

Church believed it—a beneficial deception appointed by God. For he confessed to seeing many, who rejected the old doctrine, give themselves up to a vicious life after they adopted his new hypothesis.

And so, respecting this more modern notion of an extended probation, it is of chief importance to inquire, what fruit such seed will bring forth among the people. It is of secondary importance what technical theories may be entertained by an elect circle of scientifically trained minds concerning such a subject as this in theology. Being skilled in dialectics, they may securely hold essential truths in terms of formal error. In the swarming masses of the Papal Church, bowing before the dead figure of the Son of Man, and gazing dependently upon the picture of her whom their church calls Mother of God, there are doubtless intelligent and true disciples who do not enthrone Mary, and who see through the man-made image to Immanuel, whom saints and angels worship. So there may be such clear views of other Gospel truths by the learned who hold this error of an extended probation, that no great harm will come to their creed and character if they shall continue to cherish it. But with the mass of rapidly dying men will not the result be otherwise? Will they not take the notion in its loosest meaning, and as a defence, when the call is made on their conscience: "To-day if ye will hear His voice harden not your hearts?"

Ask the average man, mechanic, merchant, or man of affairs, what he understands by this new doctrine of probation after death, and quite likely he will say, that somehow, which he may not attempt to explain, it is understood to abolish hell. And because it is the desire of, at least, not the best people, to abolish that dread abode as a hobgoblin of the old theology, therefore they take eagerly to the new; because they think it either teaches no future punishment, or so near none, that the chances of anyone suffering it are incalculably small.

And in this conclusion, are they not justified by the utterances of the "new theology?" For, if we read aright, putting the different declarations of their doctrines together, they do reduce future punishment to less dangerous elements than any school which differs from the orthodox Protestant. Indeed, we see nothing very fearful in their foreboding of future punishment.

For, note: the Roman Catholic Church holds before those who die in venial sins a flaming purgatory of punitive suffering; while for such as die in mortal sin they preach banishment from God forever. Also, the advocates of the final restoration of all souls have expressed themselves very alarmingly as to the painful results of sin in the next life if men go out of this life at variance with God. Dr. James Freeman Clarke declares: "In the next life the sinner must suffer while he is guilty, be the time longer or shorter." "And if it (the duration of suffering) shall be during five, ten, one hundred, or ten million years, that is for him to say." And this eminent authority in the Unitarian