

the humble service and gentle ministration of this household, is a mirror that reflects the tender, refined and social character of the Apostle. The grace of hospitality, though rare, is a gift of the highest order, and is a mark of genuine love and interest in the cause of God, and challenges our best and deepest appreciation.

How pleased we are, when among strangers, to meet Bro. Stephanas. How easy it is to pick him out from among strangers. If you are at the meeting, you will notice as soon as meeting is out he will not hang around the door waiting for some one to invite you home, but he is the first to meet you with a warm, hearty shake of the hand, and instead of asking you to come and see him before you leave town he makes you promise to go home with him. You are pleased to get an invitation, but more than pleased to get it in such a good, earnest, warm-hearted way. When you enter his home you find the family are all chips of Stephanas. You are made to feel at home in spite of your native diffidence. You say in your heart, "The Lord bless this home, for they have refreshed my spirit." You can say with Cowper, that it is not true "That only shadows are dispensed below, and earth has no reality but woo." It should not be thought a strange thing if you found yourself glued to this family, and very slow in changing it for another. We are not surprised when we find others just a little jealous of the household of Stephanas. But they ought not to be. Let them follow the example of Stephanas, and they will find plenty who would gladly avail themselves of their hospitality. But, when the milk of hospitality is soured, or turned to curd, it will never find a market. The household of Stephanas will never have any reason to complain because the friends do not visit them. If he thinks he is overburdened with his friends, he has none to blame but himself. Let him stop inviting them and pressing them to come and they will soon leave. Cruden says, that the primitive Christians made one principal part of their duty to consist in the exercise of hospitality, and they were so exact in the discharge of it that the heathens admired them for it. It has always been held in high esteem among civilized people. We are commanded "to be a lover of hospitality," and to "use hospitality one to another without grudging." It is the test of our standing in the day of assize. "Depart from me . . . I was a stranger and you took me not in. Inasmuch as you did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. Whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only, he shall in no wise lose its reward." H. MURRAY.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF CONDEMNATION.

There are many passages in the scriptures which evidently teach the condemnation of the wicked, and the punishment of the impenitent sinner.

Christ says, Matt. xxv. 46, of a certain class of persons, "And these shall go away into eternal punishment." Again He says, Mark xvi. 16, "But he that disbelieveth shall be condemned." Paul says, Rom. ii. 8, 9, "But unto them that are factious and obey not the truth, but obey unrighteousness, shall be wrath and indignation, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that worketh evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Greek." And again, II. Thess. i. 7, he speaks of the Lord Jesus from heaven, with the angels of His power in flaming fire, rendering vengeance to them that know not God, and to them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus: who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of His might, etc." These statements are corroborated by many other passages which might be quoted. The message they bring is a startling one. It awakes us to the fact

that there is a most awful fate awaiting the rebellious sinner. It is no less than an eternal destruction from the face of the Lord; and that destruction is represented by the Saviour as a punishment for his sins.

These awful facts are variously treated by men. Many do not believe them at all. The Infidel laughs them to scorn and classes them with the rest of the book in which they are found, as ingenious fables, invented to frighten the credulous. The Universalist endeavours to explain away their force. He argues that it is not consistent with the goodness of God, and with the statement—"God is love"—to suppose that God could punish any of His creatures endlessly. If He admits any punishment at all after death, He claims that it is only disciplinary, and intended to correct and restore the sinner; and that finally all men will be holy and happy. And many of what were once called orthodox people, are cherishing, either secretly or openly, those views. The recent trials at Andover, grew out of the fact that certain professors in that school, held and taught views concerning future punishment and probation which were in conflict with the creed on which the college was founded. Those doctrines are very comforting, certainly, if one can believe them. But they have one serious fault. They are evidently not true. But if we hold to the view, that punishment for sin is real, and endless, how can we dispose of the objection that such a view is inconsistent with the goodness and love of God? We have but to consider the question from a natural and common-sense point of view. Man is a compound being. He is a resident of a compound universe. He is subject to the laws which hold sway in the different spheres of the universe in which he dwells. Man has a body. Around him is the physical universe, of which his body is a part. His body, his physical frame, is subject to the laws of the physical world. It is a physical law that heat will burn. Man, as a physical thing, is as much subject to that law as anything else. It is a law in the physical realm that animal organisms must have food, and drink, exercise and rest. Man must conform to that law.

An infraction of any law of the physical world brings its penalty. Man breaks a law, and he suffers for it, perhaps dies in consequence. He refuses to eat; he suffers hunger—and dies of starvation. He refuses drink, he dies of thirst. He neglects rest and sleep, he becomes a maniac, and dies of exhaustion. What are these consequences of man's transgression against nature's laws? Are they not punishments? See that invalid, covered with sickening sores, a foul disease eating inward toward his vitals; his countenance distorted; his limbs warped out of shape; his whole frame in a quiver of agony; death staring him in the face. Who is it? You look into those eyes, and, despite the grim gloom of death which is gathering over them, you recognize the expression. You knew him a few years ago, as a bright and promising young man, with ruddy cheeks and robust constitution and an apparent lease on life which you thought good for half a century. But what has befallen him, that he now dies in such a state? Ah! he has been fool hardy enough to defy the laws of nature, and live in our right rebellion against her government. The wine cup and the brothel have made him deaf to her warnings, and he has been compelled to reap as he has sown. He sowed into the flesh, and out of the flesh he is reaping this harvest of corruption which you see. And what is this? Is it not in the physical realm what Paul predicts in the moral sphere, "wrath and indignation, tribulation and anguish" upon the evil doer? Now we attribute this to nature in the exercise of her laws, and we do not call nature cruel or capricious, because she thus vindicates the majesty of her laws and punishes the offender. We say that the man simply suffered the consequences of his

own misdeeds. But suppose we put God in the place of nature, for indeed, we too often put nature in the place of God. Let us call the power which lies behind the laws of the physical world, and operates them, God. Let us say that God rules the physical world, for He does in truth. Then let us think of God as dealing with this offender against His government in this sphere, and bringing this punishment on him. Then what can we say? Is it inconsistent with God's goodness, through which man enjoys an existence; a physical structure "fearfully and wonderfully made," and physical pleasure uncounted, that such a punishment should be visited on the offender. We dare not so charge. The man has sinned, and he but suffers the consequence of his transgression. It was not because God was not good, nor that God did not love him, that this fate overtook him. God's goodness provided an abundance of legitimate enjoyment, he despised that goodness and perished in spite of it. God's love warned him of his danger. The first twitch of pain, and the first flush of fever, were the red lights on the track to warn him to go no further. And they were but the natural protest of that wonderful mechanism, with which God endowed him against this suicidal course. But in spite of this he rushed headlong to his fate. Behold him then, in spite of the goodness and mercy of nature's God, reaping what he had sown, in this awful death!

Man has a mind. About him is a mental realm, governed by laws. Man obeys those laws, and lives in peace and happiness. He transgresses them and suffers untold torments. He commits an offence. He knows he has done wrong. His conscience gives him no peace. His mind has no rest until the offence is atoned for.

He overstrains the mind. It gives way, and he wanders a maniac, the penalty of his sin. He carelessly takes the life of another. His intelligence teaches him the accident could have been avoided. The knowledge of that haunts him like a specter, a great cloud of sadness rolls over his sky, and his remaining days are irremediably saddened. Is God unkind because these things are true? Must we attribute to nature, if we choose to name it that, whose laws have been violated, a malicious vengeful spirit that delights in the suffering of the sinful, because these things are so? We are not guilty of such childishness as that. We recognize that in these spheres, sins must be atoned for, and transgression receives a just penalty.

But man has a moral nature. He was made in the image of God. And, though that image has been much defaced, it is there still, and capable of restoration. And there is a moral universe in contact with which man lives. There are also laws which hold sway here. Now can we suppose for a moment that man can violate, and ignore, the laws of the moral world without suffering the consequence? Is it only in the physical and mental realms where man must obey, or suffer? Certainly in this sphere, as well as in the others, man must submit to be governed, and every transgression and disobedience will receive a "just recompense of reward." The same God who gave to man his tenement of clay, created the tenant which inhabits it. And the same hand which ministers justice to every transgressor against physical law, holds the balance in which all moral actions are weighed. It is, then, no more inconsistent to think of punishment for the rebellion of the soul, than for the transgression of the body. In either case we transgress against law, in either case transgression brings penalty, and in either case the power behind the law is the power of God. If, then, God can be just, and merciful, and good, and yet allow the sinner against physical laws to suffer awful torments of disease and death; can he not be as just, and merciful, and good, and permit the transgressor of moral law to pay the penalty of his guilt?