

al fire is ever intended as the *instrument* to destroy the wicked. In telling of judgments on the 'heast and false prophet alone, *fire* and *burn* are used eight times where literal fire is not meant; and in over 100 texts they are thus used." If, then, these terms are used as emblems of *wrath* and *suffering*, or "fiery indignation," as Mr. B. says, "surely his scheme of the literal burning up of sinners at the judgment day, and their annihilation thereby, founded principally on the text in Malachi, and such expressions as the burning of chaff, tares, &c., ought, by his own shewing, to be abandoned.

Acts iii. 21. "Whom the heaven must receive until the times of institution of all things," is cited, (p. 21.) as proof of annihilation. Our Lord said of John the Baptist, "Elias verily cometh . . . and restoreth all things." But how did he "restore all things?" Obviously by the fulfilment of all that was written of him. (Mark ix. 12, 13.) In accordance with this, the closing part of the verse shews, that the term rendered "restitution," derived from the same root, does in reality denote the accomplishment, or *fulfilment* "of all things which God had spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." Certainly it gives no countenance to the doctrine of annihilation.

Our author adduces Col. i. 19, 20, which speaks of God as "reconciling all things unto him-self, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven"; and Eph. i. 10, "That in the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth." But these texts, with that in Acts, afford a much more plausible argument in favor of Universalism; for assuredly *restitution* and *reconciliation* are exceedingly different from *annihilation*. But they furnish no real argument in support of

either of these discordant schemes. The Apostle was treating of believers who had gone to heaven, of such as were then on earth, and those who would subsequently believe. (Col. i. 18-23. Eph. i. 4-14. Jno. xvii. 20-24.) To these he evidently referred in like manner when, speaking of Christ, he said, (Eph. iii. 15,) "Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named." This error of applying to the wicked those portions of Scripture which relate only to the pious, is quite common, and exceedingly dangerous. It should be carefully avoided.

Because Solomon acknowledges that he had been tempted to think, (See Eccles. ii. 1-3, and Ps. lxxiii.) from external appearances, that "a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast," Mr. B. alleges this as proof, (p. 11.) that it is really so. But Solomon presently adds "Who knoweth" [duly considers the difference between] "the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth." (Eccles. iii. 18-21.) In chap. xii. 7, he says of man at death, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." (Compare Acts vii. 59.) Is this any where in Scripture said of beasts?

5. *Attempts to evade the obvious meaning of plain texts.* It is an unexceptionable rule in exegesis, that plain texts should guide us in the interpretation of such as are obscure. The reversing, therefore, of this course is an evident indication of error.

Our Lord Jesus Christ—"the faithful and true Witness"—has unquestionably revealed the future states of men with peculiar plainness. The people to whom He spake were in general either Pharisees or Sadducees. Josephus says, "The Sadducees take away the belief of the immortal duration of the soul, and of the punishments