason. Nor has God left man's nature in equipoise as between right and wrong, good and evil, but has wrought into it elements which make the sentiment of the right, the true, and the good intensely attractive; and the opposite sentiment of the wrong, the false, and the evil, correspondingly repulsive.

This freedom of choice will continue through eternity; and the relation of motive to volition, and the natural preferableness of the good to the evil will remain eternally unchanged. It follows, therefore, that the future and endless condition of the sinner will be *just what he chooses to have it in preference to surrendering his will to the will of God as expressed by his law*; and of this, neither the sinner, nor his friends, nor his apologists can reasonably complain. God simply gives to every moral agent his choice, at all times, between sin with its results, and holiness with its rewards. This is an essential and radical element of a moral government. And now, if any one deliberately chooses the former and persists in his choice, even after an experience of evil enabling him to decide intelligently, why should God turn his back upon his own government and become the servant of the sinner, and relieve him by blotting him out of existence?

Even in hell, if a sinner shall choose God, instead of himself, as his object of supreme affection; if he shall put his own individual interests on the true level with those of his equal fellow-creatures, instead of exalting his own at the sacrifice of theirs, his choice thenceforth will be satisfactory to God and to his own moral nature, and the sting of present sin will be extracted. And it is even more certain that the benevolence of God would find a way to pardon his past sin, than that any one will ever, in a future world, thus form the choice which God's law will there, as here, require.

4. Eternal misery is not to be regarded as the penalty inflicted for a few specific and hastily-performed acts of transgression, as is generally assumed by those who deny the doctrine of future punishment. Sin, in its generic and

fundamental form, is like the act of the Confederate States renouncing forever their allegiance to the Union. It is a rebellion against the law and government of God, not for a time, but as a finality. It is the comprehensive act of the soul eternally renouncing its allegiance to God, and, at the same time, allying itself, without reserve, to the "throne of iniquity." This essential quality of sin, in its generic form, appears also in the specific acts of sin. If a man steals your watch, or commits murder, he does it for eternity. His volition is not merely to commit the act, but to stand by it, perpetuate it, cover it with falsehood, and so conceal it that, if possible, the fire of the last day shall not disclose it. Moral acts have the attribute of eternity in them. The soul's fundamental act of rebellion involves its whole character, and will determine all its future developments toward God, as the one act of the secession of the Confederate States will determine all their acts toward the government against which they have rebelled. The war and all its bitter consequences are involved in the act of secession. Nothing but the regeneration of the soul, by which its allegiance to God shall be renewed, or its annihilation, can, by any possibility, prevent the evolution of an eternal succession of specific acts of sin from this one fountain of disloyalty.

It is not for the mere outward deeds done in this world, then, that sinners are to be forever punished. These are referred to, in the Bible, as indicating the degree of guilt involved in the one fundamental and eternal deed of revolting from the government of God, just as the deeds of the Southern Confederacy, in desolating the land with war, in crowding our hospitals with sick and wounded and dying men, in covering the battle field with the slain, and in filling the whole land with wailing and woe, might be referred to as illustrating the fearful wickedness of the one comprehensive act of secession.

The eternal penalty, then, which God pronounces against sin, only runs parallel with the sin which it punishes. The great sinful deed of revolt from God is done in the body, but

it does not spend and exhaust itself in the body. It reaches right on as long as the being of the sinner endures ; and the penalty which it involves does no more. Surely, no apology is needed for a government which punishes sin no longer than it endures.

5. No fault can reasonably be found with God for the severity of the punishment he promises to inflict upon sinners ; for, it is to correspond exactly with the grade of sin which is punished. God, who can make no mistakes, will adjust penalty to transgression with consummate perfection. He will so interlock the penalty and the transgression that there cannot be a variation of a hair's breadth from what is just and right.

6. It must be remembered that God, preparing the way by the greatest sacrifice it was possible for him to make, by a complete and "finished" atonement, and by the manifestation of his infinite love in forms richer than had been before known in the universe, and having therefore the highest power to attract the love of his creatures, has freely offered pardon for sin, and an eternal participation in all the glories of his kingdom and character, to every man who will heartily return to his allegiance to him. He makes the condition of salvation as easy as it can be in the nature of the case ; for, without faith, salvation would be a natural impossibility. He employs the best methods to persuade men to turn and live which his infinite benevolence and wisdom could suggest. He sends the best agents the Godhead affords to the very hearts of men, to urge the great salvation upon them ; and they do it with infinite love and compassion ; nor do they cease their efforts till, by the sinner's own blasphemy, they must be utterly fruitless. Sitting as the spectator of the moral universe, and knowing from eternity just how each free moral agent will treat the offer of salvation, God predestinates to heaven, and adopts into his own family, every foreseen believer, shielding him from all fatal temptation, and completing, beyond peradventure, the work of his redemption.

7. This scheme of God for the salvation of the lost, the

incorrigible sinner contemptuously rejects, and stands to his rebellion.

With these elements entering into the problem of God's dealing with the wicked, why should we admit any necessity for the annihilationist's argument based on the assumption that God is either unjust or malevolent in following sin with endless misery ?

But the objector may say : " men will not *choose* to live in a lake of fire and brimstone forever, and therefore one of your main premises is unsound, and your conclusion does not afford the relief desired."

To this objection two answers may be given : 1. While it would seem almost unaccountable that a moral being should choose such a doom as the Bible pictures for the lost; yet we know that, in its beginnings, and with an experience of what sin involves, and in full view of the cross of Christ to dissuade them therefrom, men do in this life make that astounding choice. It is not the suffering they choose, for its own sake, but the selfish and sinful gratification of their desires, which involves it. They freely give themselves up here, to be rolled and tossed restlessly about in the fiery lake of ambition and avarice, of envy and pride ; to be tortured by the stings of passion, and eaten by the worms of lust. They set fire to their own moral natures, and feed the flames with all combustible materials, and gather fuel for future use, by making war upon God and the changeless laws of his moral government ; by putting light for darkness, and darkness for light, and thus attempting to confound all moral distinctions ; and their experience tends to confirm them in, rather than dissuade them from, their preferred course. Since such is the choice of the sinner here, and since nothing which issues either from God's throne of justice or of grace induces him to change it, it is impossible to say that he will not continue so to choose hereafter, rather than give up his selfishness and bow his heart to him whose atonement he now despises and rejects.

2. A second answer, and one to which especial attention is asked is this : The fearful descriptions which the Bible

presents of the condition of the lost are such as a *holy mind* would give, and not such as the sinner himself would draw. The picture which a sober, virtuous, and true man would put upon the canvas, of a drunken, profane, and polluted wretch, would scarcely be recognized by the vile man himself. He might boast, even, of his bad eminence, glory in his shame, and account his ruin a reward.

The suggestion here made, although in a certain way it modifies the impression in regard to the severity of God, made by the Bible descriptions of future and eternal punishment, does not in the least abate the solemn meaning of the scriptures; for the picture which the holy mind of God, by his prophets and apostles, draws of the condition of the lost, *is the true one*. The sinner will not be unconscious of suffering, any more than the drunkard, who can give the most graphic account of his miserable experiences, is unconscious of suffering; and the fact that the sinner will be in a state to choose his sins with the sufferings they involve, only makes his doom the more fearful to contemplate.

One of the assumptions of universalists and annihilationists is, that God, being infinite in goodness and power, will not allow evil to be eternal in the universe.

It is admitted that God will not allow any evil to exist eternally which he will not overrule to the higher good, on the whole, of his moral universe. The real question is this: *Is it an evil to allow moral beings who will, in spite of all right considerations, pervert their powers, and thus involve themselves in suffering, to exist forever?* The affirmative cannot be proved. We know that the existence of such beings, in itself and at least for a time, is on the whole a good; else how could a God of benevolence have given them such existence? It is equally clear that, if God can overrule the wrath of man or restrain it so that it shall be made to conserve the higher general ends of benevolence (and it is quite certain that he can, and altogether impossible to prove that he cannot), then the assumption of universalists, that God will destroy all sin, otherwise than as men may choose to give it up on the terms offered in the gospel; or of annihili-

lationists, that he will put the wicked out of existence as a means of removing evil from the universe, is wholly destitute of logical force. Any incidental evil which, in his wondrous economy of moral influences, God can so overrule, neither benevolence nor power would seek to remove. If the United States government shall so put down the Southern rebellion that its history will forever tell against all future rebellions; if it shall so punish all incorrigible traitors that they shall have no power to inaugurate a new treason; if their sufferings shall promote loyalty and discourage secession in others, the triumph of the government will be complete — a triumph demanded alike by justice and benevolence. And when God shall have so put down the rebellion against his throne that its history will afford the strongest motives to future loyalty; and when all rebels and traitors who, refusing the mercy of the government kindly offered to all who will return to their allegiance, are condemned to suffer, in the state prison of the universe, the due reward of their deeds, as beacons to warn the race against further sin, then God will have cleared the universe of evil so far as his word teaches that he will do it. Every knee will have bowed to, and every tongue will have confessed, the rectitude, the benevolence, and the supremacy of his government.

To argue from the benevolence and power of God that he will remove from the universe all that men call evil, is to prove too much. The assumption that God would altogether *prevent* the existence of sin and suffering is quite as valid as the assumption that, having permitted them, he will some day change his policy, and exclude them from the universe. And would it not be as reasonable to infer from the existence of sin and suffering, the non-existence of a God of infinite love and power?

We pass now to consider the reasoning of annihilationists. We think Mr. Hudson, as well as his co-believers generally, has fallen into a fundamental error which vitiates his whole process of thought. The engine of his logic is off the

track at the start, and pulls the train off with it. When in the outset a writer assumes and commits himself to a radically false principle, notwithstanding his seeming integrity, it must and will shape all his reasoning. When the universalist or annihilationist commits himself to the sentiment, that the wicked are not to suffer in future conscious misery, he will almost unavoidably define all his essential terms, like sin and holiness, justice and mercy, faith and repentance; he will adopt and vindicate just such laws of interpretation; he will even invent just such a system of mental and moral philosophy; and he will form just such conceptions of God's character and government, as his adopted theory demands. Into that mould he will pour all the metal of his reasoning. Happy is he who does not start with the assumption of the truth of that which he is bound to prove.

Before endeavoring to point out the fundamental error of annihilationists, we desire to state clearly one principle which must guide us in our investigation of this subject, and which seems self-evidently true, namely: There is no original and changeless meaning inhering in *words* by which their sense can be determined independently of the context, and other circumstances which may throw light upon the ideas which those who used the words we seek to interpret, intended to convey by them. Words are but signs of ideas, and the reliable interpreter will go behind the signs, and will use all the light he can obtain, that he may find out just what is signified. For the interpreter, words may have no other meaning than that which their writer puts into them.

The radical fallacy of annihilationists, if we understand them, consists in the direct violation of this great rule, in the illogical assumption *that the original, settled, and inherent meaning of the word "death," is annihilation.* Their scripture argument is an attempt to force the Bible into harmony with this assumption. It is not an exhibition of the grand current of truth flowing like a river through the whole Bible, as we see it in the opposite arguments of Professor Barrows (Bib. Sac., July, 1858), Prof. Hovey (Impenitent Dead), Prof.

Cowles (Oberlin Evangelist, 1861), and Rev. Mr. Love (New Englander, April 1862), but rather an effort to prove from the reflowing of the waters in the eddies, that the river itself flows from the ocean backward to the mountains.

So far as we have been able to consult their works, annihilationists make this most false assumption in the outset, and carry it through, to the utter perversion of all their reasoning. Elder Cook (True Source of Immortality, Hartford, 1847) seems to himself to have proved annihilation when he has quoted, "All the days that Adam lived, were nine hundred and thirty years, and he *died*." "Abraham *buried* his wife in the cave of Macphelah." "David is both **DEAD and BURIED**." Mr. Blain (Death not Life) opens his work by collating the passages which threaten "death," "destruction," "perdition," "corruption;" which declare that sinners shall be "consumed," "devoured," "slain," "killed," "blotted out," "hewn down," "cut off," "ground to powder," "torn in pieces," "burned up," and the like. Mr. Hastings, (Old Paths, Providence, 1855) introduces his book with a liberal quantity of texts to show that men "shall not live forever," "that they shall die," "shall perish," "shall be consumed," "shall be devoured by fire," "shall be cut off," "destroyed," "burned up, root and branch," and "be as though they had not been." The same assumption is made by Ellis and Read in a work of some pretensions (Bible against Tradition). Elder Grant, in his discussion with Dr. Litch, at the Music Hall, Boston, 1859, is embarrassed by the fact that he should have to stand before an intelligent audience to prove that when a man is dead, he is *dead* and not alive. Mr. Dobney of England and Mr. Hudson of this country are the more learned and acute writers on the side of annihilation. They however make the same assumption. Mr. Dobney teaches that Adam went out of existence at his death, nine hundred and thirty years after he was formed of dust. To die was to cease to be. He was not allowed to eat of the tree of life, and his death was, therefore, an extermination of his being. (The Scripture Doctrine of Future Punishment, p. 133.) The vicious assumption

glides into Mr. Hudson's work more unconsciously, but it is there. He asks (*The Doctrine of Future Life*, p. 171), "are 'life' and 'death,' and other like terms, to be taken in a metaphorical sense whenever they look beyond the veil that divides time from eternity, or *do they retain their common meaning?*" i. e. of existence or non-existence. Any other meaning than annihilation given to the word "death" is, with Mr. Hudson, metaphorical. He admits (*ibid.*, p. 172), "that these terms are sometimes used in a tropical sense," but adds, "language would be mere cloudland, a baseless fabric of visions, if its commonest words did not commonly hold their literal sense." In other words, *death* must commonly hold its literal signification of annihilation, or all reasoning about it would be "mere cloudland." All reasoning about it *will be* mere cloudland if we do not give to the word its *true sense*, undoubtedly; but what is its true sense, is the very question in debate. Mr. Hudson's book becomes sheer cloudland from his having assumed that there is some literal meaning inhering in the word "death," by which the controversy can be settled, when the whole question, in the last analysis, is, what is signified by the term itself.

Now, can we go behind the word "death" and find out what meaning there is in it? That word and others identical with it in meaning, are found in all languages, and they have been used in all ages. They have been employed to represent one great, everywhere prevailing fact in human experience, and therefore the same substantial meaning has always been given to them.

Let us inquire, then, what is the meaning of these words *now*? Suppose the annihilationist should quote all the obituary notices in Christendom in which the departed are said to have *died*; suppose he should quote all our authors as affirming unvaryingly of the departed that they had "died" and were "buried," that "dust had returned unto dust," that the dead were "cut off" and "were no more;" suppose he should quote passages from the public prints wherein men were said to have "perished" from a steamer sinking in mid-ocean, or by the frosts of a winter night, or to have

been "destroyed" by pestilence, or "killed," or even "annihilated" in battle; suppose he should produce from some daily journal an account of a great conflagration in which whole families were said to have been "burned up, root and branch" (parents and children), and "consumed like stubble," so that the ashes of their bodies were mingled with the ashes of their dwellings, and would be found "under the soles of the feet" of those who should walk over the ruins which the terrible flames had left behind them,— would he have proved that the dead of America were, in the judgment of the writers quoted, annihilated? Certainly not; and for the simple reason that the writers had put into the word "death," or any one of its equivalents, no such meaning. We know perfectly well that they used the language quoted, and at the same time believed that death did not terminate man's existence, but that it was continued right on in another state of being. To argue annihilation from any such supposed literal meaning inhering in the word "death," as used anywhere in the civilized world now, would not be respectable reasoning for a madhouse. With the present reigning belief of men, they could not by death mean annihilation. It would imply self-contradiction; and so to interpret the word would be to commit the gross absurdity of making those who used it witnesses against themselves.

Our next position is this: What is true now has been equally true in all ages of the world. The generations of mankind have believed in the continual existence of man after his death or departure from the flesh; and therefore, as now, the term "death," or any of its synonyms, has never had, and never could have had, the sense of annihilation in it.

The doctrine of a future state of existence did not originate with the "heathen Plato," as many annihilationists, less wise than Plato, are fond of affirming. Homer recognized it five hundred years before his day. The Egyptians believed it long before the Israelites were their bondmen. The earliest belief of the Hindus was that of the simple existence of the

soul after death (Bib. Sacra, April, 1859, Prof. Whitney on the Vedic doctrine of a Future Life). Turn where you will, to the most ancient or modern nations, to the most cultivated or to the most rude and savage tribes of the eastern and western hemispheres, and you find everywhere the belief in the continued existence of the man after he leaves the body. The doctrine of metempsychosis, which, in the natural order of thought, must have come after and presupposed the belief in continued existence,—for it relates to the history of the soul after its departure from the body, —held sway all over the eastern world long before Moses was cradled in the Nile. And to this day, that system has reigned over the Burman, Chinese, Tartar, Tibetan, and Indian nations, including at least 650,000,000 of mankind. From a time, then, to which the history of the world runneth not back, to the present day, in all the languages of men, the words corresponding to our word “death” could **not** have had in them the sense of annihilation. This was as true when Moses wrote the Pentateuch as when Gray wrote his “Elegy in a Country Churchyard.” But perhaps it will be said that God meant annihilation by the word “death,” whatever may have been its meaning in the languages of men. How this was, we shall see more fully when we come to the discussion of the texts bearing upon the subject. It is enough to say here that, if God would communicate thought to men, he must use words in the sense in which men understand them. Moses wrote the account of the creation and fall of our first parents for the instruction of the Hebrew people of his own age; and their understanding of the words used would determine the ideas they would receive from the record in Genesis. If God inspired Moses to use the language he did, he doubtless intended the Hebrews should receive the ideas the words used would convey to their minds. They recognized the continued existence of men after death, as certainly and distinctly as we do now. They had a more practical confidence in the existence of men out of the body than, if possible, in the existence of God himself. To keep them from following the supposed

guidance of the departed, instead of the will of God, Moses was obliged to make a law against necromancy, with the penalty of death attached. It was impossible, therefore, that God should have communicated the idea of annihilation to the Hebrew mind by the word "death" or any one of its synonyms; for, they had not the idea that death terminated man's existence.

It is not difficult to account for this universal conviction of the race that existence continues after death, and that the term "death," therefore, could never have had the sense of annihilation. There is an inner light, amounting to a consciousness, by which a man sees and knows the distinction between *himself* and his *body*, and so clearly that he cannot help making it. He sees and knows that his body is essentially an organism for his mind's use; that his arm, foot, tongue, all his voluntary members, are just as truly instruments which he uses, as the saw, axe, or pen which he grasps with his hand. The destruction of the organism does not destroy the agent for whom it is made. Death never reports itself as doing the work of annihilation upon the man. It rather suggests the idea of retribution to the wicked, and of deliverance to the righteous. From this inner light man sees his existence to be independent of his body, as clearly as he sees the existence of God, the duty of rectitude, or the fact of his accountability. Nature, from without, falls in with this inner conviction, and confirms it by her constantly recurring illustrations of the fact that apparent death is only a step from the lower to the higher forms of life.

Before passing to the more direct scripture argument, let us dispose of a matter upon which Mr. Hudson, as well as his less learned disciples, lays considerable stress, namely: "the silence of the scriptures respecting man's natural immortality."

The position of the Bible is never to offer proof of what is intuitively attested by the reason. All such truths are always taken for granted. Mr. Hudson, however, seizes upon the

fact that the Divine existence, which stands at the head of the list of intuitive truths, is frequently affirmed in the scriptures, and infers from this fact that, even if our natural immortality were a "postulate of reason," we ought to find it insisted upon as much as the Divine existence. The reply is very simple. We deny that the Bible ever asserts the Divine existence *for the purpose of proving it*. It always assumes that God's existence is known—that the idea is in every man's mind. Men have, however, utterly lost by sin the true conception of his character; and the very object of revelation is to reveal that character, that men may be saved. God does indeed affirm his existence; but it is to make his character known, to distinguish himself from the gods many and lords many whom the world worship. He declares his existence as the Creator of the universe; not to prove it, but to declare that "there is no God beside him"; to disprove the reigning and fatal polytheism of the people. The Bible urges the Divine existence with simple reference to the regeneration of the world—never to prove it.

Precisely so, the Bible deals also with the question of our immortality. It is an intuitive truth, universally believed; never asserted as a thing to be proved; always taken for granted. There was no occasion to affirm it. The conviction which the mind has of intuitive truths is always weakened when we attempt to draw it into a reliance upon any evidence which is short of that which is intuitive. The world has always believed in a continued future existence, independently of any affirmation of it in a written revelation, more firmly than it has believed any truth which is attested merely by such revelation. Men who reject revelation entirely, who will believe nothing on the mere authority of a book, implicitly hold to the doctrine of immortality. The mere assertion of the doctrine in the Bible, therefore, in order to prove it, would neither have deepened nor extended the conviction of its truthfulness. The thing the world needed was, not to have a future and endless existence proved to it, but to be shown how man could, in that future existence, secure to himself the purity and blessedness which

he was made to enjoy; not to have the mere fact of his existence "brought to light," as to which he had no doubt, but how to make that existence glorious and divine. And hence, on that subject, and to meet that real necessity, the oracles of God are full of light, from Genesis to Revelation. The sun is above the horizon in Moses; it rises higher in the psalmists and prophets; it culminates in the Messiah; and in him it stands and gives ample light to all who are willing to see the way, through the Spirit and the truth, into the kingdom of righteousness and peace.

We may as well, also, at this point, consider the subject of the resurrection, in its relations to the doctrine we are reviewing.

With most annihilationists, the death of the body practically extinguishes the whole man. There is no conscious existence between death and the resurrection. They can see no meaning to the resurrection if men are all the while in conscious existence. "Why raise a man from the dead if he is alive already?" is their triumphant challenge.

What are the several obvious positions of the Bible bearing on the resurrection?

1. There is to be a future resurrection of the race, of both the just and the unjust.

2. The bodies to be produced by the resurrection, will have a resemblance to our present bodies; yet they will not be of "flesh and blood, which cannot inherit the kingdom of God." They are to be changed from a material and corruptible nature, to an immaterial and immortal one.

3. The soul, at the death of the body, does at once enter and inhabit some sort of a vehicle for its use, "a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." The devoted Christian groans, "earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with this house which is from heaven." To leave the tabernacle of flesh is to enter that, and be "swallowed up of life" (2 Cor. v.). Moses and Elias appeared upon the mount of transfiguration in these heavenly vehicles.

4. The Bible everywhere recognizes the departed as still existing, as we shall soon show more fully.

In Christ's conversation with the Sadducees touching the resurrection of the dead, he quotes what God said to Moses at the burning bush: "I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob;" and adds: "God is not the God of the dead [the dead in the Sadducees and annihilationist's sense—of non-existent], but of the living"; proving that the patriarchs were then in existence, enjoying the benevolent reign of God. How this reasoning of Christ "touches" the resurrection of the dead, is obvious. The Sadducees did not believe there was any existence of men or angels out of the body; and, therefore, the proof that the patriarchs were then in conscious and joyous existence, would overthrow their radical position, and leave their materialism without support. If these patriarchs were in existence, without their material bodies, much more, the Sadducees would be compelled to admit, might they exist subsequently in their re-organized bodies. A later scripture would doubtless bear an interpretation like that given to the Saviour's quotation from Genesis: "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died and rose and revived, *that he might be Lord both of the dead and living*" (Rom. xiv. 7-9).

5. Consistently with all these facts of revelation, suppose,—when the judgment is to sit, and the affairs of Christ's earthly administration are to be reviewed, and men are to be judged according to the deeds done in the body; and when it may be essential that the race should appear in vestments corresponding to those they wore while their characters were forming,—that the righteous and the wicked should return, as it were, to their graves, and take on by a miracle of Omnipotence, their resurrection bodies—copies of those they dwelt in here—and appear at the judgment; and with them such as may then be living on the earth, whose bodies, by a like miracle, shall have been changed from corruptible to incorruptible,—would not all

be fulfilled which the scripture doctrine of the resurrection calls for? Describing the result as it would appear to the eye, we should say truly that the dead were raised; all that were in their graves had come forth to judgment; death and hell, hades and the grave, had given up all they contained; their prisons were emptied, and henceforth they themselves, as the keepers of the dead, might cease to be — might be destroyed as to their office of guardians of the dead previous to the resurrection.

It is not essential that the resurrection body should have the identical elements of the old one, even if identity of elements be possible as between an immortal and a mortal body. It would make no difference whether you have one particular square foot of oxygen in your body from the great ocean of that material or another; and so of all the elements which compose the human system. It would be the same, to appearance and to all practical purposes, in the one case as the other. It would be as truly the same, as your body of to-day is the same as your body of ten years ago.

Then, as to the vehicle occupied from death to the resurrection: since it was "eternal in the heavens," and divinely constructed, we need not suppose it thrown aside at the resurrection. It may combine with, and give immortality and eternity to, the resurrection body. Our present tabernacle seems like a nest of organizations, one within another; and Omnipotence surely will have no difficulty in securing the union of the heavenly and the resurrection body.

With this analysis of the resurrection, the doctrine falls in harmoniously with the common view of a future life, and has nothing in it which favors the sentiment of annihilation.

We are now ready for the scripture argument. Mr. Hudson's position, when reduced to its lowest terms, is, that the Bible teaches that we lose our existence by sin, and regain it by the gift of Christ. He does indeed protest (Christ's Life, p. 4) against being understood to mean by eternal life *mere* existence. But his argument seems confused by not properly distinguishing between what he calls

the literal and metaphorical meaning of the words. The Christian world has no controversy with him as to what he admits to be the metaphorical sense of eternal life and death, but only as to the literal one. He insists that the literal meaning of death as the penalty for sin, is, "extinction of being: one installment, physical death; the other, annihilation of soul"; and that the restoration of that which is lost by sin, namely, existence, is *the* great gift of Christ to believers. If Mr. Hudson proves that extinction of being is the penalty for sin, he proves, of course, that there can be no eternal suffering; for that would imply existence: but to prove that the radical gift of Christ is an immortality of existence, is *not* to prove an immortality of spiritual life, of holy blessedness; for we know that moral beings do and may exist in great misery and suffering. *The issue is on the question of existence.* If the doctrine of a future existence be established, then we can raise the inquiry: *In what moral condition will men exist?* The two questions are radically distinct; and Mr. Hudson can not be allowed to set all logic at defiance by confounding them.

The assumption runs through his works, that "life" is synonymous with existence; "death," with extinction of the whole being. Such is the "literal," any other the "metaphorical," meaning of the words. His books labor with the effort to harmonize the scriptures with that assumption.

Let us show:

I. That, contrary to the theory of most annihilationists, the soul is capable of existing independently of the body.

The record concerning the introduction of man into the world, is this: "And God said, Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness. So God created man in his own image" (Gen. i. 26, 27). In this creation no mention is made of the dust of the earth. In the next chapter (Ibid. 2-7) it is said: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground." We have, then, a *creation* and a *formation* of man; the two distinct ideas being expressed by two different Hebrew words. That which was *created* bore the image and likeness of the invisible Creator — was the man,

as to his nature in the image of the Divine; that which was *formed* was the man as he appeared to the eye, but, as yet, a lifeless object. Subsequently to this formation, God breathed into the nostrils of the fashioned, visible, and yet inanimate man, and thereupon he became a living soul. That which was first *created*, spirit and life like its Creator, was doubtless united with that which was *formed* of the dust, lifeless and a man only in appearance; and this made the living man. As Jesus once breathed upon his disciples, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," so, it is natural to suppose, that when God breathed upon the fashioned clay, the act was accompanied with a volition which might have been addressed to the waiting form thus: "Receive an immortal mind bearing my image as a spirit, and my likeness as a thinking, sensitive, voluntary, and responsible moral being,—powers enabling the creature to commune with and share the experiences of the Creator, and to exercise the lordship assigned to him on the earth."

That man has this double and separable nature, is evident from various scriptures: "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt. x. 28). These are the words of Christ, who made and knows man's nature; and, if the soul is not capable of an existence separate from the body, the statement has not even the attribute of common sense.

So the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, in its very structure and by the changeless laws of thought, proves that Christ taught the separable existence of the soul. It makes no sort of difference what lessons he designed to convey by the parable; there is the fact, put into the story itself, of a living, thinking, feeling, anxious man who had died and left his body. What an absurdity of speech would this be, if such an independent existence were impossible!

Paul declares that, when in his vision, he knew not whether he was in the body or out of the body. Could he have used such a form of words, if he had not believed he might be out of the body as well as in it, and even while

the body was living? He wrote (2 Cor. v.) of the body as the house in which we dwell, and which we may be called to leave at any time to occupy another tenement; of the body as the mere clothing of the man, which he will lay aside at death; and thus he takes for granted, as a most familiar fact, the possibility of the conscious and joyous existence of the man out of the body. He speaks as freely and naturally of being present in and absent from the body, as we of the present day can. Nor could there have been any good sense in the prayer of Stephen, as, looking up and beholding Jesus in glory, he said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," if he had not understood perfectly well the distinction between the soul and the body, and believed that, being absent from the body, he should be immediately present with the Lord. How absurd, too, on any other supposition, was the promise of Christ to the thief: "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." A man must be distressedly pushed by his theory before he would commit the absurdity of trying to make "to-day" qualify the time when Christ was making the declaration. In this respect the promise qualifies itself. If a man make a promise to perform some certain thing, his duty is to tell *when* he will fulfil it. This Christ did.

We need not pursue this point further. Since the Bible was written, it has made the same impression which, by nature, men have all over the world; which is, that death does not terminate the soul's existence; and the task of forcing the scriptures to the support of the theory of annihilation, is as fruitless as it is laborious.

II. Let us show that the terms "life" and "death," as used in the Bible, do not mean mere existence and non-existence, as annihilationists assume.

From what has been shown, the application of the terms "life" and "death," and their synonyms to the body, can prove nothing whatever; for the body may die, and the soul continue its existence. The term "death" is applied both to the body and the soul, and there must be some analogy between

the death of the one and of the other. Where is it? The Bible, like all other books and like all men of common sense, describes things *as they appear*. Joshua said the sun, rather than the earth, "stood still," because it appeared so. David said the earth "could not be moved," while it was moving all the time, because it appeared so. The orator of to-day who wishes to represent the unchangeable character of one object, will declare that it is as immovable as the solid earth; although he knows, and his hearers also, that the globe is in perpetual motion. Lettered and unlettered men alike conform to this natural and unavoidable law of speech. Even the omniscient One, who cannot forget, says: "I, even I, will forget you"; because he would make it appear to them that he had done so.

Now, the Bible treats the subject of death in the popular language of appearance. Man, as he appears before us, an active, speaking, thinking being, dies and is buried. He is gone, and no longer appears among his fellow-men in the flesh. His "thoughts" or plans, as he appeared visibly executing them, have perished with him. The dead "know nothing" of what is taking place in the earthly sphere from which death has removed them. All intercourse, all recognition between the dead and the living in the realm of visibilities, has ceased. It is, in appearance, as if the dead were not and had not been. With this principle in view, the beautiful harmony of the Bible is at once apparent. It uses language on this subject precisely as we use it now; and it no more meant annihilation then than now. It was as natural for David to say: "I shall go to my child, but he shall not return to me"; for Moses to speak of the patriarchs as being gathered to their fathers; for Job to say: "There the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary be at rest" — undisturbed by the "voice of the oppressor"; for Old Testament saints to "declare plainly" that they sought a heavenly country, and were but strangers and pilgrims" here, as for us to say and do the same things.

Here, then, is found the analogy between the death of the body and the soul. The soul that is dead is, to God and in

appearance, as if out of existence; it is out of the sphere of its true life. It has no practical and proper recognition of God; no sensibility to his true character; no communion with him as living men commune with each other; and is as indifferent to the things which constitute the true life and glory of God, as a dead man is to the things which occupy the living. They do not know God. The dead soul, too, is in a miserable case, as is the dying and dead body. The soul may be still as active and sensitive in its sphere of wickedness and death, as the elements which composed the body continue to be after its dissolution.

The assumption of annihilationists, that death means extinction of being, is contradicted by the current representation of the scriptures; which is, that sinners "*are dead*," and yet in existence.

The penalty of the violated law, was instant death. "*In the day thou eatest thou shalt surely die.*" Eve ate and *immediately* her eyes were opened, not to find herself as God, but to see and feel the ruin, the shame and guilt, her sin had incurred. We must remember that the history of the first sin was written by Moses, a man learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and who believed the doctrine of the continued existence of the soul after death as clearly as we do; and that he was writing for the Hebrew people, who were keenly alive to the existence of the soul out of the body; and that he could not, therefore, if he retained his common sense, have used the term "death" to signify something to which they had never applied the term. It is equally obvious that God, knowing how the word "death" was understood by Moses and his nation, could not have inspired him to use the word in the sense of annihilation, unless he wished to deceive the world.

Nor is there any ground for supposing that Adam himself understood death to mean annihilation. He was a very intelligent man, evidently; able, extemporaneously, to give names to all the beasts and fowls, — a thing it would trouble any modern Agassiz to do, — and to strike out the family institution as by intuition, and proclaim it for all coming

generations (Gen. ii. 24). He had as yet all the light upon his mind which could reach him through the undisturbed image of God, in which he was created; and if he knew no more than a North American Indian, he would recognize the radical distinction between himself and his body, and be able to foresee his continued existence in the sphere where his Creator dwelt, though his body should crumble again to dust; and he would not, therefore, naturally have taken death as meaning annihilation.

The Bible is consistent from beginning to end in representing sinners as dead, not anticipatively, but really. They are so dead that they "must be born again" before they can have life. Until they receive Christ, he declares they have "no life" in them; they are "alienated from the life of God;" they must "pass from death unto life," and rise as from the dead to a new life. Christians are those who *were* dead but have been quickened or made alive by the Holy Ghost; those who *have* passed from death unto life; and *have* everlasting life through faith in Christ, who has raised them from death to life.

Now, with his theory, Mr. Hudson must say that sinners are *not* dead, and will not be, at least till they leave the world, or are finally annihilated after the judgment. Instead of admitting that sinners have "no life" as Christ declares, he must insist that they have life, as much as the righteous have, as much as they ever can have, for an eternal existence can only be possessed moment by moment. He must deny the necessity or possibility of man's passing from death unto life in this world, for they are not dead as yet, and they have life already, and therefore the idea of passing from death unto life, in his sense of the terms, is a palpable absurdity. He must deny that Christians have been born again to the life which the gospel promises; for, in the first place, they have never been dead, and if they had been dead, i. e. out of existence, nothing but the resurrection at the last day would restore them to life again.

Mr. Hudson attempts to escape these absurdities by claiming that, *by a figure of speech*, all these things are said

to occur in this life, when the real meaning is that they are to occur after this life! Sinners are going to be dead when they leave the body; then they are going to be "born again" by the resurrection, and finally be put out of existence after the judgment, to remain out forever. Christians were not really dead by sin and have not really passed from death unto life, but they will be dead in the grave after earth's experiences are all past, and from that be raised to existence again.

The absurdity of supposing such a figure of speech seems greater, if possible, than the absurdities which are thought to be removed by resorting to it. Would God have made such a wholesale use of prolepsis when he knew it would deceive the world for eighteen hundred years at least; when there was no sort of necessity for it; and on a subject of such vital and transcendent importance? If he had meant what Mr. Hudson's theory requires that he should mean, would not the truth have been sometimes put in direct and plain language? Would not some intimation have been given that it was concealed by a prolepsis? But Mr. Hudson cannot escape all the absurdities of his theory under the figure of prolepsis. He must resort to some other method of disposing of the fact, that the gospel everywhere represents eternal life as the product of moral forces, of truth, knowledge, faith, and not of a physical resurrection.

Mr. Hudson's theory will not allow him to admit that the penalty of sin came upon Adam "in the day" he transgressed; and hence he must deny that spiritual death is any part of the penalty of the law. But what are the facts? Under the natural government of God, the penalty of violated law begins to take effect as soon as the law is broken, and continues at least as long as the transgression, and often as long as life lasts. Is it not so under moral government? Is not spiritual death more than a state of sinfulness? Has it not the elements of punishment in it? The perjurer is a transgressor, doubtless; and has not his perjury the very sting of retribution in it? We hold, and Mr. Hudson cannot disprove it, that the penalty of the moral law is, in some measure, executed continually upon the transgressor. In the

progress of its execution, the body is swept down to the grave. Rest is gone from the sinner, who is like "the troubled sea, whose waters cast up mire and dirt." Nor is this idea of present infliction inconsistent with the fact, that the law will have a fuller and more fearful execution, beginning with that day when God shall make a revelation of the righteousness of his administration by exhibiting the wickedness of men, and publicly announce the doom thenceforward of the righteous and the wicked. That revelation, combining with the elements of retribution in the sinner's rebellious soul, will fearfully deepen his woe and anguish. If this be so, it follows that extinction of being is not the penalty of God's law.

Annihilationists seek support for their theory in the fact that man was not allowed to eat of "the tree of life," lest he should live for ever. The assumption is, that eating of the tree of life would have conferred an immortality of existence; and since Adam was forbidden to eat, he could have had no immortality. But such an interpretation is a mere fancy, having no support from reason or scripture. If we will allow the New Testament to throw its light back upon the symbolism of Genesis, we shall find that the fall of man consisted in the setting up of the human will to act upon the knowledge of good and evil, *guided by the light coming from the mere human understanding, instead of the light coming from the mind of God through his commands.* If Adam had followed God's direction, instead of "leaning to his own understanding," he would not have known good and evil in the ruinous sense. Refusing to do this, he brought woe and death upon himself, although he foolishly supposed he should become as God. Every sinner falls by the same process. The tree of life is for the healing of the nations, and all men are invited to come and eat of its fruit. It cannot be that God really wished to keep Adam from it. Adam was forbidden to put forth his hand to take the fruit of the tree of life *in the same mistaken and ruinous way in which he had put it forth to take the fruit of the former tree.* He must not be allowed to seek his recovery by an effort

put forth, even towards the tree of life, in reliance upon his self-wisdom, lest he should regard himself as having recovered his life, lost by sin, when he would only have made his sin and ruin more complete. The *self-righteous* act towards even the tree of life must be forbidden, therefore, not indeed to keep the soul from salvation, but to render its salvation, by the only true way, possible. The Pharisees, for example, acting *self-righteously* toward good and evil, laid hold of the tree of life, i. e. an offered salvation, and supposed they had recovered the eternal life lost by sin, and made themselves one with God; but they had only deceived themselves and confirmed their ruin. So it has always been with self-righteous men. There is no reaching the tree of life by the *self-route*. Self must die, "slain by the law"; the sinner must renounce his pride, his own wisdom, and become a little child, and receive his salvation as a "free gift" of a Redeemer raised up to bestow it, without money or price, on the believer. In this way salvation is a reality; in the forbidden way it is but a name.

The account of the fall and recovery of man, therefore, affords no countenance to the doctrine of annihilation.

Mr. Hudson has a chapter (13th, p. 446, *The Highest Good*) in which he labors to make it appear that life is the highest good. It is pervaded, however, with the fallacy of ambiguity. He uses the term "life" in the sense which his own theory requires, and also in that attached to it by those against whom he writes. The spiritual life which Christ gives is, no doubt, the highest good. But is life in the technical sense, which his theory demands, and for which he contends against the general sense of Christendom, the highest good? Suppose *life*, in his own proper sense, to be the "casket" whose enclosed powers must continue to act; suppose this "casket," the mere existing mind, has been emptied of all love, truth, justice, mercy, and all other forms of moral excellence, and filled with hatred, malice, revenge, ambition, jealousy, deceit, murder, and all their kindred iniquities; will life then be the greatest good? Will the

casket then contain heaven? Men may exist, and be full of hatred to God and man, hereafter, as well as here; in eternity, as well as in time. If in the expression, "life is the primary quality of all joy," Mr. Hudson uses the term "life" in his technical sense, it is not true. Existence is the *condition* of all joy, and of sorrow as well; but not the quality of all joy, in the sense of being *what we enjoy*. The rich enjoy their money; the student, his books; the traveller, what he sees; the Christian, his Saviour and his service. And so, on the other hand, men do not suffer because they exist, but because they are guilty, or cannot have the gratification they desire. It is only by the false assumption that existence must ultimately be attended with blessedness, that he can make it appear that the life for which he contends is the greatest good.

III. There is a class of passages which teach us definitely what life and death, as pertaining to the soul, are, and which are in palpable conflict with the theory of annihilation.

"And this is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent" (John xvii. 3). This is our Lord's own definition of the eternal life which is his gift; and it shows just how it is given. As the assured knowledge coming home to an orphan beggar that he had become heir to a large fortune, would give him such a life as it is in money to give, so the assured knowledge of our God, in his relations to us and ours to him, will, by the very law of our being, give us the moral and spiritual life which is in God, and which he waits to bestow on his creatures. Mr. Hudson seeks to evade this passage by construing it to mean, that the knowledge of God is that which leads to eternal life. But it does not lead to eternal life in his sense of eternal existence. It has no tendency whatever to produce existence, while it necessarily produces, in those who receive it from the Spirit, who alone can bestow it, the very life of God, from which sin has alienated us. His effort to avoid the passage is

fruitless, for there are too many texts in which the same doctrine is contained.

Take the remarkable passage of Peter (2 Pet. i. 2-4), in which he represents grace and peace as multiplied unto us through our *knowledge of God*; and all things that pertain unto life and godliness, as the product of the Divine power to us through the *knowledge of God*; and that our being made partakers of the Divine nature and life through the exceeding great and precious promises, is all by the knowledge of God—the promises becoming life-giving through the knowledge, by the Spirit, of the Promiser.

Now, if love, faith, obedience, communion with God, and benevolence toward man are among the elements of the eternal life which Christ bestows, it is naturally impossible that we should have this life in any other way than by the knowledge of God. No resurrection from the grave, no miracle of perpetuated existence, *can* bestow it. On the other hand, make known the excellence of God, and the willing mind will be filled with love toward him; make known his faithfulness, and to trust will be a thing of course; make known his humility, and the soul will flee its pride and seek the lowest place; make known his forgiving mercy, and the heavy burden of sin is gone; make known Jesus as brother, bridegroom, intercessor, deliverer, and the soul welcomes him to the throne as the all and in all of life.

Isaiah saw this truth when he said (liii. 11): "By his knowledge," i. e. knowledge of him, "shall my righteous servant justify many." Jeremiah understood it too, when he makes God say (iii. 15): "And I will give you pastors according to my heart, which shall feed you with *knowledge* and *understanding*." Paul reflects this view when, in his own experience, he counts all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord (Phil. iii. 8), where he testifies that the new man is renewed in knowledge (Col. iii. 10); and where he declares to the Corinthians (1 Cor. iv. 15), that he has begotten them through the gospel which he had made known unto them. The apostle John is

full of the doctrine also, that he that hath the knowledge of the Son hath life; and he that hath it not, hath not life.

On the other hand, Paul (Eph. iv. 18) affirms that we are "alienated from the life of God *through the ignorance*" of him in which sin has involved us; thus showing that the loss of the true knowledge of God brings the death, as the receiving of it, through the Spirit, restores the life, promised in the gospel. The whole heathen world was given over to corruption and reprobation, on the simple ground that they were "unwilling to retain God in their knowledge" (Rom. i. 28); and this, not in an arbitrary way, but because nothing could save them from such a result, save the knowledge of God retained as a living moral force within them. When Christ comes in flaming fire, it will be to take "vengeance on *those that know not God*" (2 Thess. i. 8), showing that their willing ignorance of him, rather than the forfeiture of their existence, was the thing from which they needed redemption, and which could be effected only by their coming to the knowledge of God through the gospel.

The philosophy of the whole scheme of salvation harmonizes with the interpretations here given. The policy of God, so to speak, from Genesis to Revelation, is to acquaint his creatures with him that they may be at peace (Job xxii. 21). He leads them into the wilderness that he may *instruct* them. He reveals himself, in his word and works, that men may know him and live. He laments over his people that they do not *know* him, not even as well as "the ox knoweth his owner, or the ass his master's crib," that they do not *consider* (Isa. i. 3).

The mission of the Holy Spirit is inexplicable on any other theory than that presented in this section. It is plainly his work to develop in us the eternal life promised in the gospel. He comes to show us the truth, to reveal to our inner consciousness the things of God, and thus to mould us into the moral image of Christ, from glory to glory, as we reach one degree of knowledge after another. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be," for here we only know in part; and the measure of our life is limited by the measure

of our spiritual knowledge ; but when he shall appear, and we see him as he is, the fulness of our knowledge of him then will give us the completed life of love and blessedness, of holiness and happiness in heaven.

If an immortality of *existence*, instead of that *life* without which existence would be worthless, is the thing promised in the gospel, there is no adaptation whatever in the way of salvation revealed in the New Testament to secure it. Only a fiat of Omnipotence is needed to perpetuate existence. Grace could not do it; truth and knowledge would have no tendency, even, in that direction. But if an immortality of the soul's life — of purity and blessedness — is the thing promised to believers, the whole scheme of moral influences and agencies revealed in the scriptures is exactly adapted to secure that end.

On the other hand, if the penalty of the law is a state of misery and wretchedness, we can see the relation between transgression and its penalty ; for sin, in its very nature, works misery, suffering, anguish, and moral and spiritual ruin, but has no apparent tendency to annihilate the soul. The analogy of truth in the New Testament, then, shows that death is not annihilation, but misery, "cursing," and spiritual ruin, just what sin naturally inflicts; and that life eternal, as the reward of righteousness, is peace, purity, blessing, the *summum bonum*, the τὸ καλόν, the soul's highest good, just what the gospel of Christ, thoroughly believed, is fitted, intended, and certain to secure. Jesus Christ, as the Word and Revealer of God, is the bread of a life of love and holiness, not of abstract existence. The convicted sinner is not distressed that he has forfeited his existence, but that he has lost purity, hope, that which his soul craves and was made to enjoy, and without which life is more barren than the mountains of Gilboa ; in short, that he has lost God, the good. The source of joy to the renewed soul is not in the consciousness of recovered existence, but in reconciliation to God, in the "welcome home" of the penitent prodigal, in the knowledge of a Redeemer's pardoning mercy and love, in the recovery of God, the good, to the soul.

IV. There remains but one other class of passages which needs to be considered; and of this class it is only necessary to take a representative text:

“These shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal” (Matt xxv. 46). The annihilationist must show, of course, that everlasting punishment means extinction of the entire being forever. Mr. Hudson makes no stand for a limited meaning to the word *everlasting* — *αἰώνιον*. He is satisfied with its literal signification. He accepts also the word *punishment* as the fair rendering of the word *κόλασιν*. His position is this: *Privation of being is punishment*, and an eternal deprivation of being is eternal punishment.

Is the punishment of the wicked, then, annihilation, or is it suffering in conscious existence? This is the question at issue. Such a controversy is not to be settled by consulting the possible variations of signification which may be given to a few isolated words. Great principles and facts, as they appear in reason and revelation, must be consulted.

We meet the position taken by Mr. Hudson on this passage, then, with the whole force of the preceding argument, which seems to us absolutely conclusive. Have we not shown that existence is not the thing lost by sin, and regained by faith in Christ? If so, eternal punishment does not here mean extinction of being. Nor, independently of the foregoing reasoning, can Mr. Hudson's interpretation be made out. Look at the scene presented in the chapter which is closed in the words of this important passage (Matt. xxv). The Judge of the quick and dead has come in his glory, in the clouds of heaven, and all his holy angels with him. He has taken his seat upon the throne of his glory. All the nations and people of the earth are gathered before him. He separates them one from another as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats, placing the sheep upon his right hand, and the goats upon his left. The day of judgment has come; the judgment is set. It is not the trial day, but that of sentence. Character has been tried and proved, good or bad; and men are standing on

either hand of the judge to hear their sentence, the doom to be visited upon them for the deeds done in the body. The King proceeds with the solemn work. He says to those on his right hand: "Come, *ye blessed* of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Turning to those on his left hand, he says: "Depart from me, *ye cursed*, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." The scene closes with the declaration that the sentences thus publicly announced will be executed: "These [the wicked] shall go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal."

Now the reward bestowed upon the righteous, is not the restoration of a forfeited existence, but the blessing of inheriting God's kingdom, prepared for their enjoyment from the foundation of the world. To go into this kingdom, and to receive of its provisions of purity, glory, and life, is the thing to which the righteous are welcomed. On the other hand, no intimation is given in the sentence of the wicked that they are to be put out of existence. They are to depart from God, instead of being welcomed into his presence in his kingdom. They are *cursed* by being thus driven away from God; not into non-existence, but to the habitation of the devil and his angels. The righteous are taken to God's blessed and glorious home; the wicked, to the miserable abode of satan and his followers. There is nothing, so far, that hints in the least at annihilation. Now it is an essential part of a sentence pronounced upon a criminal in punishment of his crimes, — for example, in the state prison, — that the court should state *how long it shall continue*. This is just what we seem to have in the passage under consideration. Mr. Hudson's construction is unnatural. The word "eternal" is of no use in the passage, if the punishment be annihilation; for that is eternal, of course. "Kolasis," or punishment, contains the whole idea, without the adjective. The word "eternal" is as needlessly and inaptly employed, as it would be if a judge were to sentence a convicted murderer to an eternal execution upon the gallows.

Mr. Hudson's construction of the passage is not confirmed, but rather overthrown by other passages. According to Rev. xx. 10, this same lake of fire prepared for the devil and his angels, does not have the effect to annihilate them, but to "torment them day and night forever." If it does not destroy the existence of those for whom it is prepared, why should it be supposed to annihilate the wicked from this world who are to be cast into it, and not, rather, torment them, also, "day and night forever?"

Take the passage which affirms that the blasphemer of the Holy Spirit (Mark iii. 29) "shall never have forgiveness, neither in this world nor in that to come." The obvious assumption is that the blasphemer will exist in that world, and that forgiveness will be denied to him. Why speak of withholding pardon from a being who is not in existence, and to whom there is no world to come? Does the wrath of God "abide upon" what does not exist? The ideas have no fitness to each other.

Then the representations of the Bible as to what is subsequent to the judgment, are in conflict with Mr. Hudson's construction of this passage. The righteous are *within* the kingdom, shining as the sun and enjoying the accumulated treasures of blessing in the New Jerusalem. The wicked are alive, in the full possession of their existence — "*without*," "weeping and wailing and gnashing their teeth." "They see "Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and the prophets in the kingdom of God," and themselves "thrust out" (Luke xiii. 28). They have their part, not in heaven, but in hell. The gates of heaven are forever shut against them: a precaution wholly unnecessary if they were annihilated.

There the Bible leaves the wicked, in the burning lake of a sin-experience, with the smoke of their torment ascending up for ever and ever; and so long as the smoke rises, the fuel will last. And since existence is a fuel which sin has no tendency to exhaust, how can we suppose annihilation to be the "eternal punishment" of the wicked? We conclude, therefore, that the second death is but the fuller and more fearful execution of the penalty of the violated law,

which, from the beginning, sin has inflicted by its progressive curse upon all disobedient minds.

The lost are to be given over to the ravages of the "worm that never dies." Do not annihilationists admit that this worm is remorse of conscience? According to their rendering, the worm will never die, but only the soul on which it preys. But the continuance of this worm implies the continued existence of the conscience; and if that power of our being is not to go out of existence, what other power of it will?

The common sense of mankind, and the scriptures, which teach that the punishment of sinners will be of different degrees according to their different characters, bear strongly against the doctrine of annihilation. This has been a perplexing difficulty for the advocates of that doctrine to dispose of; and some of their writers have actually denied that the Bible teaches different degrees of punishment. What their construction could be of Luke xii. 46-48, concerning the few and many stripes, and of Matt. xxv. 14-29, concerning the certain man and the servants to whom he committed the talents, it is difficult to see. Mr. Hudson does not relieve the difficulty by saying that "all such differences may be met in the processes of the 'second death' itself, whether such processes be natural, or inflictive and supernatural" (*Christ our Life*, p. 4); for, according to his theory, extinction of being is the penalty, and not "the processes of the second death." And his argument is that death means annihilation; so that he can have no ground for supposing a difference in the processes of death, making it painful to men according to their character. What evidence is there that the painfulness of death corresponds to men's wickedness?

The passages which affirm the resurrection of the wicked, do not fit well to the annihilation theory. If the sinner is to be immediately put out of existence after the judgment, why raise him from the dead only to re-destroy him? Some of their writers have also met this objection by denying that the wicked will be raised; forgetting that Christ

said that "all who were in their graves should come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation"; and not remembering that Paul's hope toward God was, "that there should be a resurrection both of the just and the unjust" (Acts xxiv. 15).

In conclusion, it may be said that the practical effect of this theory upon unconverted and sin-loving minds must be fearfully injurious. They can and will say: "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die; and death, at the worst, will only be an eternal, unconscious sleep, undisturbed even by a painful dream. We have nothing to fear from protracted, endless suffering. There is no 'wrath to come,' and 'to abide upon us' forever." Alas! how readily will men, supremely devoted to their selfish ends, satisfied with their sinful gratifications, and only fearing the terrible retribution which sin has seemed to threaten, seize upon this theory to relieve their forebodings. It is in vain for Mr. Hudson to protest against such a practical result of his teachings. The wicked will insist upon the conclusions his premises afford.

The logical tendencies of this doctrine are in strange conflict with the system of truth revealed in the New Testament. It has allied itself already, in the minds of some of its advocates, with the most positive materialism. One of them, to escape a difficulty, says: "Yes, there is such a thing as *soul-dust*, to which the dead soul moulders back." The argument of another is, that the whole man, soul and all, is *dust*, and unto dust he—all there is of man—must return. From such materialism, to a most mischievous infidelity, there is but a step—a step, too, difficult for a materialist *not* to take; for the very laws of thought are such that it is difficult to adopt one radical error without accepting, at least unconsciously, its correlative ones.