

# THE HOMILETIC REVIEW.

VOL. XXVI.—NOVEMBER, 1893.—NO. 5.

## REVIEW SECTION.

### I.—NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING OF HELL.

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THERE has been no universal opinion among men in respect to the final fate of the wicked. The Buddhists believe that the wicked, brought at last to submission and obedience to eternal law, shall, with the righteous, attain Nirvana—that is, unconsciousness or nothingness. The Persians believed that the wicked will ultimately be purified by fire and so saved. The ancient Egyptians believed that the incorrigibly wicked would ultimately be annihilated. The early Christian fathers taught that eternal life is the gift of God in Jesus Christ. The prevailing opinion of Christian teachers, since the days of Augustine, has been that the wicked would suffer eternal, conscious punishment. Some Christian teachers, through all the ages, have believed that all men would finally be saved from sin and enjoy eternal life. It is evident that if there is to be certainty of conviction and universality of agreement in respect to the ultimate destiny of wicked men, that conviction and that opinion must be based upon a revelation from God. Man's desires may show that for which he has an aptitude; his hopes may be a prophecy of that unto which he may attain, and his fears may be a forecast of a possible fate; but the certainty of the final outcome of choice and conduct and character can be known now only by revelation. The revival of the study of biblical theology will tend to lead to more common and more certain conviction of the ultimate destiny of men who believe not God and obey not the truth, but take pleasure in unrighteousness.

I shall therefore proceed to inquire what the New Testament says, what its words naturally mean, and what its symbolism and its direct declarations teach concerning the final fate of sinful men.

The received version of the New Testament has somewhat obscured its teachings by the translation of two Greek words of different meanings by