

Pastor and People.

Future Punishment.

BY REV. J. L. LINDSAY, TORONTO, ONT.

Discussion on this subject still continues in Britain, and appears to be reaching a crisis in Scotland. The Rev. W. P. Fair, of Edinburgh, has published a valuable contribution to the controversy, which doubtless will have a large circulation in the old country and even a considerable one among Scotch ministers on this side of the water. Each of our readers who are acquainted with his other writings, will not be disappointed with this. It is a valuable little book; the style clear, direct, simple, terse, and fresh; the argument convincing, not abstract, but suited to the general reader, and we need scarcely add, the doctrine is orthodox. There are works by American writers which exhaust the subject more fully, and go more thoroughly into exegetical and philological questions, and we think Mr. Fair's book will be improved by their addition in this respect; for the orthodox doctrine has nothing to fear but everything to gain by such discussions; still we do not know any book upon the subject more likely to be useful, and we heartily commend it to our readers if any of them feel "shaky" in their belief and unable to find a reason for their opinion.

On entering on the consideration of a subject so overwhelmingly important and with issues so appalling, we are properly exhorted "not to attempt to establish what is congenial, but rather to ascertain what is true; to dismiss all feeling, and with judicial impartiality prosecute the inquiry; for by the testimony of Scripture alone is the question to be decided." To a man who is in danger of eternal death, it may seem impossible to lay aside feeling, and even the Christian cannot but feel intensely as he contemplates the loss of millions of his fellow-men, but these feelings should not influence our judgment or blind us to the express teachings of Him who cannot lie.

The argument proper of this thesis consists of five propositions to the following effect: (1.) The doctrine is taught by the terms used; and if it had been intended to teach it, no better or more explicit terms could be used. (2.) The doctrine is implied in many other passages of Scripture, and is deducible by fair inference. (3.) Salvation is to be found in this life only, therefore those dying impenitent cannot be saved. (4.) The Government of God is by law, and according to law the penal consequences of sin must be eternal. (5.) A state of continuing impenitence is appropriately a state of unending punishment, and a denial of the doctrine destroys the harmony of Christian doctrine and indeed overturns it. The latter part of the book is an answer to the more common objections urged against the doctrine. (1.) It is opposed to the goodness and love of God. (2.) All punishment is disciplinary, and ends in reformation. (3.) Everlasting punishment is disproportionate to the demerit of sin. (4.) Annihilation, not eternal suffering, is the doctrine of Scripture. (5.) God has a secret purpose of mercy to redeem the finally impenitent.

To a large extent, especially in America, this is old ground, beaten hard by the tread of valiant supporters of truth and its bolder assailants. But in the last objection we are presented with the most recent phase of the controversy, which has a very seductive and plausible appearance, and is particularly insidious as implying a flattering compliment to those who hold it. We are told with the greatest self-complacency that although "the Scripture has passed by this secret purpose of God in total silence, it is to be deduced by patient thought and moral influence alone; to be wrought under the influence of superior doctrinal feelings." In plain language, that the doctrine is not taught in Scripture, nor is it logically deducible therefrom; but men of the highest moral sensibility and eminent devotional feeling may, and do attain to it, while ordinary Christians are left to believe a lie. And who are those highly moral and pre-eminently devout men, that thus are lifted above the ordinary sphere of Christian intelligence and experience; those favorites of heaven that receive this special revelation; those chosen ones "with whom is the secret of the Lord"? Are they those who tremble at God's word and are reverently afraid to add thereto or to take therefrom? Are they the willing, large-hearted, earnest men and women who forsake all for Christ, and go forth to save sinners? By no means; these believe in eternal punishment. But we are to believe that their spiritual vision is not clear enough for God to reveal his secrets to them. He only does so to such men as dream and speculate, and try to solve mysteries and square God's ways with their notions, and make it their business to justify God by explaining away His words and proving themselves more benevolent, merciful, and loving than God. A little more humility would indicate more knowledge of God's mind. (Matt. 11: 25.)

But what inference is to be drawn, if God has given us a revelation which threatens eternal death and at the same time, he has a secret purpose to the contrary? Are these threatenings a mere deceptive ruse intended to deter men from sinning through unfounded fears? Are we to surrender Jehovah's veracity and admit his insincerity because the moral and devotional feelings of some men are not in harmony with what he has said? God forbid. What guarantee would we then have for the eternity of bliss, peace and glory? Perhaps there is a secret purpose concerning that also. Perhaps saints may fall, and be again raised up after all be an insecure inheritance. Pressed by this difficulty we know that some have admitted the possibility of this, may have asserted that free agents must be held to change, and such are the exponents of the position that some have ever gone so far as to blasphemy, conjecture that in the course of ages there might come a divine apostasy to evil. We stand aghast! What is certain if Hell is not a way of escape, if Hell may become Hell; if Jehovah may change, and "I am" cease to be what He is? And yet how can we believe, unless we plant our feet on the

firm word of God, knowing that He cannot lie, and that not a jot or tittle of it can fall. There is no middle ground; either we must believe what He says, or give up the Bible, stand trembling on the verge of a rational abyss, where no light shines and no order can be found.

And here the force of the last argument made itself felt. All the doctrine of Christianity is based on the fact that today one is to change every other. To use an expression which some who walk in the new light of God's secret purpose seem to delight in—the system of revealed religion possesses a fluidity. Now, since it is expiated by the suffering of the guilty, or in any other way, what need is there of Christ's atonement? If there is a secret back door into heaven, what need of the only way to the Father? Then if it is expiable without God's Son's interposition, the atonement and the deity of the Saviour disappear from the theological system. Is not this always the result? Christ becomes only the sent of God, the heavenly teacher and example.

Again, if punishment has the power of discipline, and can reform and purify the sinner, what need is there of the Holy Spirit. And so, generation after generation, men are not made alive by God's power, but "their pride is crushed under the fire of divine wrath," and they become conscious of their loss and repent; in all this there is no need of nor place for the work of the Spirit.

Another argument which Mr. Fair presents satisfactorily, and to which due weight has too seldom been given is—that after death, sin continues; nay, strengthens by habit, eternally. Such is the law of evil, and nothing but a miracle of grace, which salvation is presented to be, nothing but the direct interposition of Almighty power, can prevent its operation. What, then, must be the character of a soul that has waxed worse and worse for thousands of years. Now, so long as sin continues, suffering must continue, for God has linked them together. The only way in which suffering can end is by repentance and the sinner becoming holy. But how can this be accomplished? Does God's secret purpose contemplate more than is seen in the gift and sufferings of Jesus Christ? If not, how shall those who have sinned the whole of God's grace feel any other love? Does the secret purpose contemplate a greater display of Almighty power than the Spirit's work on the day of Pentecost? If not, how shall those who have successfully resisted that power and quenched his operations, be brought to repentance? Can there be more compassion and love or greater power manifested by God than has already been manifested? If not, what hope can there be of saving those who would not yield in the more favorable circumstances of the day of grace, now that they are hardened in sin, blinded and seared in conscience, and held fast in the enslavement of ever-strengthening habits of wickedness?

Surely it is madness, unutterable madness, to build a man's hopes on such foundations; it is cruelty, unpardonable cruelty, to suggest such a hope to lost men. There is but one way, and if Christ is despised "there remains no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries."

Of course those who hold the orthodox faith must expect to be told that they are less merciful than others, and make God a cruel tyrant, etc. Let them not answer again. They only believe what God says of himself, "that He will in no wise clear the guilty." They add nothing. They know that God dwells in thick darkness, and that they cannot scatter the cloud. They are satisfied that the Judge of all the earth will do right, and that all Holy beings will approve His acts, and they may calmly trust in God and in His revealed word.—N. Y. Christian Intelligence.

Watching for Souls.

The pastor commanded to watch must know first how much there is to be done; second, how many there are to do it; and third, how the work may be best apportioned among the laborers.

To arrive accurately at all this, will require profound study, and much earnest prayer in any parish. Suppose a church of three hundred members, to be charged with the spiritual care of three hundred families, and of individuals, besides these enough to make fifteen hundred souls. It is not impossible for the pastor and officers of the church to make out a complete register of these, and, in due time to inform themselves well of the condition and wants of all. Not all of these will be attendants on church, even occasionally, yet should they not be forgotten or neglected by the disciples of him who came unto his own, though he knew beforehand that his own would receive him not; and who yet brought some to receive him, gave them power to become the sons of God.

There are very few families or individuals who will not receive well the courteous attentions of the people of God, interested in their souls. Men spontaneously recognize the propriety of such solicitude on the part of Christians.

Men are not without reason and conscience, and hopes and fears, and sympathies. In heaven they all send for some pastor to come and bury their dead. Many of them have lapsed into non-attendance and carelessness from the early training in families in which one or both parents were professors of religion. There are memories of prayers heard at the bedside of early homes, nay, uttered by their own lips, in childhood and youth, which may be called back. Nor are they, in general, we may believe, wholly devoided by the holy spirit. The Sabbath's stillness, the church-bell's call, the very sight of the unopened Bible, present to them, though they enter no house of God.

The spirit strives; Jesus weeps over them; God says "How shall I give thee up? God has no pleasure in their death. The Christian goes to them therefore not alone, God who "so loved them," goes with him. The Christian is a co-worker, and his labor of love for them in the Lord, shall not be in vain.—Selected.

Faith in God.

Two men were neighbors, and each of them had a wife with several little children, and he would do me to support them. Now, one of these men was all the time miserable, saying to himself, "If I die, or if I fall sick, what will become of my wife and my children?"

And this thought would not leave him. But now, as he lies in bed, as a worm gnaws the fruit in which it is concealed.

The same thought had come to the other man, but he did not dwell upon it; "For," said he, "God, who knows all his creatures, and who watches over them, will watch over me, my wife, and my children."

The latter died quietly, while the first did not rest, one moment of rest or of inward joy.

One day, while working in the field, and cast down on account of his fear, he saw some birds enter a bush, go out, and then return again. On approaching nearer, he saw two nests placed side by side, and in each one several little birds newly hatched, and still without feathers.

Now, when he returned to his work from time to time, he raised his eyes and watched the birds, who came and went, carrying food to their little ones. Just at the moment when one of the mothers returned with her beak full, a vulture seized it, flew off with it, and the poor bird, struggling vainly in its grasp, uttered the most piteous cries.

At this sight, the man, who was working near, felt more troubled than ever; "for," said he, "the death of the mother is the death of her little ones. Mine have only me. What will become of them if I fail them?" And the whole day he was gloomy and sad, and that night he could not sleep.

The following day, on his return to the fields, he said to himself, "I want to see the little ones of that poor, unfortunate bird; several, no doubt, have already perished," and he hastened toward the bush. On looking in, he saw the little ones all well; not one of them seemed to have suffered. Being astonished to see this, he concealed himself in order to watch them.

After a little while he heard a slight cry, and perceived the second mother-bird bringing back in haste the food which she had gathered, and which she distributed to each of the little ones impartially, and there was enough for all; thus the orphans were not deserted in their distress.

The father who had doubted Providence related that evening to the other father what he had seen; and the latter replied, "Why should you doubt? God never abandons his children. His love has secrets which we cannot fathom. Let us believe, let us hope, let us love one another, and pursue our way in peace. If I die before you, you will be a father to my children; and if you die before me, I will be a father to yours. And if both of us die before our children are of an age to provide for their wants, they have for their father 'Our Father who art in heaven.'"—From the French.

Too Late.

Last evening I went down to a steamboat to see a gentleman who had promised to carry a letter to a friend for me, and just got there in time to hand it to him as the captain cried out, "Let go!" and off went the boat. I am glad I was not too late, thought I, when a gentleman ran past me crying out, "Hold on! hold on!" but the captain shook his head and cried, "It is too late." Then the poor man looked very sad, but his lip, and stamped his feet; but all would do no good—it was "too late." Perhaps he had friends on board, perhaps valuable baggage, perhaps he wished to go in that boat that he might see some sick friend before he died; but, alas! he was too late! Ah, how often is that the case! It is an old saying that "Time and tide wait for no man."

A young woman, who was very sick, sent for a minister to visit her. While he was pointing her to Christ, and telling her how willing the Saviour was that sinners should come to Him, she burst into tears, and said, "O, that I had repented when the Spirit of God was striving with me; but now I am undone!" And at another time, just before she died, she said, "When I was in health I delayed repentance from time to time. O, that I had my time to live over again! O, that I had obeyed the Gospel! But now I must be in hell forever. I cannot bear it; I cannot bear it!"

An old man was called upon by a young Christian friend, who, finding him very sick, began to speak to him about religion and his soul's salvation. "Ah! my young friend," said the old man, with tears, "had I thought on these things years ago, happy I might now be; but it is now too late. And so he died, crying, 'I am lost forever.'"

Beware how you suffer the infidel to draw you upon metaphysical ground. If he get you there, he will have something to say. The evidences and the declarations of God's word are the weapons with which he must be combated, and before which he must fall.

A correspondent of the Edinburgh Courier says—"I have often wondered that in the public reading of the Holy Scriptures, so little regard is now paid to the following very sensible injunctions given in 1645:—'When the minister who readeth shall judge it necessary to expound any part of what is read, let it not be done until the whole chapter or psalm be ended; and regard is always to be had unto the time, that neither preaching nor other ordinance be straitened or rendered tedious, when rule is to be observed in all other public performances.' The pure Saxon words of our English Bible, when properly read from the pulpit, ring on our ears like the kirk bell; but the too frequent interpolated remarks have a jarring effect, however good or to the point the comment or exposition may be. It would certainly be more edifying if the editions, as above, of 1645 were more generally obeyed in our kirks."

The Bolted Door.

O! His knocking,
Ever knocking,
At the heart's thrice-bolted door,
Which he would not bang,
Ever knocking,
As we oft have done before,
And we never yet have heard, heard not,
While we fasten'd the door.

To be coming,
Ever coming,
In a quiet and calm tone,
To the door,
And the labor,
To the weary and the lone,
Still they draw not the summons,
Till the spirit of the door.

By his coming,
Ever coming,
By his mercy, by his care,
Kindness, leniency,
And compassion,
Collaborating, till his prayer,
Let me enter! Let me enter,
Open with the unlocked portal;
Hear it mental, open quickly,
God is waiting at the door.

The Dress of Christian Women.

A writer in *Times of Refreshing*, answers some inquiries on the above topic, in the conclusive words of Holy Writ. It is this the true pattern, how many "godly women" are to be found? We hope it will not be deemed impertinent in us to "hold the mirror up to nature."

How should a woman "professing godliness," dress? How adorn herself?

In "modest apparel." (1 Tim 2: 9.)

With "shamefacedness," i. e., with no intent to draw the eye. (1 Tim 2: 9.)

With "sobriety," i. e., with nothing conspicuous. (1 Tim 2: 9.)

Not with "braided hair," not with "plaiting of hair," i. e., elaborate arranging of the hair. (1 Tim 2: 9; 1 Pet. 3: 3.)

Not with "gold." (1 Tim. 2: 9; 1 Pet. 3: 3.)

Not with "pearls." (1 Tim 2: 9.)

Not with expensive clothing. (1 Tim 2: 9.)

Not with clothing as an adornment. (1 Pet. 3: 3.)

Observe, there are three points as to clothing the body: let it be modest, let it be inexpensive, let it be unobtrusive.

These are two points as to the sort of decoration to be avoided: no jewelry, no fanciful dressing of the hair. And there are two points to be observed as to the adorning: "A meek and quiet spirit," "good works."

Surely a woman professing godliness should be careful in this matter, which the Holy Ghost has not considered unimportant; surely she should clothe herself in all "modesty," "shamefacedness," and "sobriety," while she adorns herself with a "meek and quiet spirit," and with "good works."

Now if she be so adorned, she will not be anxious to attract the gaze of admiration by heaping jewellery upon her person, or decorating it with handsome clothing, nor will she be much busied in the way she arranges her hair. If given to good works, she will have neither time nor money for the decoration of her body.

The above is merely a summing up of Paul's and Peter's thoughts in the matter, as contained in 1 Tim. 2: 9, and 1 Pet 3: 3; and as it has made these thoughts very clear to my own mind, I now write it for others who may be exercised on the subject and who honestly anxious to walk in simple obedience to the word of God.

The Guest Chamber.

It is the prevalent opinion among householders that the guest chamber, or "spare room" must, in every respect, be the best and most desirable chamber in the house. We think this is a mistaken idea. Of course the room should be pleasant and inviting, furnished as tastefully and with as many conveniences as can be afforded without curtailing the comfort and pleasures of the family, and with such regard for comfort that a guest on entering may at once not only feel at home, but as if surrounded with kindness and thoughtful care. All this can be accomplished without appropriating the largest and most commodious room for that purpose. The chambers most used are next to the sitting-room, most necessary to the comfort and happiness of the family, to whom the house is home, and not a mere transient stopping-place, should be the best ventilated, the largest and most convenient. The mother's chamber and nursery if there must be two apartments, they should be separated only by a door, that the mother's care may be near at hand; ought to be chosen with reference to the health and enjoyment of those who are expected to occupy them for years. The "spare room" should be a secondary consideration; for our guests are but temporary residents of our rooms, to whom, to be sure, must be given all the time and attention that family cares will allow; but to the permanent inmates, the house is a resting-place from hard labor; a refuge from outside care for some of the family, and to make it such to husband and children, the housekeeper has a daily routine of duties which can be wonderfully lightened by pleasant surroundings, and thus, for reasons having a bearing on every member of the household, it seems to us very desirable that more thought, care, and expense be given to secure a pleasant outlook, a thorough ventilation, and attractive and convenient furniture for the family rooms, than for the one set apart for those who now, ever honored and beloved, can of necessity remain but a few days.—Selected.

We carry ourselves but too nicely with Christ our Lord; and our Lord loveth not unclean, and reserve and dryness in friends. Since need force that we must be under obligation to Christ, then let us be under obligation; for it will be no otherwise.—Lutherford.

Faith and Future.

The children of Israel had gone through the desert, and were close up to Canaan, so close that they sent over an exploring party to come back and tell how things looked. These spies returned, bringing grapes and bringing tidings. The land was fruitful and delightful; but, alas! there were giants in it. Then the people set up a great, big fuss, a cry of disappointment and terror. They blamed Moses and they exclaimed we shall never go in; we had better die in Egypt; we had better be buried in the wilderness! All but the patience gave out. He was angry at the whole of them. He made Moses tell them that they might have trusted Him, and he would have borne them on.

Now that they said they should not enter in, no one but Joshua and Caleb should ever set foot in the land of covenant and promise. Those who had said that they were going to die in the desert might die in the desert, and he would wait for them to do it. "Say unto them, as truly as I live, saith the Lord, 'as ye have spoken in mine ears so will I do to you.' And then he commanded that the entire nation should start back down toward the Red Sea again. There can be no mistaking the purpose and sense of this history; for the apostle, away over in the New Testament, remarks, 'as we see they could not enter in because of their unbelief. Let us, therefore, fear lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.'—C. S. Robinson.

Sing More.

Cultivate singing in the family. Begin when the child is not yet three years old. The songs and hymns your mother sang, bring them all back to your memory, and teach them to your little ones; the hymns and the ballad; funny and devotional; mix them together to meet the similar moods, as in after life they come over so mysteriously sometimes. Many a time, and oft, in Wall-street and Broadway, in the very whirl of business; in the sunshine and gaiety of Fifth Avenue, and amid the splendor of the drives in the Central Park, some little thing wakes up the memories of early youth—the old mill, the cool spring, the shady tree by the little school-house—and the next instant we almost see again the ruddy cheek, the smiling face, and the merry eyes of schoolmates, some gray-headed now, most "the mouldering in the grave." And anon "the song my mother sang" springs unbidden to the lips, and soothes and sweetens all these memories.

At other times, amid the crushing mishaps of business, a merry ditty of the olden time pops up its little head, breaks in upon the ugly train of thought, throws the mind into another channel; lights break in from behind the cloud in the sky, and a new courage is given to us. The honest man goes singing to his work; and when the day-labor is done, his tools laid aside, and he is in his way home, where his wife and child, and tidy table and cheery fireside await him, he cannot help but whistle and sing. The burglar never sings. Moody silence, not the merry song, weighs down the dishonest tradesman, the perfidious clerk, the unfaithful servant, the perjurer partner.—Hall's Journal of Health.

Profane Use of Scripture.

Among the sins of the tongue in which some professed Christians indulge, none is more strange or wanton than the irreverent use of the language of God's Word.

A really pious heart revolts from using sacred language to give flavor to some jest. Sidney Smith did not think much of his own inclination in that line. He says: "It is wit of so low an order, and in which some sort of progress is so easily made, that the number of those endowed with the gift might be nearly equal with those endowed with the gift of speech."

Yet a pun may have genuine wit, and there is a harmless and wholesome use of it. Punning upon the language of Scripture is pitiful, and grossly unworthy of the lip of a professed Christian. It is profanity. It profanes sacred language.

Reader, if you are at all disposed to indulge yourself in this way, repress it as an evil disposition. If you have heard a pun on a sacred passage, you may hanker to tell it to some one who will laugh over it with you. But try rather to forget it. You want to awaken a laugh. It will be a costly laugh. Whenever they hear that passage of Scripture, though it be in the house of God, the frivolous pun you have made upon it will at once occur to them. An the vital, solemn, import of the holy word will be destroyed by the witticism fastened upon them by yourself.—Rev. W. W. Do in the Christian at Work.

Value of Sleep.

Dr. Alexander was often heard to say substance as follows:—"Cherishing, at their, teachers, and other men of letters habits, lose much health by losing sleep; this is because they carry their train of thought to bed with them. In my early years I greatly injured my health by studying my sermons in bed. The best thing one can do is to take care of the last hour before retiring. Devotion had ended, something may be done to quiet the strings of the harp, which otherwise would go on to vibrate. Let me commend to you this maxim, which I somewhere learn from Dr. Watts, who says that in his bed he received it from the lips of Dr. John Owen—a very good precept for a maxim:—Break the chain of thought (bed-time by something at once serious and agreeable). By all means break the continuity, or sleep will be vexed, if not driven away. If you wish to know my method it is to turn over the pages of my English Bible, slighting on a passage here, a page there, backward and forward without plan, and without allowing my mind fasten on any leaving any place the moment it ceases to interest me. Some tranquilizing word often brings the divine blessing of peace. 'Ho give us His beloved sleep.'"