

"everlasting destruction," as it occurs in these verses, has been pressed into service to teach the annihilation of the wicked; but that this is not its meaning is plain from the words of Christ elsewhere, (Matt. xxv. 46), where an entirely different word is used, which does not mean destruction, in this sense, at all. This idea of banishment from God is one of the most awful in connection with the punishment of the lost. They are to be "cast into outer darkness," and this must be beyond the circle of order and light. *Where* this is we can but dimly guess; for beyond the limits of law and order we can scarcely conceive of either "place" or "time." To human investigation God's universe appears well-nigh limitless. Unaided vision touches only the hither side of the starry universe; but by telescopic power we pierce to depths so inconceivably vast that even the flashing light, travelling 12,000,000 of miles in every minute of time, could not cross the interval in less than a thousand years. Throughout all these regions of inconceivable magnitude, law and order reign. "God, and the glory of His power" are there.

But imagination, overleaping these almost illimitable barriers, finds herself in a region still beyond,—a region of darkness, and of the shadow of death. And—who can tell?—perhaps in this "outer darkness," on some wandering star that has broken away from its orbit,—that has dashed over the frontiers of a law-abiding creation, the finally impenitent may find their everlasting abode. And as that world has broken away from all law and order, so it has fled beyond light, and goes wandering in darkness that may be felt, sinking evermore in fathomless voids of space, where only chaos reigns; rolling beyond the confines of life, with no sun or star to light its horrid gloom, or chase away its foul and foetid vapours; its only light, if light it may be called, the murky flames that hiss out from a thousand fissures; a world that shudders in the throes of perpetual earthquakes; where in all the range of its vast circumference there is no trace of life or beauty; no budding plant or blooming flower; no purling brook or flowing river; no virgin beauty of morning, or golden splendour of evening, or mystic pomp of starry night; a world stripped of the last remnant of its primeval loveliness, abhorred of angels and accursed of God!