

briars in one day." And in Malachi it is said : "The day cometh that shall burn as an oven ; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble ; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch." The last of the Old Testament prophets is in harmony with those who preceded him.

The unfruitful and the worthless are fit only for burning. "The chaff," says Lange, "is the whole refuse of God's husbandry." "All that is not wheat," says Alford, "will be burned." Unquenchable fire does not denote inconsumable fuel, but fire which, like the uncontrollable blaze of a straw fire, cannot be quenched, and which consumes that upon which it feeds.

Such is the significant imagery by which John the Baptist teaches the final fate of the wicked.

In the seventh chapter of the Gospel by Matthew, Jesus says there are two ways open to human choice. The one is entered by a wide gate, the other by a straight gate ; one is a broad way, the other is a narrow way ; one leads unto life, *zōē*, and the other unto destruction, *apoleian*. This word *apoleian*, according to the Greek lexicons of Liddell and Scott and Robinson, means "destruction, perdition, and of persons, death." In the tenth chapter of Matthew and in the twelfth of Luke, Jesus bids men not to fear them who kill the body but who cannot kill the soul, but to fear him who is able to destroy (*apolesai*) both soul and body in Gehenna. And the primary meaning of *apolesai* is "to put to death, to kill, to destroy utterly." There seems to be significance also in the contrast between what men can do and what God can do. Men are able to kill, *apokteinai*, the body, but God is able to destroy, *apolesai*, both soul and body. In the fifth chapter of Matthew, and also in the ninth chapter of Mark, Jesus teaches that it is better for a man to pluck out the right eye or to cut off the right hand or foot, if that organ is a cause of offence or sin, rather than to be cast in entirety into Gehenna, where the worm dieth not and the fire is unquenched.

Gehenna is the Greek form of *Gah Hinnom*, the valley of *Hinnom*. This was primarily and literally the deep, narrow valley skirting Jerusalem on the south. In that valley, after the introduction of the worship of false gods, the idolatrous Israelites burned their children in fire to Molech (2 Kings iii. 10 ; 2 Chron. xxviii. 3 and xxxiii. 6). The valley came to be called "the valley of slaughter" (Jer. vii. 32). And the prophet said that in that valley the dead bodies of the people should be meat for the fowls of heaven and for the beasts of the earth (Jer. xix. 7).

The valley became in later years the common lay-stall of the city, where the dead bodies of criminals, the carcasses of animals, and every other kind of filth was cast to waste away by natural decay, or, according to late and, perhaps, somewhat questionable authorities, to be consumed by fire. Decay, however, is slow combustion, the decomposition and destruction