

doom of the ungodly. Is it not, now, passing strange that ninety-nine out of a hundred of the readers of the sacred volume—that very plain book—understand it as teaching the remediless woe of the wicked, if all the while no such doctrine is there?”

Not at all, Doctor; they have been accustomed to hear it preached from infancy, and learned to take the “*explanation*” of certain texts as the foundation of their belief, instead of the texts themselves, which, the Doctor truly affirms, are “clear and easy to be understood,” because the book in which they are found is a “*very plain book*.” I hope to convince the Doctor that the above statement is true, *i. e.*, that a goodly proportion of men at the present day take for the foundation of their belief the “*explanation*” of the text rather than the text itself. Has it never occurred to you, Doctor, as “passing strange that ninety-nine out of a hundred” of Roman Catholic readers of the Bible—“that very plain book”—understand it as teaching the worship of the Virgin Mary, priestly absolution, prayers for the dead, penance, purgatory, &c., if “all the while no such doctrine is found there?” or, that the *great majority* of professing Christians, who are all supposed to read that “very plain book,” should understand it as teaching *sprinkling* for baptism, if “all the while no such doctrine is found there?” Don’t you think, Doctor, that it is the “*explanation*” they have based their belief on, instead of the plain text? We are bold to affirm that this is the case in reference to the question under consideration. The Doctor proceeds:—

“For what are the facts of the case? They are briefly these. Christendom has been broken into sects, divisions, parties, and denominations, and opinions the most diverse from each other, and even of opposite character, have been maintained by them. But on some topics there has always been a substantial and undisturbed unity. One of them is the state of the wicked, dying impenitent. That they shall ‘go into everlasting punishment’ has been held with undeviating uniformity, by persons of all classes and persuasions—by the Eastern and the Greek Churches—by Roman Catholics and Protestants—by Episcopalians, Presbyterians, and the various Congregational bodies—by Calvinists and Arminians. However differing from one another on other subjects, there is *here* a marvelous agreement. We trace it in Christian writings all down the stream of time, from the earliest period to the present day. * * * * With exceptions too inconsiderable to deserve more than a passing notice, the irremediable doom of the impenitent transgressor has been taught ‘everywhere, always, and by all.’”