

the orthodox sense, inspired. The third question, that of Eternal Punishment, is probably the main cause of Dr. Thomas's secession. The doctrine is peculiarly repugnant to the strong and all-embracing sentiment of humanity, which marks American society and democratic society generally, in contrast to the sterner sentiment generated by social privilege, the military system, and cruel penal laws in the communities of the Old World. We have already remarked that the only Church which has sprung from American soil owes its existence to a revolt against the doctrine of Eternal Punishment. A benevolent gentleman once observed to a scholar, that the question turned entirely on the real meaning of the Greek word *aiónios*, and proposed to set it at rest by giving a prize for an essay on the signification of that word. The scholar replied, that in the first place, so far as he was aware, the Greeks could not be shown to have drawn a clear distinction between indefinite duration and eternity; and that, in the second place, though Christ's words are recorded in Greek, they were spoken in Syriac, so that the philological examination of a particular Greek expression would be of little use. The second observation is one which verbal commentators on Christ's words might do well to bear in mind.

Of all the modern Churches the Methodist was called into existence and moulded by circumstances most nearly resembling the origin of Christianity itself. It was born, not of doctrinal antagonism, but of pure desire to reclaim a godless and vicious world. Dogma, though not absent, has sat lightly on it, and, like the first Apostles, it has preached chiefly to the heart. This, we are persuaded, is the secret of its vitality and expansive force, in comparison with other Churches at the present day. For the same reason it offers probably the best centre for union, should union, formal or informal, ever become possible. Those who have it in their keeping, therefore, if they wreck it by dogmatic exclusiveness, will show a want of insight into its character, and do a great injury to Christendom. To secede from it lightly will be unwise; equally unwise will it be, by blind tenacity of dogma, to force upon those who, like