

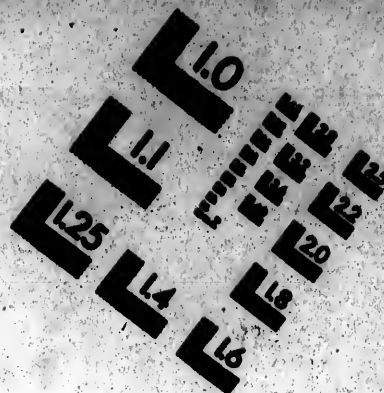
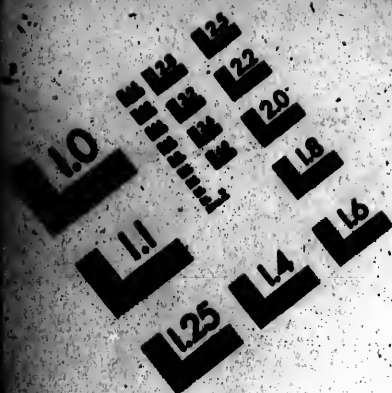


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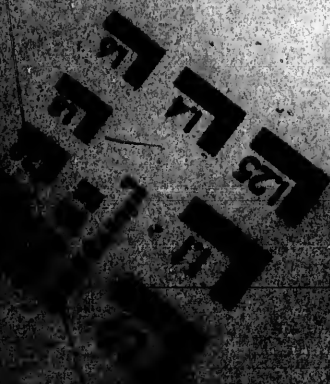
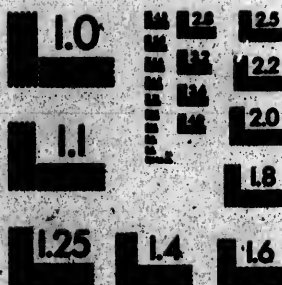
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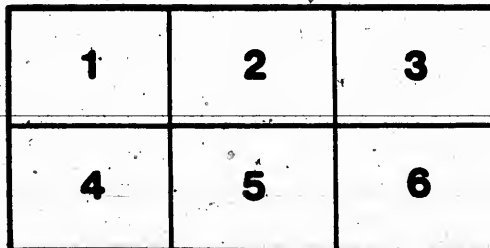
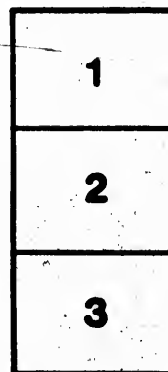
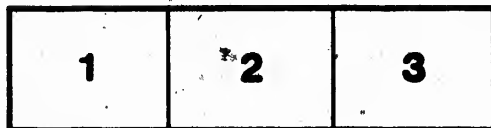
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SODOM;

OR,

"ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY."

BY

WILLIAM GLEN MONCRIEFF

LONDON, ONTARIO.

AUTHOR OF

"MAN'S ONLY HOPE OF IMMORTALITY,"

&c., &c.

LONDON, ONTARIO :

JAMES I. ANDERSON & Co., BOOKSELLERS, DUNDAS ST.

BYRUS E. BROOKS, OFFICE OF "THE BIBLE STANDARD,"
MALVERN LINK, WORCESTERSHIRE, ENGLAND.

1884.

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1884.

"I beseech thee to hear me patiently."

—PAUL,

"Royal wisdom won
From lonely searchings, and the strife for light."

—EDWIN ARNOLD.

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I.—INTRODUCTORY.

WHILE the more recent years were in progress, copies of tracts, journals and pamphlets frequently reached my study, advocating the doctrine of a "Second Opportunity;" which theory will receive ample explanation in the following pages. Sometimes it was possible for me to discover the sender; sometimes it was not; but alike to the known and the unknown a feeling of gratitude had a place in my heart. To those who kept me in mind when gifts were being distributed, I take this occasion to return my sincere thanks for their attentions.

As a result of the mild and estimable spirit pervading the testimonies referred to, I was encouraged to read them, not without patient consideration. Some Christian friends would now and again ask my opinion of such works; and after studying what they promulgate, and testing it in the light of Scripture, I did not hesitate to express my opinion frankly in the case. A verbal statement, however, is rarely so satisfactory as a carefully written estimate; and as the question is one of unusual importance, I now present this pamphlet containing my deliberate thoughts to friends and strangers, hoping it may aid inquirers in understanding the problem so many are anxious to solve.

When the question at issue is pronounced, as above, one of unusual importance, it is so described with all the seriousness of intense conviction. It is not a speculative affair, like the inquiry—Are the stars peopled?—or this other one, What is the sign of the Son of Man?—the answers, be what they may, having no practical bearing on the concerns of this mortal life, and the final attainment of deathless salvation. On the contrary, it is eminently practical, and embraces interests of unspeakable moment. One misunderstanding the teaching of

Holy Writ may defer inquiries after mercy in the faith that a grand opportunity to be enrolled among the blest is in reserve for each erring being, some time in the mysterious future, which, alas ! may turn out altogether a cloud-built, hazardous expectation. Is there such awful danger ? To answer the interrogation is the business at present in hand.

I have not time to prepare a full treatise examining all the positions and deliverances of the writers in question ; and in the circumstances deemed it best to choose a single point where some efficient criticism might be delivered, leaving others, who, may be inclined, to examine at length points left unassailed, according to the leisure at their command.

The point selected relates to the inhabitants of Sodom, yet, we are invited to believe, to be restored to life for the very purpose of being favored with remedial opportunities, most likely, if not assuredly, to culminate in their eternal salvation. The Scripture bearing, as is supposed, on the future of those signally wicked persons, is so full and explicit, according to these late-born universalists, for such, in effect, they undeniably are, that they reckon it a very powerful and central argument on their side. If it can be shown that they entirely misunderstand the prophecies as to the ancient town with a shameful record, and the utterance of the Lord Jesus in a text about which much will come to be written, their doctrine has lost one of its main pillars, if not its chief support. To affirm that the strongest plank of the bridge thrown by them across the gulf of perdition is rotten, could easily be done ; but who with a fair measure of sense heeds a deliverance marked only by offensive dogmatism ? We ask for proof, and should be manly enough to give it. God help us in the use of reason and Scripture to find the truth, because it alone is a safe guide past the bewitching and fatal delusions that environ our path as candidates for an existence never to close.

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II.—SODOM'S JUDGMENT.

"Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom . . . in the day of judgment, than for that city."—Matt. x., 15.

1.—The first view of this text entitled to consideration may be styled the orthodox one, which locates the retribution in eternity, and consigns the rejecters of Christ to a worse hell—more terrible suffering—than that appointed to, or in store for, the ancient inhabitants of Sodom beyond these visible spheres. All are held to be immortal, and though the anguish may vary in degrees according to the proportion of guilt, it proceeds after the final assize through interminable years. Thus the woe of Sodom, and the sufferings endured by the dwellers in Capernaum and Jerusalem when the Roman armies laid them waste and treated their inhabitants with savage barbarity, were only a faint emblem and measured foretaste of the perpetual agonies awaiting, for their different offences, the same forlorn creatures in another quarter of the universe. Fortunately this fell interpretation need not detain us long. Since in the Sacred Volume men are never pronounced immortal by nature, and since according to the same record, "death," not unending agony, is "the wages of sin," no one should hesitate for a moment to reject the atrocious dogma involved in the popular explanation of this passage. It utters an alarm, no doubt, and we may thank God that impressive as it happens to be, it has nothing in common with the horrors that lawless fancies have combined and sent forth as with the seal of heaven.

Even in the text, be the suffering, or "judgment," tolerable or greater than one can bear, there is not a single word intimating that in any case and in any degree the infliction is to be interminable. Indeed, the "day of judgment" would seem plainly to indicate but a short duration, though in any given instance of how brief a span, may be hard to determine. Understand

"judgment" to mean trial—judicial investigation—assize—and can it last to all eternity? If it were to be prolonged during eternity, when would the convicted offender enter on his award? Never, unless he is to bear retributive woe while the trial goes on! Understand "judgment" to mean vengeance, retribution, punishment, as surely it does mean in this instance, and how, if it is to have no end, can it with propriety be called a "day of judgment"? Would such a mode of speech not tend to create a false impression as to its continuance? It might be a very long day, or period including ages even; but what is any period, however long, if limited in its stretch, in comparison with absolute duration, which creeds, happily becoming obsolete, assign to the being and the pangs of the finally condemned? The very form, "*day of judgment*," or vengeance, appears most naturally to import not un-closing wretchedness, but pangs, whatever their magnitude, of temporary continuance only. These pangs, or this "judgment," or vengeance, we hope to locate in the realm of terrestrial history, and to dissipate the atmosphere of mystery, with its indescribably lurid tinge, in which the Master's words have been enveloped.

2. The second view of the passage is that advanced in such works as "*Food for Thinking Christians*," "*Zion's Watch Tower*," and in other publications advocating similar ideas regarding what they entitle "*The Coming Age*." A few extracts from the productions named will, with a fair amount of accuracy, enable any one to reach their conception as to what the Saviour taught in the verse under examination.

THE SODOMITES.

(From "*Food for Thinking Christians*.")

a.—"Surely, if we find their restitution foretold you will be satisfied. But why should they not have an opportunity to reach perfection? True, they were not righteous, but neither were you when God gave you your opportunity. Jesus' own words shall tell us that they are *not as guilty* in His sight as the Jews, who had more knowledge: 'Woe unto thee, Capernaum, for if the mighty works which have been done in thee had been done in Sodom, it

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would have remained unto this day.' Thus Jesus teaches that they had not had their full opportunity. 'Remember,' Jesus says of the Sodomites, that 'God rained down fire and *destroyed them all*.' So if their restoration is spoken of in Scripture it *implies* their resurrection."—(pp. 44 and 45.)

b.—"These Amalekites, and Sodomites, and others, were used to illustrate, or to be 'examples for our admonition.' These people might just as well die so—'by the sword and by fire'—as of disease and plague, and it mattered little to them, as they were merely learning to know *evil*, that when on trial '*in due time*' they might learn *good*, and be able to discriminate and choose the good and have life."—(p. 45.)

c.—"After comparing Israel with Sodom and Samaria, and pronouncing her worse, v. 53 (Ezek. xvi.), says: 'When I bring again the captivity of Sodom and Samaria, then will I bring thy captives in the midst of them.' [In death all are captives, and Christ came to 'set at liberty the captives, and to open the prison doors' of the grave.] In v. 55 this is called 'a return to THEIR FORMER ESTATE,' restitution.—(pp. 45 and 46.)

d.—"That Israelites, Sodomites, Egyptians, and others, have not fully lived up to the knowledge they possessed, we doubt not, and they will doubtless, therefore, have '*stripes*' in the coming age for sins not pardoned by Jesus' ransom."—(pp. 54 and 55.)

GOD'S PLAN:

(From "Zion's Watch Tower," October, 1882.)

e.—"A part of God's plan of salvation, now due to be understood, is that the Sodomites (Ezek. xvi., 48-63) and all men who have never yet come to a knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. ii., 4) are to be saved out of Adam's death, brought to life again by reason of Jesus' ransom; and that they may *then* be made acquainted with the truth and have an *opportunity*, by obedience to that knowledge, to reach perfection as men and live forever."—(p. 7, col. 3.)

f.—"Ezekiel not only speaks of the restitution of the Jews, but tells of the restoration of the dead ones to their *former estate*. Among them he mentions the Sodomites, and says they will be restored. We remember Jesus' statement, that 'it rained down fire and brimstone, and *destroyed them all*' (Luke xvii., 29). Hence we know that Ezekiel's prophecy is concerning men, dead for nearly a thousand years before he prophesied. Nor need we be surprised at the restitution when we remember that Christ died for their sins as well as for ours, and that in His estimation the Sodomites were far less guilty than some of the Jews of His day who had greater light (Matt. xi., 23). The time of their restitution will be the time of their *trial* or judgment; and Jesus says it will be more tolerable for the Sodomites than for some of the Jews *in the day of judgment*—the millennial or judgment (trial) age of the world."—(p. 8, cols. 2 and 3.)

There is a fatal mistake, to the best of my judgment, in the words:—"So if their restoration"—that of the Sodomites—"is spoken of in Scripture, it implies their resurrection" (Extract a). The restoration of Sodom in the Bible sense implies no such thing, and that we shall endeavor to establish at the proper time hereafter. For the present let this be borne in mind, that we hold the writer, who, we doubt not, aims at the glory of God, has entirely misapprehended the restoration promised in the sacred words.

Before exhibiting what we reckon the true meaning, or nature, of the restoration promised in favor of Sodom, we shall briefly inquire if the words of Jesus in the passage in hand, coupled with all the circumstances involved in the fulfilment, for instance, of Ezekiel's announcement, understood in the sense of these writers; and if the harmony resulting with other Scriptures as to the method of the Divine government, encourage a mind eager simply after the truth in the matter, to adopt the teaching advanced in the American works, of which the titles have been transcribed above, and similar publications.

Behold, then, those that for heinous guilt were summarily cut off by the flaming brimstone-shower, restored to human form and human consciousness by omnific resurrecting power! We suppose they appear on earth, and in the old region where they suffered, in some way prepared for their welcome.

In that locality, or somewhere on the globe, they revisit the glimpses of the moon for reformatory or saving designs, we are led to understand, and yet why that is imagined to be the end in view is neither very naturally indicated by the expressions of our Lord, nor does it seem to accord with other statements in Scripture bearing on the final destiny of certain classes of men.

§ 1. The verse before us, if it pre-supposes such a restoration as those writers maintain, actually seems, after all, to have not *one gleam of hope for either agent or company*: "It shall be more tolerable for the land"—including, of course, the people—"of Sodom in the day of judg-

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ment, than for that city"—any city like Capernaum or Jerusalem,—guilty of resisting the authority of God's Son, sent on an embassy of mercy to our world. The infliction alluded to is of an awful character for both, or words unwarrantably misleading because exaggerated are employed; only for the one it is not quite so crushing and agonizing as for the other. The language on the face of it is that of *despair*. Not a hint is given as to the end or issue of the woeful imposition being release or moral elevation; the two stand before us in the keeping of inexorable justice, apparently enduring what has been assigned them as their bitter and hopeless doom. To extract any comfort from the passage requires, to speak with sorrowful candor, an ingenuity which the necessities of a theory have sharpened keenly.

§ 2. In extract *d*, it is written—The

"Israelites, Sodomites—and others who have not fully lived up to knowledge they possessed—will doubtless have 'stripes' in the coming age for sins not pardoned by Jesus' ransom."

This representation of their loathsome and impious offences is very mildly drawn, a peculiarity of these works and in striking contrast with the faithful and stern language of inspiration when the guilt of such characters is described. But passing that by, we go on to observe that these "stripes" are assumed to be the more or less tolerable sufferings mentioned in the verse under inspection. We say assumed, for there is no attempt made to vindicate the assertion. Reference is held to the parable (Luke xi., 47), we presume, by introducing the term "stripes," and if so, we contend that some endeavour ought to have been made to connect the two—the "stripes" and the woes of this verse; to show when and where the "stripes" are to be inflicted—before death or after a resurrection; and to justify the employment of a parable to support a theory, or doctrine, when all plain and direct instruction is silent as to the matter which the writer aims to uphold.

§ 3. Being an ambiguous word, moreover, "stripes" may suggest love or wrath, and be expressive of either.

Speaking of Solomon, the Divine Voice addressed these words to his parent, the king: "I will be his father and he shall be my son. If he commit iniquity, I will chasten him with the rod of men, and with the *stripes* of the children of men."—2 Sam., vii., 14; see also Heb. xii., 5-11.

KRISIS (JUDGMENT)—ITS IMPORT.

The Greek word (*Krisis*) used in the original and translated "judgment," has no uncertainty of the kind. When employed in such a case as this, it expresses trial in the sense of judicial inquiry as to guilt or innocence, or the actual vengeance laid on a convicted offender. Hence the phrase "day of judgment" is equivalent to, not a reformatory time, or a time of appeasing painful penances, but a time of stern punishment, in whatever shape the wrathful visitation may come forth by human or Divine appointment. The following passages in which the word occurs, as a noun or as a verb, establish this beyond dispute that the word (*Krisis*) is pre-eminently a *penal* term, or one expressing wrath inflicted by the Supreme Judge, as its ordinary and central import.

Matt. xii., 36.—"Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment (*krisis*).

v. 37.—"For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

"Condemned"—that is, sentence shall be given against thee.

xxiii., 33.—"Ye"—Scribes and Pharisees, v. 29—"serpents, ye generation of vipers! How can ye escape the damnation (*krisis*) of hell"—gehenna?

"*Gehenna*"—the place or the symbol of capital punishment. "The wages of sin is death."—Rom. vi., 23.

Mark iii., 29.—"But he that shall blaspheme against"—that is, revile—"the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation" (*krisis*).

John iii., 18.—“He that believeth on him is not condemned (*krisis*)—part of the verb of which *krisis* is the noun: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.”

v. 19.—“And this is the”—cause of—“condemnation (*krisis*), that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.”

v., 29.—“they that have done evil,”—shall come forth—“unto the resurrection of damnation” (*krisis*).

“Damnation,” that is, judgment, or condemnation. Whether in the “Millennial Day” or not, verily there is little to console in the prospect of such a resurrection.

Rom. ii., 16.—“In the day when God shall judge (*krisis*) the secrets of men, by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.”

“Secrets,” meaning hidden desires, lusts, passions, and motives of men.

2 Thes. i., 5.—“which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment (*krisis*) of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the Kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer :

v. 6.—“Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you ;

v. 7.—“And to you who are troubled rest with us ; when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels,

v. 8.—“In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that KNOW NOT GOD, and that OBEY NOT THE GOSPEL of our Lord Jesus Christ :

v. 9.—“Who shall be PUNISHED with everlasting destruction from”—that is, to come out from—“the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.”

In other words, the destruction to be inflicted on the characters described, is to be dealt out to them by the Lord Himself. So Paul did not hesitate to represent his “Captain” as a Judge with terrors ; and impenitent, Christless sinners as authorized to look for nothing in the nature of forbearance or salvation when He returns, as return He will, “in flaming fire.”

Heb. x., 27.—“A certain fearful looking for of judgment (*krisis*), and fiery indignation, which shall DEVOUR the adversaries.”

Jas. ii., 13.—"He shall have judgment (*krisis*) without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy."

2 Pet. ii., 6.—"Turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned (*katekrimen*) them with an overthrow, making them an example unto those that after should live ungodly ;

v. 9.—"The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the"—rather, a—"day of judgment (*krisis*) to be punished."

"Temptations," that is, trials, tests, or proofs of character.

The "unjust" are, be it observed, kept unto a day of judgment (*krisis*)—to be illumined, softened, and turned into shame-clad penitents, over whom angels may rejoice? No; they are held by the bands of justice that punishment may unerringly lay them low. The wrath of God abideth on them. John iii., 36.

Rev. vi., 10.—"And they cried with a loud voice, saying, how long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge (*krisis*) and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?"

xiv., 7.—"Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment (*krisis*) is come."

v. 8.—"And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen."

xvi., 5.—"And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged (*krisis*) them." (Compare v. 4).

v. 6.—"For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy."

v. 7.—"And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous are thy judgments." (*krisis*).

xviii., 10.—"Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment (*krisis*) come." (Compare v. 8).

Here "judgment" indubitably means retribution or punishment.

xix., 2.—"For true and righteous are his judgments (*krisis*) for he hath judged (*krisis*) the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand."

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These are the chief verses in which the Greek noun, translated "judgment," as in the text, or its verb, expressing the act of judging, are found; and even one not exactly an adept in the science of interpretation may without difficulty settle its import to his own satisfaction. It is essentially associated with judicial inquiry, and forms and measures of vengeance for the guilty; not trial in the sense of patient and even unexpected holy, spiritual, Millennial instrumentalities to evolve excellences in callous natures; nor of discipline, sharp and sorrowful, with ameliorating aims; but vials of wrath to be emptied on those who have slighted the warnings of Divine terror, and resisted the allurements of Divine love.

§ 4. As our only object is to discover what is the truth, being aware that anything else is a will-o'-the-wisp rather than a steady and safe light, we request special attention to a few lines now to be quoted, for, when rightly understood, instead of differing from, they beautifully correspond with the Bible sentences just transcribed. The portion of Scripture alluded to is—

Acts xvil, 30.—"Now (God) commandeth all men everywhere to repent:

v. 31.—"Because he hath appointed a day"—period—"to the which he will"—or is about to—"judge (*Krisis*) the world"—the inhabited earth—"in righteousness, by that"—or, by a—"man whom he hath ordained: whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."

Sometimes instead of "judge," *rule* has been employed in translating this verse, and not incorrectly, for the verb (*Krinō*) expresses the idea of ruling—administering government and law; also of judging, in the rigid sense of convicting and punishing evil doers. For these varied ends all dominion in heaven and earth has been committed to the Lord Jesus, and at this moment His people are loyally submissive to His behests, while the world—the mass of unconverted men—are summoned on pain of dire experiences to supplicate forgiveness so long as it may be obtained.

The day is approaching when He shall be more plainly manifested as the Ruler over men, for the nations are destined to know beyond a doubt that He is Supreme; in which epoch the disobedient shall be physically, at times awfully, smitten with the indignation it is His prerogative to display. Representing invisible Deity, He will be "merciful and gracious, long suffering, and slow to wrath," yet as Heaven's Viceroy, entrusted with immeasurable force to execute His decrees, He will "by no means clear the guilty." To overlook the fact that he is to appear as the unrelenting adversary of sin, and as the punisher of those who persist in contracting guilt, is to lose the essence and the power of the Apostolic message here recorded.

Even as he addressed the philosophers at Athens, the authority was in sleepless exercise. Note with thoughtful mind the communication: "God commandeth all men everywhere to repent;" and then the reason of it: "Because," or inasmuch as, He has set up a man to be earth's Ruler and Judge. And if we consider that the universal Christian expectation then prevailed that on any day the heavens might open, like immense folding doors, and allow Jesus, the Son of God, with His radiant train of attendants, to approach our world, the weight and bearing of the prophesy became infinitely more impressive. He comes not all smiles alone. He brings more than celestial rewards and dainties. He comes with terrors that will cause many knees to quiver. In truth, the whole Divine arrangement implies that acts of disobedience are now being recorded with an unerring pen; and that sooner or later they who are unapproved by the all-searching glance may expect to be stricken with the bolt of doom. On His return, when His reign more sensibly to human eyes begins, He who hung on the cross will shine in the glory which His exalted merits and functions entitle him to wear. Then, as Sovereign over the nations, His part will be to enforce the eternal ordinances of piety and virtue. Instead of countenancing weak sentimen-

alism about men as erring children, and feeble pictures of their naughtiness who come far short of what conscience dictates and gracious opportunity claims, then the lessons will be such as to exhibit iniquity in its true colors, and startle those who love it in place of righteousness. For thus it is written :

Ps. xlv., 3.—"Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty."

v. 4.—"And thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things."

Ps. ii., 8.—"Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession."

v. 9.—"Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

Zech. xiv., 9.—"And the Lord shall be King over all the earth: in that day shall there be one Lord, and his name one."

v. 17.—"And it shall be, that whoso will not come up of all the families of the earth to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts, even upon them shall be no rain."

v. 18.—"And if the family of Egypt go not up, and come not, that have no rain, there shall be the plague wherewith the Lord will smite the heathen, that come not up to keep the feast of tabernacles."

One remark more about this famous announcement in the Mars' Hill oration: Those who are to be ruled over and judged by the glorified Redeemer, are, so far as this verse indicates, the living nations arising on the surface of the globe as time progresses—made up of individuals who have never been entombed, of course. No resurrection is spoken of except that of Jesus Himself. Some may suppose that "Millennium" should be prefixed to "day," here also associated with judging, and having made this convenient addition to the apostolic address, conclude that they have a warrant, of probability at least, to maintain that the whole company of the unsaved dead, Sodomites included, will be restored to life, and placed under this sovereign Lord's tuition, exhortation, and sway; but we strongly urge such interpreters to be content with what the simple unaltered words deliver. Their notions may be counte-

nanced by other Scriptures ; out of reverence for the sacred testimony, let them, however, abjure all such support of their system as only a facile imagination can supply.

DISOBEDIENCE—ITS FINAL CONSEQUENCES.

§ 5. In attempting to discover if the proposed exposition of the text round which our thoughts are gathering is worthy of acceptance, or, to put it otherwise, in determining what hope there is for those who have died aliens to righteousness, we must not overlook a certain class of very significant passages, apt to be ignored, so far as their full import is concerned, by the advocates of a "second opportunity." The passages are such as these:—

Mark viii., 38.—"Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of his Father, with the holy angels."

According to the new theory, those referred to in these lines are of the number who, after being summoned from the tomb, are to have another pressing invitation to lay hold on eternal life. Then surely we might expect some indication on the part of the speaker of His prospective pity, some longing whispered, however faintly, for the dawn of the new era when their enmity would vanish for ever away. Have we anything of the sort? "Of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed," &c.; and is there much hope in a statement like that? It looks dark as midnight, and by no device we are acquainted with could even one very slender beam of encouragement be discovered in the gloom.

John iii., 16 — "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

v. 18. — "He that believeth on him is not condemned; but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

"Condemned already," that is, sentenced to punishment, which necessitates him to perish; debars him, to express it otherwise, from inheriting eternal life. The

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condemnation, be it observed, already lies on him. In the last verse of the same chapter the unbeliever's doom is put beyond misapprehension:—

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

Another verse meriting consideration is:—

John viii., 24.—"If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins."

"Die in your sins;" or, to give the phrase a causal force, be destroyed by them. The words seem to intimate more than that the accused would die sinners, or uncleansed from moral defilement. Certainly this would be the case; but the phrase viewed in that light partakes so much of the nature of a truism that we instinctively reject it as not in unison with the solemnity of the Speaker. The doom-words, then, so far as we can determine, have respect to the last issues—the dismal climax of an offender's being. Each guilty one dies—sees not the first ray of everlasting life; the wrath—the displeasure—of God abideth on him. In this case the persons addressed were Jews, members of a community alluded to in our principal text on whom judgments of great severity were by and by to descend.

Acts xiii., 46.—"It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."

These Jews, of Antioch, in Pisidia, to whom Paul and Barnabas preached the gospel, were held, in scornfully rejecting their testimony, to judge themselves "unworthy of everlasting life." This was their opportunity. Their day of salvation was then coming to a close, and would shortly be over. In more awful words the Messengers had announced the certainty and hopelessness of their doom, and, by implication, the doom of all who receive not mercy in God's appointed time and way:—"Beware—lest that come upon you, which is spoken of in the prophets: Behold, ye despisers and wonder and perish,"—verses 40 and 41.

The perishing and the "everlasting life" are contrastively mutually explanatory. The perishing was not a temporary visitation—a wreck, as it were, to be repaired at length; it involved the forfeiture of eternal life, with which the Lord Jesus will yet invest His followers; and which, properly understood, is the totality of the ineffable salvation put within the reach and option of sinful men.

Rom. i., 32.—"Who"—the sinners mentioned in the verses immediately foregoing—"knowing the judgment"—the declared sentiment—"of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death."

Now, is it not a fact that each of those debased heathen would have died even if he had been a model of all excellence? What then does our heaven-illuminated instructor mean? This, as a general rule, that sin, whatever form it assumes, leads to death; and that he who dies, as every human being must, in virtue of the law of mortality under which he is born, after spending his days in resisting Divine holy instincts and suggestions, can have no warrant to anticipate another life, however eagerly such may be desired by him. His badness would necessarily unfit him for a higher and enduring existence, which, for aught he knows, ~~there is~~ is great in charity to men, may intend to confer on those who recognize, though imperfectly, His supremacy in nature, and value truth and righteousness in the inward parts.

Rom. ii., 12.—"For as many as have sinned without law"—written or revealed will of God—"shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in"—or under—"the law shall be judged by the law."

This affirmation is very similar to the last one, and must be interpreted in the same way that its impressive significance may be evolved. "Perish" here is equivalent to "death" in the extract from the first chapter. The announcement looks above the mere act of losing life, and concentrates attention on the *hopelessness* of the privation; for, as already observed, all men die in the course of nature, using a popular form of speech, irrespective of their moral and spiritual condition.

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Whatever might have been in reserve for those that "did good" over heathen lands, this thing is certain, the profane and unrighteous, those who have shut their ears to the teaching of starry night and sunny day, who have stifled the appeals of conscience, the voice so faithful in the depths of their being, were ordained to perish, never to enjoy a renewal of conscious existence on an elevated and pure and glorious scale. They perish, not because they refused a better life, for a better life was never presented to their choice, nor had it been offered to their neighbors, whose record tended to the Creator's honor; but for the reason that they profited not by such lessons as their great Friend imparted,—rose not above the low standard of character accepted around them,—had no aspirations that the Infinite One might recognize, and ennoble, and satisfy with the gift of endless days. So much was done to enlighten their reason and stir up reverence for God, the Beneficent, that they were "without excuse."—Rom. i., 20. In the hearing of idolaters the great Apostle spake these memorable words:—"He left not himself without witness, in that he did good and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."—Acts xiv., 17. The speaker has no apology for the blind leaders and their followers; and while the passage we have now in view has not a word decisive as to a future, to say nothing of an *immortal* future, for those who hear the voices from earth and sky, from the rippling waves of a blissful Providence, and from the deep recesses of each pilgrim's heart, it shuts the door of hope against those who have dishonored their Creator, and set all moral restraints habitually at defiance.

§ 6.—The same truth contained in the verses from John and Romans is repeated, with a change of form, in

Gal. vi., 8.—"He that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

Sowing to the flesh is lawlessly, or sinfully, gratifying the appetites, passions and desires of our nature; doing

what is felt to be wrong ; doing to others what we could wish no one to do to us. He who thus sows or sins shall reap corruption ; in other words, corruption is his irreversible doom—he shall not ascend to “life everlasting ;” or, as we found it expressed in the verses presented in Section 5, he dies, he perishes, in the sense therein explained. Here the New Testament revelation opens up the grand hope of immortality for the good, and by explaining what God intends them to reach in the unfolding of His purposes—a being equal in permanence with that of “the morning-stars,” we are led very clearly to apprehend their fate who have wasted years beneath the sun continually doing evil. Having sown the seeds of decay, comes to them ere long the harvest of death ; or, to write it differently, in the progress of events they die, shut out from the eternal abodes where none except the friends of God, and truth, and righteousness, may enter in.

NO GOD-GIVEN SIGNALS OF COMFORT.

§ 7.—When the verses from the Romans, quoted in the two preceding sections, were penned by their sainted author, are we not warranted to suppose that if deep down in futurity he has discerned signals of God-given comfort for the guilty to whom reference is made, he would have been swift to reveal his discovery ? Had he found tokens of the sort, positive we may be that the language he employs—that of absolute despair, would have been carefully avoided. But no door is left open ; no plain assurance held out ; not an approach to the might of assuring testimony, that at some stage in the great hereafter the prize lost might be regained,—the terrible blunders might be rectified. Verily, it is so. They die—those erring ones ; they perish. Having sown to the flesh, corruption is the only harvest awaiting their sickle. In the absence of explicit deliverances from the Master himself, or His large-hearted messenger, for example, it is in vain to rehearse Scriptures that indicate hope for them so long only as the verses are mis-

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understood, or are forced, let us say by over-sympa-
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they were never intended to make known.

We end this section with the remark, that the longer
God's dealings with the impenitent are meditated upon,
humbly taking the Bible as our guide, this will demand
a place among our convictions ; and though it may not
meet the ideal results of some, the dictate of wisdom is
to receive it without a murmur :—"The Lord knoweth
how to reserve the unjust unto the (a) day of
judgment (*krisēōs*) to be"—subdued and regenerated ?
No ; but—"to be punished." 2 Pet., ii., 9.

"SINS NOT PARDONED BY JESUS' RANSOM !"

§ 8.—Seeing that in the words "It shall be more toler-
able," &c., heavy pain is represented as in reserve for
those who perished in Sodom, when, according to the
new lights, they re-appear as living men for a fresh
moral experiment, some explanation of their future suf-
ferings had to be given, and with that we are supplied in
Extract d, where we read, they "have stripes in the
coming age for sins not pardoned by Jesus' ransom."
The reason can hardly be pronounced ingenious, and is
liable, moreover, to the charge of detracting—not in-
tentionally, we readily concede—from the Redeemer's
fame. Stripes for sins not pardoned by Jesus' ransom !
Hitherto we have held by the faith that Jesus' propiti-
ation had an efficacious bearing on the past as well as
on periods to be, so that whoever were admitted to
share the benefit of His sacrifice would find that it
brought a wealth of mercy to those who merited wrath.
To this confidence we have been guided by what is
written in the third chapter of the Epistle to the
Romans, v. 25 :—"Whom God hath set forth to be a
propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his"—
Jehovah's—"righteousness, for the remission of sins that
are past, through the forbearance of God." Which
thought is repeated and enlarged, we may add, glorified,
in this thrice-precious testimony :—"The blood of Jesus

Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."—1 John, i., 7. That propitiation, that blood, can meet the entire necessities of sinful man. For this very design the blood was shed, the propitiation offered up on Calvary, that the salvation furnished in the Gospel might be rich, and free, and perfect. Alas! for us all if the offering had not been of unlimited value; if, to use an illustrative mode of speech, Jesus had not paid in our behalf the uttermost farthing. In virtue thereof, He, and He alone, can save those who come unto God in His name. Nothing remains to be added at any time, now, or in the future, near or far, by observance or by agony, so as to supplement what He left undone. According to the class of writers whose sentiments we are considering, something was left unfinished when He expired on the cross; something essential to salvation, and something which no helpless sinner is able to complete. We disavow the perilous teaching with full purpose of heart; and wherever one troubled soul is eagerly seeking for eternal life, we entreat him to depend on Jesus and on Jesus alone for all he desires to escape, and all he desires to attain. Divided honors—much to the Son of God and a little to the candidate for immortality and the Kingdom—is an arrangement bearing the signs of madness and impiety. The theory of inspiration is, a sinner absolutely undone, and Christ delivering him with the skill, and mercy, and power of one mighty to save.

SODOM'S JUDGMENT DAY.

§ 9.—The citizens of Sodom had a judgment day, and a fearful day it was. On investigation, the "Judge of all the earth" declared them unfit to live, and by fire and brimstone summarily ended their crimes. Quickly paid were the wages of sin. Capital punishment was the doom inflicted on them. This fact ought to be well considered, as it exhibits their case in a clear and intelligible light. Great as their sins were, these did not subject them to mortality, for, sooner or later, independent of moral considerations, they, like all the generations of humanity, would have returned to dust whence they

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prang. Their punishment, then, accurately viewed, was the *untimely* infliction of hopeless death, and that by a dreadful instrumentality. The law of God, in nature and revelation, recognizes no higher form of retribution than deprivation of life. When inflicted, justice asks no more; and ignorance and barbarity alone can represent it as requiring more. "The soul that sinneth it shall die."

THE VENGEANCE ON SODOM MISREPRESENTED.

§ 10.—Though the guilty dwellers in the plain had an awful visitation by reason of their extreme depravity—a visitation which no unperverted mind could anticipate or contemplate even without horror, their measure of vengeance is spoken of in Extract *b* neither as correct human sentiment dictates, nor as the Bible, in its truthful manner, describes the terrible catastrophe. Listen to the quotation once more:—

"These people (the Sodomites) might just as well die so (that is, in the brimstone shower), as of disease and plague; and it mattered little (11) to them, as they were merely learning to know evil that when on trial 'in due time' they might learn good and be able to discriminate and choose the good and have life."

A mind must be in an unhealthy condition that produces such ill-regulated thinking. Remember how Abraham pleaded, and reiterated his earnest cry again and again, on behalf of these insensate moral beings; remember how Jesus, whose nature was true in every fibre and in every tone, wept over Jerusalem as there was exhibited before His prophetic vision the tempest of wrath in which it was soon to be overwhelmed; remember how nature recoils from dissolution, especially when it appears terror-clad in front of those in the bloom and vigor of manhood; and whoever may under-estimate, perhaps make light of the fiery woes that descended on Sodom's guilty streets, you will, I trust you will, with better feeling and better sense, confess that imagination fails to realize and language to paint that crisis of tremendous ire. The dream that a renovating cycle is yet to dawn on the beings then consumed ought not to dis-

turb the faithful estimate of what was rained on them in an age long past. Were the dream and hope warranted by prophetic oracles, no inspired pen would forget what is due to agonized hearts, or dwell lightly on a judgment that stands without a parallel in the records of sin. Why is the retribution depicted in faintest hues? Is it to answer the necessities of a theory, that the true character of the visitation, as an out-burst of vengeance, might be hidden out of sight? There is manifestly a desire that it should be regarded in some such easy fashion as this:—"What came mattered little to them; it had simply a flavor of anger in its composition; 'twas but a momentary terror, not a final award of reeking abominations;—a somewhat disagreeable exit from a polluted scene, a sip of evil, a wholesome preparation for marvels of grace in an after age when their trivial infirmities shall be corrected, and more than a recompense made them for their painful experiences, when the red shower fell that morning from a thunder-riven sky."

WHY WERE THE SODOMITES TO HAVE A SECOND CHANCE?

§ 11.—Extract c contains an answer to the question, —Why were the Sodomites to have a second chance? "They had not their full opportunity," before they were cut off. The reply is professedly based on the words of our Lord addressed to the chief Galilean city in His time:—

Matt. xi, 23.—"And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven"—that is, so signally privileged—"shall be brought down to hell" (*hadou*)—"thou shalt be destroyed:—"for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day."

In v. 21 of the same chapter, a parallel statement is made concerning Tyre and Sidon, which there is no necessity to transcribe.

The words, "it would have remained," &c., seem to imply that the people, supposing their illuminating opportunities had resembled those of Capernaum, would have turned from their evil ways, and as a result the

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all we assign an absolute, as it were—a scientific,
eaning? With all deference, I venture to respond,—
e should not. It is one of those forms of speech met
ith in moral discourse when the terms employed are
ever intended to be taken literally, but claim to be in-
rpreted freely, catching the spirit of the language
ther than its surface meaning. High probability, not
ositive certainty, is the most such an expression should
e held to import, and we may safely accept it at a
uch lower figure. That would sufficiently accomplish
e exalted Speaker's immediate design, which really
as to blame Capernaum with great severity for inex-
usable neglect of the gospel message, rather than to
firm, as if it were a matter beyond all doubt, what the
ncient depraved community would have done had its
rileges been on a par with those of the Galilean city.

A parallel mode or figure of speech occurs in a state-
ment of this kind :—

Matt. xix, 24.—"It is easier for a camel to go through the
eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the king-
dom of God."

Strictly speaking, a camel could not force its way
through the narrow gate bearing that designation; is it
is impossible for a rich man as such to be admitted into
the Divine Kingdom? The good Lord, we may be
confident, advanced no such extreme and improbable
doctrine; else what of Abraham, and Job, and Joseph,
and David, and Joseph of Arimathea, and a long list
besides, who had great wealth, and lived in God's fear,
enjoying his favor?

It is proper, then, to receive the statement about the
rich as, at the most, indicating danger in the possession
of wealth, and the certainty, admitting of no qualifica-
tion, that he who makes gain his supreme desire and
ambition, shall never cross the frontier of the Kingdom,
never partake of the glory to be revealed therein. Yet
may not one who has loved gold with an idolatrous pas-

sion, find mercy, like any other sinner? Certainly he may, but his heart must turn from all sordid things; and what he holds in charge must be consecrated to the honor of God, and the welfare of humanity. 1 Tim. vi., 17-19.

Had Christ been preached in Sodom, and His marvelous benevolent deeds wrought in her streets, the degraded multitudes might have forsaken their iniquities; and yet they might not. An affirmation that they would have repented, directly or indirectly given, has therefore, all things considered, to be taken with reasonable qualification. One dies and a friend exclaims:—"Had Dr. Blank been summoned in time, a precious life would have been saved!" However skilful, even that physician might have failed; and yet such positive language obviously springs from nature and is in every-day use. It misleads no one, for allowance is instinctively made for its strength and assurance. In Sodom's case had evangelical appeals, now in words, now in deeds, been frequent as in Capernaum, the motives to repentance would have been more powerful than those they were familiar with; but all motives may reach the heart and the conscience in vain. At this moment, in circumstances far more favorable than Capernaum's lot, however propitious that lot was, multitudes will not comply with the invitations of Gospel mercy. They sit under its sound, but the world—pleasure and vanity and gain—hinders the word of life and love from subduing them to its might. If appealed to as those who listen regularly to the warning message, we may affirm, imitating the Great Teacher, outcasts in the desolate regions of our great cities would seek their Father's home; if so addressed, the benighted heathen would cry aloud in Jesus' name for pardon; and yet neither of the two classes might obey the heavenly admonition, for appeals of the most melting character may be defied in the sad perversity of the human will. A few of both divisions might weep bitterly for their deeds of shame when conviction stormed their hearts, but the mass—may we not

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what is observable day by day in the world? From
which the lesson to be gathered is, caution in forming
expectations rather prompted by an eager anxiety for
the salvation of men, than by unimpassioned calculations
to the probable results of pious effort towards that
end.

DWELLERS IN SODOM HAD A SUFFICIENT OPPORTUNITY.

§ 12.—While we object to the statement as unwarranted that the dwellers in Sodom have not yet had their full opportunity," whatever that might amount to, we intend, on the authority of Scripture, they had a *sufficient opportunity*—one which, if properly used, would have enabled them to obtain Divine acceptance, and all that it involves. In his address to Cornelius, the apostle Peter utters these most assuring words:—

Acts x., 34.—"God is no respecter of persons."

v. 35.—"But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."

At Lystra, the Apostle Paul, along with Barnabas, intended before the heathen that they had *guide enough* in the truthful acknowledgment of God and to His awe, according to the first of the two conditions of acceptance specified in the 35th v. of the 10th chapter, just quoted by our hand. Thus it was spoken:—

Acts xiv., 17.—"He"—the Maker of all things, v. 15—"left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."—Compare Matt. v., 45.

Speaking of heathen not just so privileged as the people of Sodom, the great Missionary from Tarsus thus describes their actual position, and offered no apology, or an approach to it, for their impiety:—

Rom. i., 20.—"The invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse."

Having closed their eyes to the sublime knowledge, and having, as it were, defied the goodness of God to awaken repentance in their hearts, towards which end he was ever energetically and with tenderest emotion striving, they gradually became more debased in their conceptions of the Divine, and in the method of their lives. Some of them plunged into dark depths of defilement till better minds, for shame, refused even to think of their low condition. Here are some things recorded against them, and it seems expedient to quote but little:

Rom. i., 23.—They “changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and birds,” &c.

v. 28.—“As they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient;”

v. 29.—“Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness,” &c. Compare verses 24, 26 and 27.

Even when prone to wickedness, and having lost, as a natural result, clear perceptions of duty or “righteousness,” they were not utterly bereft of what may be called instinctive moral checks and promptings. This is fully recognized in that dismal narration in the earlier chapters of the Epistle to the Romans:—

ii., 14.—“For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves.”

v. 15.—“Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing, or else excusing, one another.”

In addition to these great advantages from nature and Providence, common to all outside of what may be described as “law,” or the sphere where direct revelation is known, it is not to be forgotten that, like the Antediluvians, the dwellers in Sodom had a conspicuous witness in their midst—Lot, a God fearing, virtuous man, whose behavior was a model to them,—an external and most intelligible conscience, for which they could not but be held accountable. They knew his manner of life,—a contrast, broadly marked, to their own. Such

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spectacles as often met his eye bowed him down with sorrow and loathing; a rebuke to the vile horde within the civic walls, and a warning, prophetic beyond his own intention.

If these reprobates took any interest in the annals of their town, they could hardly have forgotten that, not many years back, their sovereign had gone out to meet the heroic Abraham, uncle to Lot, on his return from the slaughter of the kings. And if they felt any desire to understand more fully what sort of a person this magnanimous warrior was, they were not unlikely to discover, so we venture to conclude, facts bearing on his marvelous faith in the invisible Friend of man, and his prompt obedience to celestial requirements. If known to all, the great Sheikh's conduct would thus be a moral sight,—the shining of a pure, and decorous, and spiritual existence,—on the plain of Mamre, not far distant from their own habitations.

At all events, they beheld in Lot's devotion to righteousness a condemnation of their own vice and profanity. Hour after hour, moreover, they had lessons of Infinite Goodness whispering to them in gentle accents: "O sons of men, repent!" And if they did not relinquish paths inevitably fatal, shall we hesitate to trace their irreparable doom completely to themselves?

THE HOPE OF MAN.

§ 13.—This is the supreme law, and herein is the hope of man through the ages, be his lot on the planet what it may:—

Acts x., 35.—"In every nation he that feareth him"—God,
—"and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."

The inhabitants of Sodom were under that benign arrangement; and we have noted in a general way the complexity of living influences around them, aiming at their pious and moral elevation. The Sovereign Lord never shows Himself a respecter of persons; makes unreasonable demands upon none. He beholds the vast millions on the world's surface with Parental interest.

throughout the variety of condition in which they are placed. Especially, we may reverently imagine, as He sympathetically moved when sorrow agitates moving hearts, and the inevitable tragedies of mortal existence transpire in His view. The infinite Father cannot be unreasonable, for He knows our frame, and how imperfect is man's moral attribute at best. Moreover, He estimates aright the force of circumstances acting in each human being's case, such as training, example, temperament, climate, hereditary bias; and displays unweariedly long-suffering and slowness to wrath. He is abundant in mercy; takes pleasure in the homage of His creatures, imperfect at all times, though ever welcome, be it only sincere. To each member of the great family spread over isles and continents, this is really His appeal: "Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My father, thou art the guide of my youth?" He asks a recognition of His presence, of His goodness, of His care, of His willingness to interpose, of His supremacy in conscience as over the teeming throng of worlds. He is near to all that call upon Him, to all that call upon Him in truth. In His sight nothing is so fair as the green blades of righteousness sprouting in a humble heart. Righteousness—a moral creature's preference of devoutness before impiety, of rectitude before faithlessness, of purity before vileness, and ratified in his habitual conduct,—righteousness is that which He values most; more than the ever burning lamps that blaze in the firmament erected and garnished by His hand. This quality approximates His own transcendent excellence, and a gleam of it shines afar. Sometimes it is otherwise expressed by a form like this,—being on "the Lord's side." The testimony may be feeble, the homage poor, the obedience faltering, yet whatever in all is genuine finds a place in His book of remembrance, where no page is reserved for the mere triumphs of genius and the deep speculations of philosophy. The Lord loveth the righteous. Not alone the mysterious ones on high who celebrate His glory in the unclouded

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splendor of allegiance and virtue ; but the yearnings for good in a dimly lighted soul ; the lifting up of hands for help in the struggle to do right ; the semi-articulate utterance of thankfulness from a contrite heart, feeling itself unworthy to address the Highest and the Holiest in boundless space. "The eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the *whole earth*, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him."—2 Chron. xvi., 9.

In the conditions of acceptance, there is nothing harsh, nothing despotical. What is claimed from man is the least that could be required ; but, mournful thought, only few, judging by records and appearances, have, in any age, attempted to comply with the terms. They who did comply ; that is, they who feared His name and wrought righteousness, were "accepted with Him," reckoned acceptable in the sight of heaven's Majesty. They were looked upon with approval, and taken into favor.

These, then, are great words that fell from the lips of Peter, and probably we are unable to fathom their complete significance. They may be in a sense prophetic ; words resting on the eternal counsels and plans of grace, which the future alone will enable us luminously to comprehend.

"ACCEPTED WITH HIM."

§ 14.—We have just ventured to call "accepted with Him" in a sense "prophetic" words ; understanding thereby, words whose meaning will be realized, except in a most feeble degree, by no righteous child of man during the period of mortal existence ; to express it otherwise, they will not have their full burden of rich significance disclosed to any one while this transient and imperfect scene continues. In every probability the words contain more than is ordinarily ascribed to them. If we have any insight as to their import, or suggestiveness, it is only to be evolved in the following mode.

IMMORTALITY REACHABLE BY MAN.

God had from eternity decreed to bring immortality, or salvation from death, or everlasting life—for the immeasurable blessing may be variously described—within the reach of our family. For long it was concealed in folds of darkness. Even the pious on the Old Testament roll of worthies had the dimmest glimpses of its splendor, if they had any glimpses at all. Though they had no gleams such as now shine to cheer their pilgrimage, and especially its close, they served God with lowliness of mind, committing themselves in life and in death to His tender, mother-like care, believing that what is best would mark their fortune now, and in the unknown, after this brief term of existence should have closed. Not theirs impatiently to long for an explanation of His purposes towards them in the future, or an answer to the question—Will consciousness, when lost in the grave, at any time be recovered? We know that it will be restored to them when they are summoned from their long repose; but restored it will be not because they believed in its renewal, or had a persuasion that such an event would yet transpire; or in some way had discerned that one was to appear at length in wondrous majesty as the Resurrection and the Life, to whom, in the fullness of trust, they prospectively committed the sublimest expectations our nature is able to cherish. Deep in the recesses of the uncreated Mind, eternal ages had been assigned them as their heritage, and when the grand hour strikes within the veil the secret of their destined re-animation and unrestrained access to fountains of perennial joy—that secret will, for the first time, be opened up to them just as the new life, with its vaster mysteries, begins. The priceless gift will assuredly be conferred upon them, though they died ignorant of their Father's gracious purpose to enrich them with permanence of being akin to that of the radiant hosts who, with lightning swiftness, execute His commands.

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RIGHTEOUSNESS AND HOPE.

On this matter being attentively examined, we find character—RIGHTEOUSNESS OF CHARACTER, the warrant for future hope. To this, God has exclusive regard. It is the element of fitness for the glory in reserve. It has been established, in a way accordant with the essential nature of both, a sweet and enduring affinity between the Omnipotent Father and his intelligent, though feeble, creature; it is a dumb appeal to His care and safe transport through the flood of death to the uncrumbling shores and the inextinguishable vitality. "The Lord loveth the righteous," and it would seem to be His beneficent resolve that nothing in which His Holy Spirit has permanently dwelt; nothing that by the gentle impulses of His Holy Spirit has paid homage, and finished this transient life paying homage, to the everlasting principles of piety, rectitude, purity and love, shall be permitted to vanish hopelessly from existence.

And though Jesus our Lord has been made known as the source of life eternal—life and incorruption having been brought to light through the gospel, still the same essential condition presses itself upon the thoughtful mind. Whoever trusts Him, whoever is cleansed in the all-purifying stream, whoever directs his steps past forbidden ways, whoever continues patiently doing good, shall, when the Lord returns, awake in the beauty of holiness without a flaw, and in youth-bloom never to decay. The plan is defined. The award, the privilege, the crown of being, all ennobled righteousness and illustrate the perfection of that adorable One who determines the world-movements in space, and the elevations among His moral offspring He has resolved to introduce.

IMMORTALITY FOR THE RIGHTEOUS GENTILE?

May we not conjecture that as for the righteous few who lived before the gospel revelation, there is immortality for the righteous Gentile also? The pious Hebrew who finished his course on earth, ignorant of the unspeakable arrangement for his admission at the resurrection

among the deathless, shall, nevertheless, spring into immortal being when the time arrives for putting the Divine resolves into execution; and why may not the same privilege be conferred upon Gentiles who feared God, and governed their lives by wisdom and conscience, though in an order, it may readily be allowed, much beneath the standard of perfection? The Pagan has no hope of future being resting on a valid foundation; no apprehension of Heaven's method of saving men; and really nothing less can be said of those who had ampler light, yet not the light that illumines the great hereafter, and falls in mild and continuous lustre on the Vanquisher of death, now seated at the right hand of Majesty in the heavens.

INSTINCT OF IMMORTALITY.

§ 15. In this section, which may be regarded as a parenthetical one, I would remark, that of immortality, existing as a purpose in God's mind, though concealed, so far as verbal utterance is concerned, from ages and generations of Jews and Gentiles, there appears to have been an instinct—may it not be thus described?—in certain human beings, and even in certain tribes and nations, like the ancient Egyptians, so revealed to us by recent investigation; the Parsees, of Bombay, whose theology is Zoroastrian; the Scandinavians, with their Walhalla; tribes lately found in Central Africa; and, omitting others that might be named, the copper-hued Turanian of this continent,—Pope's "poor Indian,"—who discovered, by the telescope of imagination,

"Behind the cloud-top'd hill, an humbler heaven,"

into which, with his faithful dog in attendance, he expected to be welcomed when terrestrial hunting expeditions were closed.

Originally, what ended in faith and confidence as to a hereafter, likely shaped itself merely as a desire that existence might not be perpetually obliterated in the tomb. Out of the desire sprang hope, and from hope, the enchanter, an assurance that this was not the last of

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man—an assurance, as many think (and not without a certain amount of presumptive warrant), built up loftily within the compass of poor human credulity by the malignant industry of unseen infernal agencies, completing so in its full proportions the Edenic falsehood, “ye shall not surely die.”

Examining the sentiments, however left on record, of those who stood firmly by the reality of another life, and viewing them at this time as the product of their own wit exclusively, much assumption may be detected in the structure of the sentiments, and also much that was illogical. Yet the whole aberration from well-based, prudent reasoning, is explicable on the ground of restless anxiety for survival beyond this changing scene. That anxiety took its rise partly in the love of life, and partly in the ardor of human love.

We throw aside all the accumulation of invalid evidence in support of the hope, if evidence it deserves to be styled, and when that is done there remains the widespread *idea of immortality*, and the *longing after it*, as a substratum in the mind which it would be unfair to ignore or deny. How did these enter as prominent and permanent subjects of thought into human consciousness? Who kindled those lights in the human heart? That, perhaps we may venture to affirm, is a question which without effort answers itself. For aught we know, and here we speak with great diffidence and but suggestively, these—the idea and the wish—may not improperly be regarded as a faint out-gleaming of the Divine intention not to obliterate the Adamic race absolutely in death, but to render immortality, through some method yet to be disclosed, attainable by man. Many secrets as to futurity in time, and other weighty interests, have apparently landed from the infinite—the inscrutable—upon the field of human consciousness, or have been intuitively apprehended by specially gifted members of the race; and why not an idea indicating a possibility of stupendous magnitude, like the one we are contemplating? It was, let us hold, an encouragement

to trust God and to fear Him; a stimulus to live in righteousness before the Awful Power irradiating nature with the splendor of His wisdom and goodness. The conception of immortality as perchance not beyond human attainment, had in it an antidote to despair, not altogether powerless. In certain minds, and there were innumerable millions of them where the desire had its yearning and its passionate entreaty heavenward, it seemed to be a hint,—to carry, indeed, the semblance of a promise, how strong we dare not aver—that, in special circumstances, at all events, the insatiable craving of nature *might* in some way, though instrumentalities lay folded up in mystery, eventually have its appeasement.

A RACE FOR AN IMMORTAL CROWN.

§ 16. There are several verses in Romans, second chapter, of an import, we strongly suspect, not generally understood. They may, and this also is suggested for inquiry, be regarded as a commentary on the gracious assurance, "accepted of him;" and describe the blessings at all times within the seizure of Jew and Gentile, and the unalterable conditions on which they are to be enjoyed. They who practically acquiesce in the terms,—sincerity being accepted as welcome tribute in lieu of faultless service, by Him who knows how feeble humanity is,—they, we repeat, who, not without painful fluctuations of constancy, acquiesce in the terms, are held by the Supreme and All-Merciful to be running a race for an immortal crown, though they are unacquainted positively with the fact. (Compare here Matt. xxv., 31-46.) The prize thus won shall certainly be theirs at some epoch in the progress of duration, when, as they contemplate the transporting discoveries expanding in their view, homage will be rendered by them in anthems of gratitude to God and to the Lamb.

A few verses must be quoted; so that a warrant, as we hold it to be, for the remarks now made may be furnished, and which on examination may perhaps be approved by the reader.

Rom. ii., 6.—“Who will render to every man according to his deeds.”

v. 7.—“To them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honor, and immortality”—incorruption —“eternal life.”

That is, God “will render” to the patient seekers “eternal life,” bringing the words needed to complete the sentence, from v. 6.

This, of course, applies to men under the Gospel ; but surely also to those who lived before its arrival, or live now where it is unknown. The one class, those under the Gospel, intelligently seek the final possession of what has been revealed, viz., “eternal life ;” the other, practising “well doing,”—fearing God and working righteousness—*are held to be aiming after its reception.* Such is the predestined climax of their existence, though they pass through the time-scenes unacquainted with Christ, and the treasures of grace and glory under his command. So living in any age and in any clime, they are, we surely ought to believe, like the Old Testament saints, unconscious heirs of interminable being. In this passage, so far as Pagans are concerned, when they are spoken of as actually seeking for “glory, and honor, and immortality”—or incorruption—the statement may properly be regarded rather as *the interpretation of the unconscious aim or tendency of their lives* under the merciful appointment of God, than a declaration of any clear apprehension existing on their side of such a grand issue, and the means of its ultimate achievement.

And here let it be observed once more, the roots of eternal life are planted in righteousness ; for what is “patient continuance in well doing” but righteousness ? “The world passeth away, and the lust”—passion—“thereof, but he that doeth the will of God *abideth for ever.*”—1 John, ii., 17. It is time, however, to finish the quotations from the end of Romans.

v. 8.—“But unto them that are contentious and do not obey the truth, but obey ~~un-righteousness~~”—*repeat*, “God will render”—“indignation and wrath.”

- v. 9.—"Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile ;
 v. 10.—"But glory, honor, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile:
 v. 11.—"For there is no respect of persons with God.
 v. 12.—"For as many as have sinned without law shall also PERISH without law : and as many as have sinned in"—or under—"the law shall be judged by the law"—meaning thereby the revealed or written word of God.

§ 17. Thus from Scripture we learn how unfathomably kind the Eternal purposes are in relation to the inhabitants of our world. Single and strong is the arch that leads from the mortal to the immortal clime—Righteousness, reverence for the Divine, adhesion to what is neighborly and humane, truthful and just. There is, to recall an idea already presented, no unreasonable burden laid upon any conscience ; no exacting of bricks without straw, or figs from thistles. The demand is regulated by what is known as possible for man to give, and to give without extreme and exhausting effort. A willingness to obey counts high in God's esteem ; deep consciousness of imperfection, tearful contrition for wrong done, these win his sympathy and smile. One has admirably said :—

"The Bible is all quick with the great truth that man *can* escape from evil, and that the work to which the good God has, more than anything else, set Himself to, is to help him to escape. . . . God has left it to man himself to decide whether he will be a vessel of honor or of dishonor."

ALL THE GLORY—TO WHOM?

If one in human form has an impulse towards what is excellent, if he builds up even with a trembling hand a virtuous resolve, if true regret at conscious failure agitates his inmost being, if he says No to passions and appetites that when indulged enfeeble and degrade his nature, if he throws himself on the unseen Mercy, which he may well believe to be immeasurable as the starry dome, all glory is due to whom for those moral movements in his humble life ? To God alone, who by His

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Omnipresent Spirit inspires what is good, and can touch the most delicate springs of will and emotion. Pride is veiled from mortal eyes, wherever mind may think and heart may feel. The infinite Father operates all in all. In these impulses, inspirations, appeals from without, remonstrances from within, the dwellers in Sodom shared, as countless millions, similarly situated, have shared since, down to the passing day. But how did they respond to the Supreme Goodness in the varied aspects it assumed, from material benefits up to the whisperings of the internal oracle—the flashes of conviction as to imperious duty? Their history and their doom furnish the reply.

WHY THE MEANS FAILED.

§ 18. The failure of the means employed to win the people of Sodom to righteousness is no proof that they were *insufficient* means. Looking upon God as an infinitely wise moral Governor, we must assume that they were inherently competent for that design. Was there not a bountiful display of goodness on His part moving them, if moved they would be, to repentance? And why was it in the end so ineffectual? Simply because they willed it to be so. Out of the egg disobedience they hatched, sprang the viper that stung them to death. "As many as have sinned without law, shall also PERISH without law." "He that, being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."—Rom. ii, 12. Prov. xxix, 1.

Even if men would be reclaimed under the action of more powerful influences, only rashness would affirm that God is under an obligation to employ such ampler measure for their benefit, or that beyond all question His love will constrain Him to do so. Many have indulged in this mode of speech, which carries the aspect of dictating to the Almighty; at least, it ventures to decide what in given circumstances would be proper work for His hand. They know perfectly what he can do, should do, and will do.

From dogmatizing about what higher opportunities will effect for wayward, obdurate men, they glide easily into dogmatism concerning the Eternal himself and His ways. It is not enough that he provides a *sufficient* opportunity, he must by some arrangement or other multiply the restorative agencies, and, for aught we know, give, what is called chance succeeding chance in a long series, till the last prodigal is, if possible, brought home. To our discernment no such idea is enfolded in the Bible. There certainly He is represented as the God of love, and it seems He can merit that blessed title without the exuberance—the fanciful superabundance of compassion that writers of a certain class deem essential to his character. We have drawn enough from that Volume to disclose the magnitude of His compassion, and at the same time to demonstrate that His compassion has limits, and those well defined.

Starting with the conception of a paternal Deity, a theorist might anticipate a different world from this, where such a combination of good and evil prevails, with an endless variety of endowments, mercies, environments and opportunities. Some die early, others live long; some have great mental powers, others are poorly gifted; some have health, others languish in pain from year to year; some have affluence, others are in deepest poverty; some have friends, others are forlorn; some bask in the sunshine of freedom, others pine under the crushing heel of despotism; and so we might continue in a protracted line of contrasts.

It may be questioned by certain thinkers, if God has any immediate connection with these diverse human lots; but whatever may be the true explanation of his relation to them, this thing is certain, the vast and complex arrangement in the world shapes itself in harmony with, or is the outcome of laws He has established; and yet having Omnipotence can we not easily imagine Him often advantageously interfering on behalf of some dweller here below, were he so inclined? But He suffers the order of things to remain, and being infinitely

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wise we may hold by the assurance that He is acting for the best. No miracle is wrought to save even the philanthropist who has caught a mortal disease when ministering to the dying; nor the mother of a young family who has drank poison administered to her by mistake; nor him who has stumbled over a precipice in the dark when on an errand of mercy. We cannot explain why so many deplorable events happen in our Father's world: the reasonable presumption is that while mysterious to our limited faculties, they are far from being inexplicable. Nay, knowing as much as we do know of His goodness; knowing also that the universe is built on the principle that righteousness is the highest and the best, and that everything is tending towards the complete manifestation of that everlasting truth, we may entertain perfect confidence in the all-governing Arm, and the all-loving Heart.

Ascending to interests of higher moment—higher, because eternity is involved therein, we ask with a yet more solemn attitude, why may not a *single* opportunity to attain "everlasting life," or immortality, be perfectly consistent with Supreme Benevolence? Who should dare to assert, even to hint, that one more and a fairer occasion is due, say due as a merciful concession, not as a right or claim in justice, to those who have already slighted counsel and despised reproof? When disease or accident, each an innocent event, terminates this life, ere, humanly speaking, its purposes and promises have been matured, it is never kindled anew in the old scene and under the old conditions, by way of compensation. When a child is left an orphan in the morning of its being—the sorest calamity it can endure—no Creative Volition summons back from the tomb those who would watch over its helpless years with the untiring anxieties of love. The wheels of destiny have no reverse motion. The mysterious current on which we are borne along submerges sooner or later whatever floats on its surface, but never heaves up the lost for another passage by the light of sun and stars. And if such is the order in one

sphere, call it the region of life on this side the grave, and it is allowed that the attributes of the Infinite shine untarnished, shall we refuse the concession that in providing no second "chance" for a future or post-resurrection life, with converting and reformatory influences, to be indefinitely prolonged, He would still be entitled to the unshaken confidence of thoughtful, poised, and pious minds athwart His limitless domain? "Just and true are all thy ways, thou King of Saints."

§ 19. We end the first division of our criticism with this general retrospective observation, that the object hitherto contemplated has been to demonstrate how poor a title to confidence the novel exposition of the verse—"It shall be more tolerable," &c., really possesses. Not a single reason in the passage itself, or in the analogies of nature and providence, calls upon us to view it after the manner of some recent interpreters. Moreover, in the course of our reflection a number of Scriptures presented themselves remarkably at variance with what we are importuned to receive as the teaching of this text, and some other texts held to be in affinity with it. We are profoundly convinced that, misunderstanding the verse, brethren on the other side have forced it to countenance a theory which we must regard as but an amiable invention of their own. What the words of our blessed Master do import we shall now endeavor to unfold.

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III.—SODOM'S JUDGMENT MORE TOLERABLE THAN JERUSALEM'S.

§ 20. So wicked had Sodom grown, "being abominable and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate," that the forbearance of Heaven was taxed to the utmost limit, yet there was no haste manifested in bringing the offenders to account. Mercy would have triumphed in their case had it been possible. But ten righteous persons were not to be found in the whole population on whose account the rest might be spared; and probably the actual number—the preserving salt—was considerably less than that. Reformation was hopeless, and as it was desirable to hinder the diffusion of such execrable immorality, and the transmission of offspring of such debased natures, a sudden and terrific storm of indignation made an end of their villainy.

Gen. xix., 23-25.—"The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar. Then the Lord rained upon Sodom brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven; and he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities," &c.

This was Sodom's "day of judgment," and such was the form in which the displeasure of God manifested itself. Awful was the visitation. Yonder the infamous city still smokes and flames in the remote past as a warning to the impious down the centuries till the close of time! The offenders had to be cut off, and the work was swiftly completed, with the smallest amount of suffering too, that could be apportioned in the execution. For while fire was rained upon them, the fire was mingled with brimstone, in the suffocating fumes of which, evolved by the flames, consciousness would instantaneously be lost. Mercy was thus, in the hour of retribution, blended with judgment.

Among the victims who perished, A. D. 79, in Pompeii, buried in the deluge of Vesuvian ashes and pumice stone merely, charged, of course, with sulphurous exhalations, some have been found, during the excavations of recent years, reclining, wonderfully preserved, with a tranquil expression on their countenances. Manifestly suffocation overtook them in a moment, and probably they expired without realizing for the shortest interval the tremendous catastrophe that had overtaken them and their fated city. Had the lava tide reached Pompeii, those unfortunates would have been consumed on the spot; still they would have borne no agony, in consequence of the insensibility that must immediately have been superinduced by the fumes from the fire-shower and the molten stream thrown out by the volcanic pulsations.

So, in like manner, perished the guilty natives of the plain, for whom Abraham interceded till, it would seem, he had courage to plead on their behalf no longer. The red curtain fell, and the tragic retribution was over! Likely not a wail rose from street or square, mansion or rustic home, and in one huge pyre—symbol of the future Gehenna—the irreclaimably depraved throng vanished swiftly from the scenes of life.

§ 21. Except Jerusalem's, the history of no city in the world is marked with such reverses of fortune; such pitiful scenes of distress when invaders laid waste its battlements, enslaved its population, or delivered it over to famine and the sword. Wailing and desolation meet within its walls age after age. For a score of times it was captured, and often razed to the ground. But the fellest woe that ever visited the nation and its capital was when, in the year of Grace 70, Titus planted the Roman legions round about the glory of Palestine, with a fixed resolve, in one way or another, to sweep the chosen people from the land of their fathers. Moses foresaw the terrible visitation and minutely described its features, rather as if he narrated actual occurrences than foreshadowed events in the distant future as they rose in

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ghastly colors before his prophetic vision. Descriptions of the real misery and overthrow correspond with every incident that the heaven-illuminated Seer foretold in the audience of the then existing nation. A few quotations from his address, contained in Deut. xxviii. chap., is all that we can afford to introduce in this place.

There we are informed the Lord would bring against them a nation from far—a nation of fierce countenance and strange language, having no pity for the youthful or the aged; they would be besieged in all their gates; in the straitness and distress hunger would compel them to eat the flesh of their sons and daughters; even the tender and delicate woman among them would turn her eye of evil toward her husband and her children, in the eagerness of her desire for food; plagues would come and devour multitudes of them, till they should be left few in number, the remnant spared would be scattered among all people the world over, and experience at their hand the sharpest woes; when, so manifold and crushing would be their oppressions, fear would haunt them day and night—in the morning, they would say, Would God it were even! and at even they would say, Would God it were morning!

In the same chapter their calamities are all represented as issuing from disobedience to God's will, who, in His sovereign mercy, had originally elected them to be a happy and exalted people before Him.

Verses 58, 59.—"If thou wilt not observe to do all the words of this law that are written in this book, that thou mayest fear this glorious and fearful name—THE LORD THY GOD; then the Lord shall make thy plagues wonderful, and the plagues of thy seed, even great plagues, and of long continuance."

In a Chapter—the 18th—which he had already delivered, this eminent servant of the Lord had announced the future appearance of a great Prophet, on the most beneficent errands. He was to rise up among the tribes, bearing a resemblance to Moses in his authority and saving mission. He forewarns them, however, that

it would be hazardous in the extreme to resist his counsels, and instead of proving a benefactor, opposition on their part to his commands might necessitate him signally to demonstrate in their history, that the wages of sin is death. When the Lord Jesus was manifested as the revealer of God and the world's Saviour, the guides and ecclesiastical rulers of the people ought to have recognized in the wonderful stranger the Prophet foretold by the Jewish Lawgiver; but deep-rooted prejudice and ireful bigotry made them blind leaders of the blind, to their own ruin and that of their followers.—Compare Acts iii., 19-26.

§ 22. Plain as were the communications of the ancient prophet, the Lord Jesus Christ made announcements in regard to the fate of Jerusalem plainer still. His harmonize with the Mosaic oracles, summarized above, while he employs words that leave no uncertainty as to the subject of his predictions.

Looking with clear penetration into the near future, he beheld the "day of vengeance" about to burst as a wild tempest on the nation, and the vision wrought trouble in his most sensitive and patriotic heart. To some of the prominent characters of the time, clothed with sin and hardened in opposition to his claims, he thus delivers his mind:—

Matt. xxiii., 33.—"Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation"—judgment—"of hell,"—Gehenna?

v. 34.—"Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes; and some of them ye shall kill, and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute from city to city."

v. 35.—"That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar."

The vengeance, he continues to say, would light on the existing generation, and in dreadful forms. He predicts the profanation and entire demolition of the temple—their beautiful house; predicts that the city would be

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encompassed with armies—a sign that its desolation was near; also sore anguish awaiting mothers and infants when the tempest should arise; in a word, great tribulation, such as had not been since the beginning of the world, nor ever should be while the world performs its revolutions. Beholding the vision which the Spirit wove before his inner eye, and realizing with the fervor of his sympathetic emotions the fierce agonies to be undergone when the closing part of the judgment would be inflicted, need we wonder that he shed tears over the doomed city, as it went rushing on to a fate which only long resistance to gospel entreaties conjoined with hardened impiety could have earned for them as their inevitable reward?

Their rejection and immeasurably cruel treatment of the Christ formed the climax of their rebellion against the God of their fathers. Such guilt demanded that the predictions of Moses and those spoken by the far greater Prophet in their hearing should be promptly and specifically accomplished. They had, as a people, hated the loving Redeemer without a cause. Early they began to plot against his life, and on several occasions made murderous though unavailing attempts to cut short his days. As the months progressed malice grew more virulent in their hearts. Its triumph came when they bound him to the accursed tree. Their own words sealed their doom:—"His blood be on us, and on our children."—Matt. xxvii., 25. They invited the outpouring of Heaven's displeasure, and it fell on them with unmitigated violence. The conquerors had no bowels of compassion. The city where the Beloved One expired was surrounded by Jews—fierce Nemesis of their unexampled crime!—hung on crosses till wood could be found to torture no more. Wrath visited them to the uttermost. Josephus says 1,100,000 perished in the Roman fury. The sun perhaps never looked on such a tragic spectacle of commingled wretchedness as was presented within and around the walls of the historic capital; and for centuries in long procession shrinking, miserable



bondsmen and outcasts of the Abrahamic line, were treated on foreign shores with envenomed scorn, and subjected to insults, exactions, and barbarities, that no pen, however gifted, could portray.

"So many woes we see in many lands,
So many streaming eyes, and wringing hands."

"Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder."—Matt. xxi., 44.

§ 23. We have been enumerating some of our Lord's prophecies bearing on the fate of Jerusalem; but there is still another—a very affecting one, truly—which ought not to be overlooked in this connection. The record of it is in John, 7th Chapter and 34th v. :—"Ye shall seek Me, and shall not find Me; and where I am thither ye cannot come." Words, I am inclined to think, having reference not to the personal salvation of those addressed, but rather and exclusively to the national ruin to be consummated shortly before their eyes. The Saviour's mind is obviously dwelling on the near future, and contemplating the progress of events in its bearings on Himself and those amongst whom He tabernacled, accomplishing His glorious mission. In the immediate foregoing verse He says :—"Yet a little while am I with you, and then I go unto Him that sent Me." Following which stands, of course, the passage, "Ye shall seek Me, and shall not find Me," &c. He seems to represent them in the hour of their approaching calamity, earnestly imploring the advent and aid of the Messiah, whom by profession they were looking for, according to the announcements in their holy Scriptures. The Messiah of God had already appeared, and they had closed their ears and set their hearts as a rock against His gentle admonitions. A mournful picture it is that arises before our imagination while we meditate on these pathetic words of our Redeemer. Never was a mighty friend so needed as now; but the loudest entreaties bring no response. The heavens above them

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are brass. But one friend ever lived on earth who had power to save them from being trampled down by the iron heel of Rome, and Him they spat upon, Him they consigned to a death of agony and shame. "Ye shall seek Me, and shall not find Me!" As a nation, the account is closed, and they are summoned to receive their wages.

§ 24. In Section 10, page 25, animadversions have been made, without any reserve, on Extract *b*, in which the terrible judgment of fire and brimstone is lightly spoken of; and that in defiance of the earnest petitions of Abraham that the people of Sodom might be exempted from impending destruction. It mattered little to them, we are asked to believe, how they died, even though it were by having a volcano emptied over their habitations. Surely the probabilities lean this way, that if they had been consulted in the matter, they would have greatly differed from a view of their case, so facile and to them altogether inconvenient, had it been propounded in their hearing. For myself, I imagine they would rather have taken the chances of fever, sun-stroke or plague along a goddly number of years thereafter, than be suddenly reduced to ashes in a general conflagration. Moreover, I feel pretty certain that any effort to win their submission to the ordeal, like children under medical treatment, as a stage in their attainment of good, and what is called a higher life, in some inexplicable way, in some mysterious circumstances, in some mysterious locality, would have evoked from their lips such indignant mockery as to convince their instructor and guide to patience, that his officious ministrations were emphatically useless and unwelcome.

§ 25. In addition to what has been submitted on the aspect in which the case of the Sodomites is presented in Extract *b*, this striking fact should be taken into mature consideration, that our Lord in His predictions concerning Jerusalem and her sons, confined His thoughts exclusively to the miseries *about to be inflicted*

on the guilty people where they dwelt. His mind never passes beyond the present scene. According to Him retributions fall here on the nation He loved, not in some other region whither as ancient transgressors they are yet to be brought by Divine power, partly, as it is alleged, to endure medicinal pangs, partly to be charmed into better motives, and endowed at length with perennial existence.

No doubt He contemplates a transcendent future for His devoted friends. He even warns them of the moment when it will be expedient for them to leave the proscribed city, so as to escape the suffering that victors would inflict on the vanquished. But while he thus acts as the guardian of their lives, and no doubt intended to supply their wants, travel where they might, He has grander hopes for them when He shall return to confer on them glory, honor and incorruption. "If I go away I will come again and receive you unto Myself."

But so far as His enemies are concerned, and, as a rule, the dwellers in Jerusalem were hostile to His mission, His eye is on earth, and contemplates time-judgments alone. But these, trivial as some theorists may regard them, press heavy on His delicate sympathies; the prospect of their advent drew tears from his eyes:—"When He beheld the city, He wept over it, saying, O Jerusalem, O Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, how often would I have gathered thee," &c. He realized the agonies about to be endured, and the devastation awaiting the city He looked upon with solemn interest and pathetic fondness. He understood well that the approaching ruin resulted inevitably from their opposition to His Father's will. They might have been sheltered under the protection of Omnipotence. He would have opened His arms of refuge, but nothing induced them to come where the weary rest, and the helpless are safe.

§ 26. If the blessed Lord had known that after the desolation about to fasten on Jerusalem, and the vengeance in store for the vast multitudes within its walls,

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there was in addition a term, or, as some assert, an eternity, of suffering for each of the guilty, is it conceivable that He would have avoided, in this momentous discourse, all reference to the subject, whether there lay far down in its depths somewhat of encouragement or the blackest despair. Why does He detail the minor and short-lived in the flesh, and conceal or make no allusion to the great and probably the ceaseless woe? Might not a reference to its mysterious workings have aroused to tearful contrition some hostile ears, however encompassed with fanaticism and crime? Might it not have been most profitable to offenders while all the ages of the world advanced?

For myself, I see no explanation of His silence except one—there was no immortal futurity awaiting them. Long before He delivered these sentences over the famous city, He had publicly announced the exact position occupied by hearers under His ministry, and the end of those who should spurn His overtures:—"If ye believe not that I am He," Messiah—"ye shall DIE IN YOUR SINS." Theirs might be a cutting off prematurely; at all events, death, certain to arrive sooner or later, would be devoid of hope; for then would come no revival to everlasting life while duration continued. "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him;" such an one remains as the wrath placed him, and that is defined in the verse quoted by us a few lines above.—John iii., 36.

§ 27. When it is said, "It shall be more tolerable for Sodom . . . in the (a) day of judgment than for" Jerusalem, there can be no difficulty now in reaching its meaning, surely? In the age of Jeremiah, the Hebrew prophet, Jerusalem was punished—grievously punished—at the hands of the Chaldeans, and, in one of his lamentations, he furnishes us with a key, if key should be required, to the passage under discussion.

Lam. iv., 6.—"For the punishment of the iniquity of the daughter of my people is greater than the punishment of the sin of Sodom, that was overthrown as in a moment, and no hands stayed on her."

In the one case the punishment was accomplished as it were in the twinkling of an eye, a circumstance abundantly explained by us already; in the prophet's time the retribution was long, and involved a complication of miseries. It was a day, on the sacred soil, hot with indignation, from which there was no escape. Surrounding verses, of which we shall transcribe a few, abundantly manifest the corporeal sufferings and mental anguish the people, whom the Lord would have rejoiced to favor, were compelled to bear. Here are a few notes of the bitter wail that rose from morn till eve in the apostate city:—

Lam. iv., 4.—“The tongue of the sucking child cleaveth to the roof of his mouth for thirst; the young children ask bread, and no man breaketh it unto them.

v. 5.—“They that did feed delicately are desolate in the streets; they that were brought up in scarlet embrace dung hills.

v. 9.—“They that be slain with the sword are better than they that be slain with hunger; for these pine away, stricken through for want of the fruits of the field.

v. 10.—“The hands of the pitiful women have sodden their own children: they were their meat in the destruction of the daughter of my people.

v. 11.—“The Lord hath accomplished His fury; He hath poured out His fierce anger, and hath kindled a fire in Zion, and it hath devoured the foundations thereof.”

Put Jerusalem as it was situated about forty years after our Lord ascended to glory in room of the same city as it was in Jeremiah's day, and need anyone fail to comprehend this language?—“The punishment of the iniquity of the daughter of my people is greater than the punishment of the sin of Sodom.” Or, looking on a few years from the date of our Lord's discourse, anticipate the horrors of the siege, then read the prediction:—“It shall be more tolerable for Sodom . . . in the (a) day of judgment than for that city,” and who shall venture to deny that its import is luminous and impressive? There is no mystery about the lines; no warrant to find in them either future-world terrors or

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future-world consolations. The scene of both visitations was earth, and time has made a record of their disastrous peculiarities long ago.

How natural Jesus was! For the dead he wept because he understood their condition was a reality, not a semblance or pretence, as it would have been had they merely undergone a removal in their essential entirety as responsible agents, to another chamber of the universe. Over the doomed Jerusalem, for instance, He wept, realizing in his thoughts how sad it was to be cut off untimely from the endearments of life, and that perhaps after the sorest pangs which conquering ruthlessness was able to inflict. There being in His faith no after-torment such as dismal creed-makers have imagined, He could permit the woes that the siege and the banishment would occasion to affect His heart with the softest pity. The destined sufferers were unquestionably hostile to righteousness, and could not escape the perdition they were hastening towards; but though they were adverse to his mission, and would ere long dye their hands in His blood, they were still human beings susceptible of pain, and for whom slow agonies were in preparation. Not merely had they such a terrible ordeal in prospect, but in the depths of His nature, he estimated the loss in oblivion of capabilities that might have blossomed through endless years; the loss, in the grave's awful silence, of songs that might have been as incense burnt before God's throne during the same cycles. Jesus displaces nothing; never merges and loses the present in the magnitude of the future; simply because everything stands out before Him and is measured by His understanding in its true nature and proportions. Had He beheld with prophetic clearness in the regions of the great hereafter all those thoughtless members of our family re-endowed with life and environed with transforming moral influence, magical in its potency, the dream of some philanthropists, as they may be called, He might have withheld his tears, and reasoned thus with Himself:—"It is a waste of pity, a useless expen-

diture of sympathy ; their sorrow abides only for a moment, here or anywhere else, but eternal blessedness shall at length crown their renovated natures." But He wept, because His infallible penetration came close up to nature, and the unalterable purposes of His Father's will. No delusiveness made sport of his eyes. Hope—there was none, and he could but melt in sadness as the vivid and painful truth came forth to His unerring perception.

§ 28. In the month of November, 1882, when the author was collecting materials in view of composing this work, a couple of sad events happened in the same week, if not on the same day, about fifty miles west of this city, which furnish substantially a parallel to the incidents referred to by our Lord, and may aptly illustrate His prediction in the comparison instituted between them. The *first* event, that of a man accidentally struck by the fly-wheel of the engine under his management, and killed instantly. There was no reason to think he was conscious of the briefest pang, nervous or mental : it was life, it was death ; it was light, and in a moment, the thick darkness. The *second*, that of a clever young person in charge of extensive refining works, with whom the writer was well acquainted. Duty required him to proceed from one department of the premises to another, and in the transition he had to pass over a large tank filled with boiling water. Unfortunately the plank snapped asunder as he went along its surface, precipitating him in the boiling cistern. Though almost immediately drawn out, the injury he received was beyond repair, and in a few hours, partly of suffering, partly of insensibility through opiates administered to save him from torture, he breathed his last. The sympathy felt for him, while he lay a doomed man, was intense and universal in the district, and far beyond it.

Both of these were pitiful accidents—judgments we have no authority to call them,—yet who would not join in saying, certainly it was more tolerable in the day of calamity for him whose life vanished like a gleam of

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lightning, than for the other unfortunate who lingered for a time, death staring him in the face, and had such suffering, while it was permitted to exercise its power, as no one of us is able to fathom; and such as, in God's mercy, may we never have to endure.

§ 29. It only remains, in this division of our subject, to guard against the least misapprehension of the statement:—"It *shall be* more tolerable, etc." The Divine Speaker has his thoughts concentrated on the future; but on what future? Not, we repeat, on what is denominated the future state, or a future world, or post-resurrection mode of being; but on a crisis in the then yet unaccomplished history of the particular city he happened to mention, or on any city of the day in Palestine that should reject his message and ill-treat his consecrated heralds. When the calamities approaching the chosen land begin to descend on its cities, Jerusalem in particular, then, as if he had testified, shall it be more tolerable, or then shall it be reckoned* that the fate of Sodom was more endurable than any city's is felt to be that condemned the Son of God. Who is to institute the comparison? Mainly those who are plunged in the flood of woe when it rolls over the land. In their terror and protracted miseries they shall remember how the judgment that came upon Sodom was swift, exempting the doomed from any agonies of dissolution, and they will be prompted to estimate and to exclaim that the ancient vengeance was more supportable than that with which they are being made acquainted. The time to institute a comparison between the fate of the consumed city and Jerusalem's had not arrived when the Lord Jesus opened up his burden of woe. Near it was, however; and it rushed down with a vengeance. Thousands upon thousands in the midst of starvation and other cruelties were ready to cry out, Better for us to have perished on the plains of old—better had we never been born! They appealed to heaven for help, and the heavens bowed not down at their entreaty; they called on death, and even he, the terrible King, had no deliverance for them.

* See Robinson's Gk. Lexicon, *civil*, B. b.

IV.—SODOM'S RESTORATION.

§ 30. Even though it can be shown that the words spoken by Jesus—"It shall be more tolerable for Sodom," etc., are forced by a certain school of interpreters to express what they never were intended to convey, other passages in more ancient Scriptures are appealed to as warranting hope hereafter for the flame-devoured sinners, and by parity of reasoning for all who may have died irreconciled to the Lord of heaven and earth. Let us prominently exhibit those passages that the supposed authority for a "second-chance" doctrine may be fairly represented in this scrutiny, which aspires to be candid and friendly. Jerusalem is thus addressed in

Ezek. xvi., 49.—"Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness, was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.

v. 50.—"And they were haughty; and committed abomination before Me: therefore I took them away as I saw good.

v. 53.—"When I shall bring again the captivity of Sodom, then will I bring again the captivity of thy captives in the midst of them.

v. 55.—"When thy sisters, Sodom and her daughters, shall return to their former estate, then thou and thy daughters shall return to your former estate."

Bringing again their captivity—v. 53—is clearly parallel to what in v. 55 is described as "a return to their former estate; and according to Extract *a*, printed on p. 8, both of them imply "their resurrection from the grave."—Compare Extract *c*, on p. 9.

At a "Salvation Army" meeting in this city a few months ago, among other exercises the 1st chapter of James was read by a subordinate official, in which occurs the statement, "sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth

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death." Very plain words, not needing much explanation, surely ; but the Captain, one obviously "suckled in a creed outworn," added, with great solemnity :—"Death ! ah, the death which never dies !" The absurdity of which could easily have been exposed by any one venturing to ask :—"If there is a death that never dies, what sort of life would it be that never lives ?"

Though the interpretation of the words in Ezekiel is not, like the Captain's, self-contradictory and inherently absurd, it comes in with as little support in reason, and is another caution to readers, bearing in mind how fallible human teachers are, not to put implicit faith in mere assertions, when a responsible intellect is entitled to a fair measure of warrant for trust in any deliverance. Had the words of the prophet been as clear as the language in James, there would have been no ground to challenge the interpretation in the Extracts ; but they are not quite so transparent, and yet, by a due, yet not an exhausting amount of inquiry, an explanation might have been discovered much simpler and much more in accord with the Scriptural style of speech than the one presented in the quotations from the Restoration documents.

In extract *f* there is another example of this peculiar mode of interpretation backed by no words of justification, and, therefore, greatly to be suspected as probably, we do not write certainly, tending to mislead confiding uncritical inquiries. Here is the specimen referred to :—

"Jesus says it will be more tolerable for the Sodomites than for some of the Jews, in the day of Judgment—the Millennial or judgment (trial) age of the world."

If in the foregoing pages anything has been established, it is, that "the day of judgment" in our Lord's prophecy, is vastly different from the "millennial age of the world," begin when it may. To keep up a theory, by slipping in words, any passage having the faintest resemblance to one in demand for the occasion, can be made pleasantly efficient, till some intellect acute

and critical steps forward with power to expose the artifice—innocent, though not exempt from danger,—and dissolve the charm.

§ 31. The Old Testament has no revelation in direct and explicit terms of a future life for any human being; which leaves it unnecessary for us to remark, that the same volume contains no threats of vengeance beyond the grave, either of limited or limitless duration. The later Testament affirms that "our Saviour Jesus Christ hath . . . brought life and immortality to light through the gospel," 2 Tim. i., 10; a text which may be sufficiently confirmed and illustrated by such verses as these:—"I am the bread of life; he that eateth me shall live by me;" "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

One may respond, so far is that from being true, here in the verses about Sodom's captivity being brought again, and about her return to her former estate, is a veritable announcement of a *post*-resurrection life for those who perished in the wrath-flames of old. To which we answer, great ingenuity will be required to find it there. The words of the prophecy do not necessarily convey such a meaning; and unless we are guided by unerring authority to understand them in that sense, we had better try and find some other and more probable signification.

So far from being guided by plain predictions in the more ancient volume of inspiration as to a hereafter awaiting man, there is really no such testimony addressed to his hope or his fear, and on that account we feel strongly authorized to protest against the words of Ezekiel concerning the captivity of Sodom being brought back again, having this new and exceedingly weighty meaning imposed upon them. Adopting such a method of exposition is a tacit confession that the latest restoration theory, like others that have gone before it, is greatly in need of support.

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§ 32. Having found (see Section 30) that bringing the captivity of any place or city, means to restore the district or city to its "former estate," we have made one sure step towards solving the problem as to Sodom occupying our serious attention. The next point is, if possible, to determine the manner in which such expressions are used by the sacred writers; that is, the sense in which they employ such language; and, of course, the sense in which we are expected, nay bound, to understand it. All of which can only be accomplished by a patient study of the Word, so far as it bears on the question; and, in an inquiry of the kind, anything like assumption is reverently to be avoided, if we expect to come home with a sheaf of truth rejoicing. The inquiry need not detain us long; but it is unavoidable, if existing difficulties are to be removed.

JOB'S CAPTIVITY TURNED.

§ 33. There is something like a key to the phraseology, in

Job xlii., 10.—"And the Lord turned the captivity of Job . . . ; also the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before."

To turn the captivity, and to bring again the captivity, are, it must be remembered, exchangeable modes of speech; and the explanation of one of them becomes, of necessity, an explanation of the other. When and how was his captivity turned? On his being restored to health, riches, family; and, in numbers greater than formerly, sheep, camels, oxen and she asses; for disease had assailed his person, and ruin had swept over his household and possessions. In his case there was a merciful "restitution of all things," and fortunately the narrative, in the same chapter from which the verse is brought, furnishes details so minutely as to leave us thoroughly informed in regard to the sense in which his "captivity" was turned. *The restoration was in kind or value, but not in respect to identity.* He was resupplied, for example, with oxen, but the old animals

never came back ; he rejoiced once more over children born under his roof, but the beloved ones who had perished suddenly in their bloom and vigor never returned from the land of gloom. In Biblical phraseology, therefore, a captivity is turned when what is lost happens to be restored, as Job's sons, and flocks, and herds, and camels ; and in what sense the restitution did take place no candid mind can by any possibility misapprehend.

§ 34. Guided by what we have found in Job, is there not authority to say, for instance, that turning the captivity of a ruined land, would signify renewing its prosperity ; turning the captivity of an overthrown city would mean having it rebuilt, though not with the old stones, and mortar, and iron, and timbers ; and having it re-peopled, but not with the former citizens ? And when God decrees that any land or city shall remain desolate perpetually, his purpose might be expressed by the formula,—their captivity is never to be turned, or by some such statement as this—they are never to be restored to their former estate.

CAPTIVITIES TO BE TURNED.

§ 35. Now it happens that in Scripture we have examples of captivities that are to be turned, and cases in which it is clear captivities are never to be turned, though the formula in a negative shape may not be employed to express their doom. These cases will help us to understand the language about Sodom,—simple language, yet sorely removed by the "second chance" interpreters from its legitimate import.

MOAB.

a.—The Captivity of Moab is to be brought again, or turned.

The country of Moab, distinguished by mountains and fertile valleys, lay east and south-east of the Dead Sea ; its capital was Ar, the ancient site being still known as Rabbah. The inhabitants were called Moabites, as they were descendants of Moab, son of Lot.

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On the approach of Israel from Egypt, they acted, in selfish fear, with great inhumanity towards the passing refugees, who were traveling under the special guardianship of Heaven. Gross idolatry was their religion, and Chemish and Baal-peor were worshipped with impure ceremonies; with human sacrifice, sometimes. 2 Kings ii., 27. The Jewish prophets delivered many threatenings against these hereditary enemies of God and his people, as may be seen in Num. xxiv., 17; Ps. lx., 8; lxxxiv., 6; Jer. xxv., 9-30; xlviii., 42; and Amos ii., 1-3. One passage has been reserved for quotation, it is so graphic in depicting ruin:—

iii. Zeph. (B. C. 630) ii., 8.—"I have heard the reproach of Moab whereby they have reproached my people, and magnified themselves against their border.

v. 9.—"Therefore, as I live, saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Surely Moab shall be as Sodom . . . even the breeding of nettles, and salt pits, and a perpetual "—long lasting—"desolation."

v. 10.—"This shall they have for their pride, because they have reproached and magnified themselves against the people of the Lord of hosts.

v. 11.—"The Lord will be terrible unto them, etc."

All travelers, to use the words of another, concur in attesting the fulfilment of these gloomy predictions; they also describe the country as abounding in ruins—shattered tombs, cisterns, walls, temples, &c., proving that it once was a densely inhabited section of the earth.

But the sun of Moab has not set for ever, as we find in the 48th chapter of Jeremiah (B. C. 607), just noted, where, in its closing verse, this gracious oracle is written:—

"Yet will I bring again the captivity of Moab in the latter days, saith the Lord."

This becomes the more remarkable, when in looking back over the chapter we meet such records as these:—

v. 42.—"Moab shall be destroyed from being a people, because he hath magnified himself against the Lord.

v. 43.—"Fear, and the pit, and the snare, shall be upon thee, O inhabitant of Moab, saith the Lord.

v. 46.—“Woe be unto thee, O Moab! thy people of Chemosh perisheth: for thy sons are taken captives, and thy daughters captives.”

The land of Moab is still under the curse, for the “latter days”—on God’s part days of exceeding mercy to this long-polluted region—have not arrived. But unerringly, as the threatened judgments responded in due time to the prophetic voice, laying waste the towns and villages, and corn-bearing dales, so certainly shall the good—the blessed renovation—foretold by the same word come with its golden harvests of plenty, and songs of mirth and praise. The ancient capital will no doubt start up in architectural youth with its beautiful streets, and towers, and squares. It and other towns to be created will be distinguished for a population better far than the haughty, idolatrous hordes that were swept from the high-ways of life; and all over the wide expanse decorous and devout husbandmen and shepherds will cultivate the prolific fields and vineyards, and tend the flocks that whiten the hill-slopes, to be blighted no more with idolatrous cruelties and Heaven’s anger. Thus shall the captivity of Moab be turned; thus, as with the man of Uz, shall the land, now a waste, be brought back to its former condition; yea, to a condition of higher prosperity, giving peace and abundant supplies to a community better fitted to appreciate, and more willing to acknowledge, the Lord’s goodness than the debased multitudes of old who perished in their sins.

EGYPT.

b.—A Captivity of Egypt to be brought again.

Ezek. (B. C. 588) xxix. 14.—“I will bring again the captivity of Egypt, and will cause them to return into the land of Pathros”—Upper Egypt—“into the land of their habitation; and they shall be there a base kingdom.”

v. 15.—“It shall be the basest of the kingdoms; neither shall it exalt itself any more above the nations,” etc.

In the 13th verse, it is said the land and cities of Egypt are to be laid waste for forty years, and the people scattered among the nations. Then, we are assured,

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they are to be gathered out from among the people with whom they had been compelled to mingle. Their return to their own land, and the revival of former industries, and the re-establishment of national functions is "bringing again the captivity of Egypt,"—really an emancipation of the people from foreign servitude, and a solace to their patriotic feelings, though in consequence of some deep degeneracy in spirit and character they are fated to be henceforth the basest of kingdoms. To the present hour they remain such a community.

Now, be it carefully observed, the whole nation involved in this prophecy is represented in ethnic or everyday human life. Reference there is none to future-world and supernatural changes in their being and position with a view to benignant eternal results. When the people were restored to their ancestral heritage their captivity was turned, and many, we may be positive, who had been carried off bondsmen forty years previously, never returned; and many new members of the community, added by birth in the meanwhile to the Egyptian census proper, shared in the public trials and public mercies. The dead slept on where friendly hands had laid them; and those added to the great family while in exile blended with the living streams as they set their faces towards what was known in their hearts, and annals, and traditions as—fatherland.

JERUSALEM.

c.—*The Captivity of Jerusalem and the Hebrew Nation to be turned again.*

The captivity of Jerusalem, means its overthrow; turning its captivity means its restoration; that is, a new town built on the old site, and called by the same name. Not, by any means, the ancient city miraculously restored, and identical in every atom and arrangement.

Turning the captivity of the nation, means bringing the *then living Jews* from among the kingdoms where they and their forefathers had resided in their respective

generations during the dispersion that followed the razing of the city under Titus, the imperial general. Not, again, the miraculous reproduction of all who perished at the time of the great siege, and during the scattering that followed its complicated horrors.

Here are specimens, and only specimens are required, of the rich prophecies bearing on the magnificent prospects before the nation and their capital:—

Deut. (B. C. 1451) xxx., 1.—“And it shall come to pass, when all these things are come upon thee, the blessing and the curse, which I have set before thee, and thou shalt call them to mind among all the nations, whither the Lord thy God hath driven thee.

v. 2.—“And shalt return unto the Lord thy God, and shalt obey his voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart and with all thy soul.

v. 3.—“That then the Lord thy God will *turn thy captivity*, and have compassion upon thee, and will return and *gather thee from all the nations*, whither the Lord thy God hath scattered thee.

v. 4.—“If any of thine be driven out unto the outmost parts of heaven, from thence will the Lord thy God gather thee, and from thence will he fetch thee.

v. 5.—“And the Lord thy God will bring thee into the land which thy fathers possessed, and thou shalt possess it; and He will do thee good, and *multiply thee above thy fathers.*”

Let the animated prophetic style be carefully noticed. The people listening are represented as having been driven away among the nations; as being gathered out from among the nations; as being brought into the land owned by their fathers. The gathering has not taken place yet! The dispersion happened a few years after our Lord's removal from earth; and the prediction was uttered nearly 1500 years before that event. How could the hearers writhe under the miseries of the siege, which happened so many hundreds of years after their day? How can they be restored to the ancient city and land? Some may hold by a resurrection and other miraculous proceedings. But rightly understood the accomplishment of the prophecy involves no such supernatural

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action. Understand the venerable Seer to regard the nation *as a unity*, like a stream flowing down time, and his address becomes instantly simple, eloquent and powerful. The whole of this most remarkable oration, so to speak, abounds with illustrations of the same figure of speech. To put this beyond misapprehension, take these as instances: Deut. xxviii., 49.—"The Lord shall bring a nation against *thee*." Against the listening crowd? No; but against their descendants at a particular date far down the ages. Verse 50.—"He shall eat the fruit of *thy* cattle and the fruit of *thy* land." The animals and fruit belonging to the hearers? No; but to those who will be their lineal descendants onwards in the centuries. Once more, v. 53.—"*Thou* shalt eat the fruit of *thine own* body," etc. Were the fathers and mothers present to do that? No; but fathers and mothers who would be alive when the predicted siege, deep down in the future, should happen.

Jeremiah (B. C. 590) xxxiii., 25.—"Thus saith the Lord, if my covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth;

v. 26.—"Then will I cast away the seed of Jacob, and David my servant, so that I will not take any of his seed to be rulers over the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob: for I will cause *their captivity to return*, and have mercy on them."

This oracle will have its fulfilment in the days when the "Branch of righteousness" grows up unto David, and executes judgment in the land.—v. 15.

Ezek. (B. C. 587) xxxix., 25.—"Therefore thus saith the Lord God, now will I *bring again the captivity of Jacob*, and have mercy upon the whole house of Israel, and will be jealous for my holy name;

v. 26.—"After that *they have borne their shame*, and all their trespasses, whereby they have trespassed against me, when they dwelt safely in their land, and none made them afraid.

v. 27.—"When I have brought them again from the people, and gathered them out of their enemies' lands, and am sanctified in them in the sight of many nations;

v. 28.—“Then shall they know that I am the Lord their God, which caused them to be *led into captivity* among the heathen : but I have gathered them unto their own land, and have left none of them any more there.

v. 29.—“Neither will I hide my face any more from them : for I have poured out of my Spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God.”

Joel (B. C. 800) iii., 1.—“Behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall *bring again the captivity* of Judah and Jerusalem.

v. 17.—“So shall ye know that I am the Lord your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain ; then shall Jerusalem be holy, and there shall no stranger pass through her any more.

v. 20.—“Judah shall dwell for ever, and Jerusalem from generation to generation.”

Amos (B. C. 787) ix., 14.—“And I will *bring again the captivity* of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them ; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof ; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them.

v. 15.—“And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God.”

Zeph. (B. C. 630) iii., 20.—“At that time will I bring you again, even in the time that I gather you : for I will make you a name and a praise among all people of the earth when I *turn your captivity before your eyes*, saith the Lord.”

All of which, a little time since, was summed up thus by “Rabbi Ben Esdra” in an epistle to his dearest friend, “Rabbi Ben Israel,” both fictitious characters, and written from Rome, as the author feigns, some time during the 15th century :—

“And then in sorrow for this grievous fate
In which we are plunged, I comfort me with this—
That He, the Eternal One, hath promised us
That we at last shall from our sorrow rest,
And from our fear, and from our bondage dire,
And build again our new Jerusalem.”

—Blackwood, Nov., 1830.

§ 36. In these instances, Moab, Egypt, Jerusalem—a turning of their captivity is announced ; signifying their being restored sooner or later to their original state. In other words, there is to be a reversal of the judgments executed upon them.

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CAPTIVITIES NOT TO BE TURNED.

§ 37. We shall now take an example of a region whose captivity is *not* to be turned, though that form of speech is not used to express the doom; to put it otherwise, prosperity shall, by Divine ordination, revisit it no more while the world lasts. The land referred to is

EDOM.

Mal. i., 4.—"Edom saith, We are impoverished, but we will return and build the desolate places; thus saith the Lord of hosts, they shall build, but I will throw down; and they shall call them, The border of wickedness, and, The people against whom the Lord hath indignation for ever."

The Edom spoken of is a mountainous country south of the Dead Sea, extending to the Gulf of Arabia, with a rich soil in the valleys, and a salubrious climate. It was called after Esau, or Edom, brother of Jacob, who settled there. The territory was about 100 miles long, by 15 or 20 wide. From the Greeks it received the name of Idumea. In the time of their prosperity, one has written, the Edomites were numerous and powerful, devoted to commerce by land and sea; also to agriculture and the raising of cattle. But neither their strong rock fortresses, nor their gods could save the country from being turned into a desert; and in that becoming a striking monument of the truth of prophecy. Travelers find over its surface, once signalized by fertility, traces of many towns and villages, long since laid waste. At this day, within the ancient boundaries, desolation reigns supreme. The Lord was greatly offended by the inhabitants of Edom, and commissioned his illumined servants to publish his resolutions that as a people they should at length be blotted out for ever, as a cloud vanishes from the sky. Their offence in his sight may be summed up, as gross and inveterate idolatry, in the first place; and second, as cruel treatment of his chosen people, who, by the way, were their blood relations, and entitled, therefore, to kindly sympathy in the hour of their afflictions. Amos writes in this manner:—

1., 11.—"Thus saith the Lord for these transgressions of Edom, and for four—or, for the many transgressions of Edom—"I will not turn away the punishment thereof: neither will he disburse his brother with the sword, and he will keep his anger, and his anger did tear perpetually, and he kept his anger for ever."

When the Amorites from Egypt towards Canaan approached the border of Edom, they, to the shame of its inhabitants, were refused undisturbed transit through the country to Moab; and when Nebuchadnezzar, centuries afterwards, besieged Jerusalem, they joined in the attack and encouraged his violence to tear up the very foundations of the consecrated city. By these acts the anger of the Lord was kindled, and according to Malachi, quoted above, it is to remain unquenched while years abide.—See Jer. xlix., 13, 17, 18, 20; Ezek. xxv., 12, 13, 14; xxxv., 2-15; and Obadiah. Though the special words about *not* turning Edom's captivity are unemployed, its appointed permanent ruin under God's "indignation for ever," holds the dread reality which the negative formula would have conveyed, and, in fact, is even more exactly expressive than the formula itself, unaccompanied with an authentic explanation, would be. Edom then, unlike Moab, is hopelessly exiled from the Divine favor. "Thus saith the Lord God, when the whole earth rejoiceth, I will 'make thee'—Edom—"desolate."—Ezek. xxxv., 14.

Suppose it had been written, The Lord will turn again the captivity of Edom, what would have been intimated thereby? This, that at some future day the desolation would be exchanged for tillage and industry in a variety of forms; towns and hamlets would reappear, and the noise of merry children would gladden the streets; cattle would wander over the slopes, and flocks pasture on the verdant mountain slopes. Perhaps also over the pleasant scenes thankful hearts in great numbers would be musical with tones of gratitude to Him from whom descends each good and perfect gift. The promise, had it been written in the Book, would have been actualized in this way, more or less com-

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pletely; and nothing more would be required to exhaust the catalogue of mercies God would bestow on it as a land re-favored, and on those who, again taking possession of its hills and vales, would resume the social and civil and political duties their ancestors laid aside when the fatal scourge of war, or internal furies, drove them into exile out of which is no return. To suppose that far higher results—individual resurrection, gospel disclosures, moral transformations, enrolments for eternal life, should also be reckoned among the heritage of the generations of debased idolaters, when the words of promise necessarily include no such complex idea, and when there is no explicit warrant in Scripture to extract it from them, is vastly more than the present writer is able to discover. Enough: and now we pass on, leaving Edom to its sepulchral darkness, and irreparable desolation, saddened and warned by the vision and the interpretation thereof:—"The people against whom the Lord hath indignation for ever."

TYRE.

Once more, and very briefly, Tyre furnishes an example of a city, unlike Jerusalem, whose captivity is not of limited duration, though the negative formula is not employed to describe her fate: in other words she, as a city, remains, by ordination of the Eternal, prostrated for all time.

A word of explanation before reading her doom. Tyre, like Sidon, near at hand, was an ancient Phœnician city located in the western part of Judea, on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. It engaged extensively in commerce, heaped up riches, freely spent on splendor and luxury. The world over, its purple dye was held in great repute. In the time of our Lord, the place was likely still celebrated for its magnificence and foreign trade, having recovered from the overthrow inflicted on it, first by Nebuchadnezzar, and then by Alexander the Great. Appearances, there are none now, of the famous city. Its site is the residence of a few miserable fisher-

men, who spread their nets on the rock once covered with palatial abodes, and the emporiums of the costly products of other climes.

Hear, now, what some of the prophets were authorized to make known :—

Ezek. xxvi., 2.—“Son of man, because that Tyrus hath said against Jerusalem, Aha, she is broken that was the gates of the people ; she is turned unto me ; I shall be replenished, now she is laid waste.

v. 3.—“Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I am against thee, O Tyrus, and I will cause many nations to come up against thee, as the sea causeth his waves to come up.

v. 4.—“And they shall destroy the walls of Tyrus, and break down her towers ; I will also scrape her dust from her, and make her like the top of a rock.

v. 5.—“It shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea, &c.

v. 14.—“*thou shalt be built no more* : for I the Lord have spoken it.”

Compare chap. xxvii., 2, 27, 35 ; Joel iii., 4-8 ; Amos i., 9, 10 ; Zach. ix., 3, 4.

We have reserved till now the two following passages on the perpetuity of the ruin in which the city was submerged :—

Ezek. xxvi., 21.—“I will make thee a terror, and *thou shalt be no more* ; though thou be sought for, yet *shalt thou never be found again*, saith the Lord God.

Ezek. xxvii., 36.—“Thou shalt be a terror, and *never shalt be any more*.”

So Tyre, in this resembling Edom, is the people against whom the Lord hath indignation for ever, and he who can distil comfort from the words we have transcribed as to both has a chemistry at command more wonderful than his who could extract gold from snow-drifts, and nourishment from grains of sand.

§ 38. What we have perused in Scripture concerning Moab, Egypt, and Jerusalem, will help us readily to understand the prediction in favor of Sodom and her daughters, that is, villages and towns in her neighbor-

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hood, that she as a centre and fountain of population has helped to create (Jer. l., 40), remaining yet to be accomplished. The words of promise read in this way:—

Ezek. xvi., 53.—“I shall bring again their captivity, the captivity of Sodom and her daughters.

v. 55.—“thy (Jerusalem’s) sisters, Sodom and her daughters, shall return to *their former estate*,” etc.

Here we have the same form of speech that has occupied our thoughts already, *bringing again captivity*, which in verse 55 is repeated, though in different words, somewhat explanatory also of the first statement, *returning to a former estate*, whatever both of them may indicate.

Now, here we solicit special attention to this condition, which seems to be essential, that no explanation can be satisfactory that does not include the literal restoration of Sodom, the city, as its prominent and central idea. Sodom was destroyed, and that we all understand, without a Daniel’s help to make it intelligible to our faculties; and there can be no mystery about her restoration—another Sodom will ultimately be constructed on the site of the ancient town. Job’s cattle were restored? not the old animals that once grazed his fields, however. Job’s wealth came back? but not the old riches, dissipated in the crash of ruin. In receiving these—new cattle and new riches—his captivity would be so far turned. But while a new Sodom, like the restored Jerusalem of the prophets, will spring up some time in the future, occupying the ground where the ancient city stood, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it, new inhabitants will also occupy its extending streets. The old population that perished in the burning? No! When as to his family, Job’s captivity was turned, the old dear ones who perished so suddenly returned, not from the dust to his once-more prosperous home, although other sons and daughters were born to him in their stead, not quite allaying, it may be supposed, the good man’s paternal sorrow. A new city, then, no, the

ancient town miraculously brought back to view with its identical stones, and timbers, and metals, and ornaments, and forms, and lines, will reappear on the original locality, to bear the familiar name, and it may be by the virtues of its inhabitants to redeem it from reproach; and a new race, not those who were swiftly annihilated amid their iniquities, but a race likely in some way kindred to those consumed in the judgment, will gradually renew the hum of traffic as in those early times, and once more gather harvests from the luxuriant fields, over which desolation brooded so long after the fire-shower fell from heaven.

Does not this view of the prophecy as to Sodom, which we humbly advance as the only rational one, explain, and harmonize with that account in Jude which represents Sodom and her associates in doom, as "set forth for an example, suffering"—literally, held under—"the vengeance of eternal fire;" that is, fire, like the phrase "eternal judgment," whose consequences are perpetual. Not a hint of hope for the consumed is given. Merow has to all appearances turned its back on them for aye. Their case is one of permanent retribution. The city was destroyed, so were they. The old city never reappears, though a new one shall occupy its ground. The reprobate company devoured by the flames returns no more for evil or for good; though a new race shall people the new city to arise where the old one stood; about which exact locality we need not create for ourselves any concern. He who inspired the prophecy will arrange for its literal fulfilment in due season.

This section cannot be better ended than by reciting the fact that the level land on which Sodom was built formed a portion of the territory the Lord assigned by covenant to Abraham and his seed for a perpetual inheritance. Gen. xv., 10. Over it Solomon actually had dominion, and over it a greater than Solomon will yet exercise benignant sway. This plain—the plain of Siddim—was fair and fruitful, like an earthly paradise, for

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the soil was of admirable quality, and meandering streams all over its expanse refreshed and fertilized the fields. The time, surely, cannot be very remote now when the long-obliterated city shall rise from its ashes, and sweet voices in the cities and villages, representing those that vanished on that morning of fire, echo and re-echo the joyful strains:—"The Lord turned again our captivity, and we were like them that dream."

§ 39. In the "introductory" portion, it was explained that the author had not time to examine all the arguments of those who contend for "another chance," and that attention would mainly be directed to the case of Sodom, on which great stress is laid in productions advocating the new theory. That case we have examined at length, and as fairly as it was in our power to discuss its merits. God grant that what has been presented may turn out exceedingly useful in accomplishing the object for which the examination was written.

V.—OTHER PASSAGES SUPPOSED TO FAVOR RESURRECTION TO A SECOND OPPORTUNITY.

§ 40. Before winding up with a few parting words, it may not be unprofitable to mention, however briefly, several of the positions in the form of passages that might have been more fully considered had circumstances permitted the author to do so. Other laborers will doubtless perform the service, in the interests of truth, and as a guide and solace to perishing men.

a.—Psalm lxxii., 11.—“All nations shall serve him.”

v. 17.—“All nations shall call Him blessed.”

By general consent, this is a Messianic Psalm, for to no one except the world's coming King can its exalted representations be applied. Before Him alone shall all Monarchs and Presidents bow; His regal name alone shall endure for ever; He alone is able to confer blessings on earth's continents and isles. “All nations shall serve Him.”

All the dead nations, it has been said, called up from the grave, in addition to all the then breathing nations, and their subsequent representatives in the line of natural descent while the Adamic race continues to be propagated.

Unfortunately for such teaching, the dead are not specified here at all. Of course, it is easy to say “the dead nations,” but it would be just as easy to say, half of them, a third of them, a tithe of them, or anything else; and they would all be equally unauthorized. I doubt not had the prophet witnessed in vision the buried nations resurrected and ultimately rendering homage to the Christ of God, he would have said so; but, to all appearance, no such spectacle presented itself to his

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illuminated foresight. The fair and natural course is to take this, and all kindred language, just as it stands, adding nothing to it, taking nothing from it. Then it expresses the blessed certainty, a certainty so often foretold in the hallowed writings, that when "the latter days" have commenced, and earth's predestined Sovereign, in glory worthy of His name, has visibly begun to exercise His benign control over all kindreds and tongues alive at that period, they will own His right to supreme dominion, and partake of felicities such as the long distracted planet had never seen from its earliest hours. In other words, piety and righteousness, as a rule, will be the prominent characteristics of the nationalities inhabiting the globe then, as ungodliness, paganism, immortality, vice, and, where Christianity has been professed, Christian formalism, as a rule, characterized the nations during antecedent times.

b.—Isaiah xxv., 8.—"He will swallow up death in victory," etc.

This passage will come naturally into view along with 1 Cor. xv., 54, to be found in its proper place hereafter in this series of texts.

c.—Ezek. xxxvii., 12.—"Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel."

It is impossible to manifest in a better way that this passage encourages nothing like "another opportunity," or restorationism, than by offering an interpretation that seems fairly entitled to be pronounced simple, natural and satisfactory. To reach it, the investigating mind will please observe:—

1st.—That the subject of the prophecy is "the WHOLE HOUSE of Israel,"—v. 11.

2nd.—That when the "Lord God" says to Ezekiel,—
"these bones are the whole house of Israel,"—v. 11, he makes no reference whatever to dead Israelites; nor does he liken his people in their then Babylonish captivity, nor at any period of their judicial sufferings there-

after, reside among the nations where they may, to marrowless bones, such as the prophet beheld in the valley of vision. All this we hold to be warranted by—

v. 11—"Then he"—"the Lord God," v. 9.—"Said unto me, Son of man, these bones are,"—that is, *represent*—"the whole house of Israel; behold THEY SAY, our bones are dried, and our hope is lost; we are cut off for our parts."

We are justified in making the words "they say" emphatic, as we have done above, for there lies the key to the 12th verse, and there is the origin of the bone-symbolism explained. "They say": it was *not the Lord who said so*, or authorized them to speak in that fashion. "Our bones," they wailed out, "are dried—our hope is lost—we are cut off for our parts," or, as for us we are cut off. Palpably the language of guilty unbelief. Promises, made long centuries before the speakers lived, that they would be restored to the land of their fathers, were to all appearance an utter failure, and despair was their song—"Our hope is lost!" As if they had exclaimed:—"We can only compare ourselves to the dead, for there seems to be as much prospect of the grand sayings bearing on our national future coming true, as there is that dried bones will again be clothed with flesh, and re-animated for the functions of life." Rank unbelief, isn't it?—often illustrated in Jewish history, and, ah me! in other histories beside. 3rd.—Taking their own graphic representation of themselves, the Lord God says to his listening prophet:—These bones are (that is, *stand for*) the whole house of Israel; or, My people represent themselves, and their prospects, by bones that are very dry. Then having unveiled, as it were, their symbolic picture of themselves, and their apparent destiny, suggested by their unbroke exile and not by inspired predictions, the Lord proceeds to rebuke their lack of faith in his promises, and, as a great mercy, to add another assurance that he will transport them yet to their own vales; in a word, "turn their captivity," and convert into solid fact all that he has ever spoken concerning their exalted national fortunes,

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Thus we may understand him to expostulate with them :
 "Though, in consequence of delays, you reckon your case desperate, even as the hope of dry bones becoming living men seems to you ; it is not so. O my people, for 'I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel'—v. 12. In other language, however adverse circumstances might be to the fulfilment of their expectations, what had been foretold would inevitably, as it were of necessity, come to pass at the predestined hour.
 4th.—Because the prophecy refers to "latter day" times, the Israelites represented as saying, some in one land, some in another, "Our hope is gone," are probably those who will be alive, for the Abrahamic tide of humanity never evanishes, when the prophecy comes to be made good, though it need not be restricted to them. Many a time since Ezekiel delivered his garden has the complaint been heard from Jewish lips, "Our bones are dried—our hope is lost ;" yet the Lord has never banished the murmurers from his affection and care. His promises are yea and amen. At length as a people they shall possess the soil owned by their ancestors, and witness there amid transports of joy not merely a political but also a religious restitution, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. Read verses 13 and 14. 5th.—The unlimited power of "the Lord God" is first represented as operating marvelously in the vision-valley so as to prepare the way for the most gracious declaration in v. 12.—"O my people, I will open your graves," &c. Their case on their own estimate included not one atom of encouragement ; yet the Lord could triumph over difficulties even more formidable than their unbelief conjured into being. The very dead he would revive, were that essential to the completion of his designs. "Is anything too hard for the Lord?"

d.—Hosea viii., 14.—"I will ransom them from the power of the grave ; I will redeem them from death : O death, I will be thy plagues"—(plague ?)—"O grave, I will be thy destruction ; repentance shall be hid from mine eyes."

The circumstances in which this verse was written enable us to understand its meaning. The date of the composition by the prophet, who seems to have resided in Judah, was some five years before the ten tribes, composing the kingdom of Israel proper, were carried off by Shalmanezzer from the land of their fathers; which event happened 720 years before Christ. The whole fourteen chapters have almost exclusive reference to those tribes; and Hosea seems to have been raised up to expose and condemn their persistent idolatries; to announce, as a final warning, their approaching conquest, with accompanying terrible slaughter, by the proud Assyrian monarch, and their removal chiefly eastward to his land, and also to countries beyond it. "My God will cast them away, because they did not hearken to him, and they shall be wanderers among the nations."—Hos. ix., 17; with which compare 2 Kings, chap. xvii. and xviii., 9-12. Apparently, while the mass of the people were to be carried towards Babylon and adjoining quarters, some of them would find their way to Egypt, either by flight or military transport, as we are told in chap. ix., 3rd v.—"They shall not dwell in the Lord's land, but Ephraim"—chief tribe of the ten, and in a sense typical of them, so far as Divine favor was concerned—"shall return to Egypt;" and in v. 6., "Egypt shall gather them up, Memphis shall bury them." There is no evidence that after their removal from Palestine by Shalmanezzer, they as a people ever came back to their own country. Up to this hour, in fact, Hosea's predictions are fulfilling; they are still without a king and a prince—chap. iii., 4; still wandering, obscure and weary exiles, among the nations.

For a kingdom like that of Israel, small and insignificant besides the great nationalities of earth, and what of the people as were spared in the sieges and conflicts to be carried off by the victor, and ruthlessly driven towards every point, like chaff before the wind, seemed but a prelude to their final obliteration. Every road was rough, every privation wearied their endurance, every

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pang that the wretched can suffer would pile up misery in their daily experience. Strangers in strange lands, without friends to alleviate their misfortunes, without one kindly, sustaining gleam of hope:—so the stars beheld them in their nightly courses. Life in such circumstances was bereft of the last solace, and grew all but intolerable. Death, to use the graphic language of this prophet, stood in front of them, a huge wild beast, with expanded jaws ready to devour the outcasts. Human reason would naturally expect that their memorial would soon perish utterly. They surely threatened to become as "Sodoma, and . . . like unto Gomorrha."

But the God of the Patriarchs, from whom they are descended, has otherwise decreed. He wills that natural decay, superinduced by strange climates and other kindred influences, shall not waste them to the last individual, as some races have been made to decline and disappear. He wills in defiance of toil, and barbarous oppression, inflicted by their tyrannical masters, wherever they may reside, to preserve the stream of their tribal life and history, generation after generation, flowing down a time; and in "the latter days" to perform marvels on their behalf. And it is this very truth—their preservation *as a race*—that we understand to be announced in these highly-wrought clauses:—

"I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death; O death, I will be thy plagues"—plague?—"O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall not be hid from mine eyes."

Death, like the grave, is here personified, and surely it is unnecessary to observe, that "death" is no more a being than is famine, fever, plague, or any other ill to which men are exposed. We must not suffer ourselves to be carried away by the language of imagination. Poetry suits the prophetic mind, but if we are to understand things clearly, we must look beyond figures to the simple and exact idea which, as a garment, they cover and render picturesque. Death is merely the loss of life. Victory over death may be obtained; or man may

be saved from death, in one of two modes : *first*, by being preserved from dying ; or, *second*, by being endowed with incorruptible life at the moment of resurrection, which revival is the transcendent gift of Divine power. The second is a New Testament idea, or prophetic intimation, and we fear there is a tendency with interpreters to put New Testament ideas into Old Testament words, when words are found, as here, capable of being so treated, without any great apparent violence to the phraseology. The practice has a pious aspect, but it is essentially at variance with defensible exegesis and Scriptural warrant. It rests in the sound of terms, rather than penetrates down to their accurate meaning, chiefly determinable by the connection in which they stand, and the time and circumstances in which they were spoken.

By a close examination of this remarkable text, it will be discovered that it consists of two parallels—statements of equal or similar import. The first consists of the two first clauses, the one beginning, "I will ransom them," etc. ; the other, "I will redeem them," etc. Parallel second consists of the third and fourth clauses, "O death, I will be thy plague ;" and "O grave, I will be thy destruction." As to the final clause, "repentance shall not be hid from mine eyes," it is simply a declaration on God's part of his unalterable resolve to execute what has been announced in the antecedent members of the passage.

According to this promise, then, the Israelites, or the ten tribes, for they are the subject of the prophecy, are to be ransomed from the grave, or redeemed from death—what does that mean? Resurrected, all of them, at length from the dust? No ; that is not the idea. The idea is this : they shall be saved from dying out, or from national extinction. In other words the people will be providentially kept in being as a race—a fate that to all human appearance seemed most likely to overthrow them. It is not a question, we distinctly and most respectfully contend, of individuals, or of personal salvation of any sort, but of race or tribal perpetuity. Indivi-

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duals will die, generation after generation will die; but the Abrahamic blood, the race issuing from him as a fountain, shall continue in being in spite of every element adverse to its indefinite prolongation.

Often, we need hardly observe to one familiar with the Bible, is this style of speech, or a form identical with it, exemplified in the more ancient Scriptures, and more particularly in the Psalms. We shall now quote some instances:—

Job v., 20.—“In famine he shall redeem thee from death.”

Not out of death, but keep thee from dying.

Job xxxiii., 30.—“To bring back his soul”—his life, or himself—“from the pit”—the grave—“to be enlightened with the light of the living.”

That is, to save him, not out of death, but from dying, that he might continue to enjoy the light of the living.

Psalms xxx., 3.—“O Lord, thou has brought up my soul”—me—“from the grave; thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit.”

Here the second part of the verse clearly explains the first:

Psalms xxxiii., 19.—“To deliver their soul”—or them—“from death, and keep them alive in famine.”

Delivering them from death is, keeping them alive in the time of famine.

Psalms lvi., 13.—“thou hast delivered my soul”—or me—“from death.”

That is, preserved my life.

Psalms xlix., 7.—“None of them”—(who trust in their wealth, v. 6)—“can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him.”

v. 9.—“That he should live for ever and not see corruption.”

Not redeem, or ransom, him out of the grave, but save his life—preserve him among the living.

Psalms lxxxix., 48.—“What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? shall he deliver his soul”—himself—“from the hand of the grave?”

"Deliver himself," meaning preserve himself from dying.

Isaiah xlii., 4.—"Who redeemeth thy life"—or, thee—"from destruction."

Redeemeth, saves thee from dying, in other words. The *second parallel* is—

"O death, I will be thy plague ;"

"O grave, I will be thy destruction."

Now, the import of these lines is really the same substantially as that of the former two, only it is intensified, and more perfectly, as it were absolutely, expressed. The meaning of the four is—the people, or tribes, about to be exiled from their homes and country will, as we have already stated, be providentially, miraculously—almost so at the least—preserved ; that is ; their seed shall be preserved to far distant ages, and for grand purposes too, when the plans of God come to be translated into historical events, and those plans or purposes we shall discover in a little while.

So far as their interests extend, death is as it were to be fatally smitten by the plague ; and when an animated creature, for such by a vigorous stroke of imagination death is here represented to be, is so visited, its injurious capacity is over. Likewise, so far as their interests extend, the grave or Sheol, also personified, is in truth destroyed already, and when destroyed it can swallow victims no more. In other words, they, as a race, can no more be deprived of life than if such a thing as dying and the grave were unknown in the world. Individuals and generations bearing their ancient name may die and go down to the dust ; but enduring existence is reserved for the race, as a race, to which they belong.

The *first parallel* represents them, or the Israelitish race as reserved from the dominion of death and the grave ; the *second*, as a higher pledge of safety, represents death and the grave as bereft of power to do them harm ; in fact, if we can ascend to the idea, as for them, or their race, done away with,—non-existent. All of

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which when reduced to its simple and final conception is, they are destined to continue, under God's care, as a people unto perpetuity.

While this verse is an assurance of the most positive kind that no circumstances, however malignant, in their approaching banishment would be permitted to wither them on the stem of being, and so terminate God's dealings with them for ever, it is surrounded with passages uttering in effect the same thing in another form, with the addition of intimations bearing on the grand future in reserve for them. So the two prophecies confirm and in a measure explain each other. Our reference is to such announcements as these :—

Chapter iii., 4.—“For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, &c.

v. 5.—“Afterwards shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king: and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days.”

If they are to be alive “in the latter days,” then God must have redeemed them “from death;” that is, according to the explanation given before, preserved them as a people for sovereign reasons and gracious purposes of his own.

They are to return, and seek “David their King.” Not the historical David, but an ideal David,—the Messiah,—emphatically Sovereign of the Jews, who is yet to be manifested in surpassing splendor as the head of the Kingdom of God. In Him the promises made to the historical David are to receive their perfect realization. That sovereignty is drawing near, and when The Christ rules over the nations, Israelites will come back from their long exile, and seek to behold His face in peace. Nor will they entreat in vain.

Chapter xiii., 9.—“O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help.”

These obstinate idolaters were about to endure untold, and apparently interminable calamities, but God, the God of their fathers, will not cast them off for aye. He will be their help.

v. 7.—“I will be thy King.”

And such He will be in the person of his Son, whose rightful throne is Mount Zion.

Finally, the 14th chapter is, so to speak, prepared for loving proclamation when the time to favor the exiled tribes is come. The Lord hath said, chap. xi., 8, “How shall I give thee up Ephraim?” the word including all Israel; and through the night of ages He has beheld the objects of his mysterious affection far from the clime of promise, and far from rest. He longs for their return; and he has tender things—things of infinite pity—to say in their hearing, when, like prodigal children, they begin to consider their ways, and the meaning of the sorrows heaped on their hearts.

Chap. xiv., 1.—“O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.

v. 2.—“Take with you words, and turn to the Lord; say unto him, Take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves”—offerings, praises—“of our lips.

v. 4.—“I will heal their backslidings, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away.

v. 5.—“I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his fruits as Lebanon.

v. 6.—“His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive tree, and his smell as Lebanon.

v. 8.—“Ephraim shall say, WHAT HAVE I TO DO ANY MORE WITH IDOLS?”

2.—Acts iii., 21.—“Whom”—Jesus Christ—“the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God had spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.”

Of course, it is easy to assert that this “restitution of all things” includes the resurrection of all the dead, and their ultimate salvation under extraordinary influences; but to back it with substantial proof is altogether a different matter. And it must be proved. The special revelation as to Sodom, does not, when closely investigated, favor the supposition in any degree, though it is set forth as of gigantic force in support of the latest theory of universal human recovery.

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Another fatal objection is, that the resurrection never happens to be plainly revealed by any of the more ancient prophets "since the world began." Indeed, a future life is unknown in their writings for any class of men. The prophets do foreshadow, in countless passages, a coming King and a glorious kingdom; but he who seeks for light on the secrets of the grave will search the old scriptural pages wearily in vain. The restitution granted to pious Job, when his captivity was turned, may well place expositors on their guard when they meet with language resembling that we are remarking upon; so apt, from its unlimited nature, to be misunderstood.

f.—Rom. xi, 26.—"And so all Israel shall be saved; as it is written, There shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob."

In this chapter the renowned Apostle describes with amazing foresight the transition and hopes and prospects of his beloved people when the Deliverer, loaded with celestial gifts, issues forth from Zion—"All Israel shall be saved," then. At the date of his epistle to the Romans, only a few of them were converts to Christianity; when the prediction is fulfilled, and fail it cannot, the great mass will own him as their Saviour and King. Eyes have been opened, and his glory has at length been discovered. So that then the moral condition of the nation shall be reversed from what it was in the earliest years of Grace, and from what it has been since the Saviour presented himself as the man of sorrows. From that hour, speaking generally, all of Abrahamic descent have been hostile to the Son of God; at the era of manifestation to dawn yet, all, speaking in the same manner, shall be friendly.

To assert that the sacred writer when he declares, "All Israel shall be saved," in the latter day, embraces within the compass of the "all" the mighty series of Hebrew generations past re-animated miraculously, is constraining the passage to utter what, we firmly believe, it was never designed to communicate. Such a stu-

pendous event is never once even dimly suggested in the prophetic book, or in other portions of the Old Testament, from whose profound silence comes no answer to the most urgent personal inquiries concerning the future. It is the living, when the Deliverer appears, as he appeared to Saul of Tarsus on his cruel mission, who are to be disarmed and renewed; which puts the oracle at a long remove from "another chance" or Universalism, properly so called. The passage is but another illustration of that national unity—the race conceived as a river flowing down time—already described, of which there are multitude of instances in the sacred Volume. The stream has long been turbid and troubled; then, reverence for Christ marking the people as a whole, it will be clear and tranquil. So interpreted we arrive at the simple and natural sense of the Apostle's delightful prediction, and we are acquainted with no authority in Scriptures old or new that sanctions the latest discovery concerning the impenitent dead,—here, of course, they are of Jewish descent,—to be suspended on his words.

g.—1. Cor., xv., 22.—"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

I have met nothing better on this verse than what was presented to the public by Mr. Allan B. Magruder in the *Restitution*, May 9th, 1883, and shall quote freely from his article, at the same time thanking him for his lucid paragraphs.

By him the verse is thus unambiguously rendered:—

"As all that are in Adam die, so all that are in Christ (or, in the Christ) shall be made alive."

Mr. Magruder adds:—

"To me it seems clear that the natural sense of the words, and the order and collocation in which they stand, give the rendering the preference over any other readings I have seen."

"The common version:—'As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive,' conveys the meaning that the re-living

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of our race will be as universal as their death; whilst the reading proposed limits the resurrection that Paul is writing of to those who are in Christ, viz.: 'As all that are in Adam die, so all that are in Christ shall be made alive.'

"The King's translators evidently supposed and believed that Paul was teaching the resurrection of all who had ever died, and they made their translation to comport with their creed. But a more careful and correct study of the context shows plainly that Paul's doctrine applied *only* to the saints—to those who were in Christ, and had no reference to a resurrection of all—to a universal resurrection, and hence affirms nothing of any other class than those in Christ. This is proved to demonstration by reading in connection the 23rd verse, in which he defines his meaning of the word 'all,' and restricts it to 'those that are Christ's'—having no reference to a general and universal resurrection. The new reading proposed is quite in harmony with the Apostle's premises and argument, whilst the other is contradictory to both."

"The old reading gives undue support to universalism."

To which I may be permitted to subjoin this observation:—That if the common version should be retained, the fair and proper course in order to reach the correct interpretation is first to determine the limit of the "all;" in other words, is it *all saints*, or *all men*? Till that is settled, nothing is settled. In explaining an author it is just to accept his terms, like the "all" here, as the drift of his argument requires, assigning them a comprehensiveness neither more nor less. The chapter from which this verse is drawn seems to be exclusively occupied with the resurrection of the sons of God. The irregenerate are not mentioned in its progress; the immunities and glories of the saved shine all along its wonderful verses. Saints, like other human beings, die in consequence of their relationship to Adam; saints rise to a new life—an angel-like existence—in consequence of their relation to the Lord Jesus, who is the Conqueror of Death and the Grave. So understanding the passage, it leaves the resurrection of the unholy to be settled by other scriptures, if such may be found, where a revival of such characters, or where a general revival



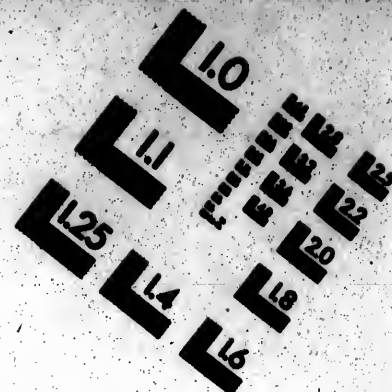
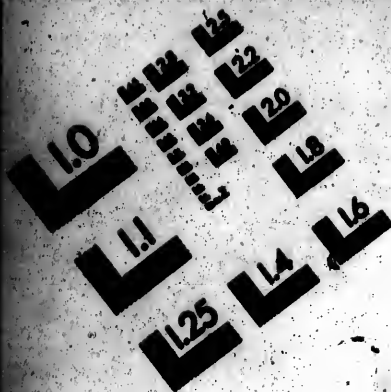


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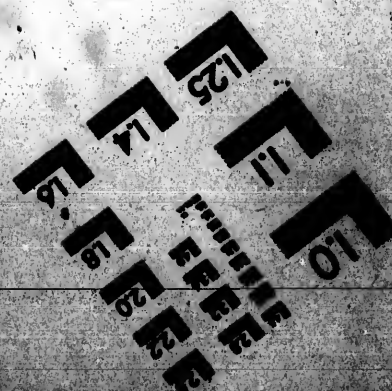
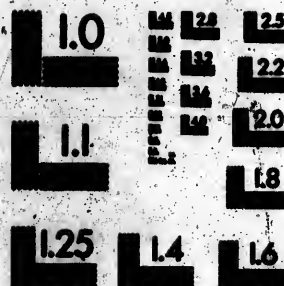
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of the Adamic family is manifestly the subject of Divine instruction.

4.—Verse 26.—“The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.”

In verse 22, we hear the Apostle, for himself and all the regenerate, saying, in Adam all, that is, all of us die, and in Christ shall all, that is, all of us, be made alive. He intimates in v. 33 that the resurrection occupying his thoughts is to happen after a God-appointed arrangement, “Every man in his own order,” or band; “Christ the first-fruits,” or earnest of the sainted sleepers in the dust; “afterward they that are Christ’s at his coming.” Perhaps there is implied in the latter statement, that there will be companies of the godly resurrected, some immediately on the Lord’s advent, others at different periods, it may be at long intervals thereafter. He is to reign till he has put down all adverse “rule, authority and power,” as it is written in verses 24 and 25. The text then comes to assure us “the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.”

As the verse stands it fails, as we think, to express what the writer intend to make known. For to say of any adversary, that he is the last one appointed to destruction, does not necessarily mean that every foe shall be utterly vanquished and made an end of. Death might only be the final one selected for perdition; the rest being allowed to retain their places and powers. This ambiguity can easily be removed by omitting the two words “that” and “is,” supplied in our common version. Then the verse will read, “The last enemy shall be destroyed—death;” or, as the words may be arranged, “Death, the last enemy, shall be destroyed;” a statement alike simple and precise. Not one enemy is to be spared.

How is death the last enemy to be destroyed? By the resurrection of the saints of God with natures immortal and spiritual. After their revival by the Omnipotent fiat, it will be impossible for them to die again.

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The Lord Jesus abolished or destroyed death, so far as He was personally concerned, by rising in an incorruptible form; death has no more dominion over him. When the sainted are re-called to life and consciousness by his power—power exercised in reward of his own obedience unto death, even the death of the cross, death shall be destroyed also so far as they are personally concerned, since they enter at the moment of their resurrection on an existence that cannot end. "Because I live ye shall live also." Which is true only for those who believe on him now, and have their names written in "the Book of life."

If only a certain number of our family are to be immortalized, the rest being ultimately deprived of existence, how can it be said that the last enemy has been destroyed? Has he not, so to speak, vitality still, holding dominion over the lost?

The matter will appear more intelligible, if it is recollected that the Apostle is here exclusively contemplating death as the enemy of Christ and his church,—the spiritual of our family; and when they are resurrected to unclosing life, the last enemy has been delivered over to perdition, so far as they are personally concerned.

Like the last enemy of the Church, "rule and authority and power" of every kind is to be annihilated by his strength, according to verses 24 and 25. Some entering into that hostile confederacy are not mere personifications, like death, but actual beings, with raging enmity to Christ and his people in their hearts. Among the living adversaries will be men in exalted position, and organizations of men. All of which are destined to what? Salvation? No; but to be put under the Lord Christ's feet; that is, as his opponents, and the patrons of unrighteousness, to be crushed out of existence, in fulfilment of this eternal law and prophecy, "the wages of sin is death," whatever rank of being the offender may belong to.

Consigned to death, he is held there. If he cannot remain in death, or, in other language, if he must be

saved out of it, then all threats, all penalties, all solemn warnings as to what unbelief entails, all punishment, spoken of in the Bible, are words cast forth without an aim, and rivaling all hollow speech in their meaninglessness.

i.—Verse 54.—“Death is swallowed up in victory.” Revision, “Victoriously.”

When the corruptible shall put on incorruption, this saying, according to Paul, shall be brought to pass:—“Death is swallowed up,” &c. The quotation seems to be brought from

Isa. xlv., 8.—“He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces, and the rebuke of his people shall be taken away from all the earth; for the Lord hath spoken it.”

The verse from Isaiah stands in the midst of predictions relating to the Sovereignty of Messiah in the latter days; the deliverance of Israel from prejudices that blinded them to his claims on their allegiance; and the termination of the cruelties—mortal cruelties, to which in many lands they have been subjected during their protracted banishment. In the last verse of the preceding chapter we are assured, “the moon shall be confounded and the sun ashamed”—that is, their splendor shall be eclipsed—“when the Lord of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.” In the 6th verse of the chapter from which the passage under review is obtained, it is said, “in this mountain shall the Lord of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things;” in the latter part of the verse in hand, we learn, “the rebuke of his people shall be taken away from off all the earth;” and in verse 9, we hear the disprejudiced and enlightened Israelites lifting up this song of thanksgiving, “Lo, is this our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us, . . . we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation.” He will save them from what? From dispersion, from derision, from robbery, from wasting cruelties. Everything seemed to

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betoken their certain annihilation as a race ; but He is pledged to preserve them in all extremities. His purpose is, as we discovered in the parallel statement from Hosea, "to swallow up death in victory," or victoriously ; and when they enter once more on their ancestral heritage it shall be obvious to themselves and to all hearing of their marvelous fortune, that he has done so. Then with a loving hand will he dry up their tears—tears with which their eyes were reddened and their cheeks furrowed through the gloom-ages of their suffering. "I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in my people ; and the voice of weeping shall be no more heard in her, nor the voice of crying." Isa. lxx., 19-25.

They have not been the only sufferers. The feast to be prepared is intended for all peoples, as well as for them. Joy, in other words, for temporal as well as spiritual blessings, comes to others in that day, as well as to the Abrahamic clans. Despotism, and slavery, and oppression, and extortion, and cruelty, and war, and ignorance, then vanish for aye from this habitable globe.

When the author of this epistle quotes the words from Isaiah, we find no warrant to conclude that he regarded them as predictive of the resurrection he so sublimely describes, and so triumphantly anticipates for himself and his Christian friends. He merely brings them to his aid as terms most adequate to express his thought at the moment of composition. Originally they were used to convey, in effect, an assurance that the chosen people, though driven on account of disobedience from their paternal hills and vales, would, as a sovereign boon from Heaven, be preserved through all the sorrows and agonies of exile ; but the New Testament writer sees in them a peculiar aptness to utter, and therefore employs them to utter, a far grander thought. Isaiah and Hosea described a victory over death that had no outcome of hope except as to the permanence of the tribal families—generation after generation carrying the name and blood down the centuries ; but the Gospel seer

and witness contemplates *individuals exclusively*, and these belonging to all kindreds and tongues. He beholds in vision and celebrates in lofty periods an overthrow which the human intellect is unable to grasp in its surpassing magnificence. Which conquest is the resurrection to immortality, in Auroral spendors, of those whose names had been written among the sons of God. That idea fulfils the borrowed language—fills it full, like a vessel charged to the brim. No victory over the grim foe could be greater. "Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels."—Luke xx., 36.

Illustrations of the same freedom with ancient words are not uncommon in the New Testament Scriptures. For instance:—

Matt. ii., 17.—"Then"—when the innocents were slain—"was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying,

v. 18.—"In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not."

"Fulfilled" here is evidently employed in the sense of vividly exemplifying Jeremiah's words, or as describing to perfection the heart-rending grief occasioned by the ferocious deed when the Saviour of the world was born. By a bold figure of speech the prophet represents Rachel, dead long centuries before, the mother of the tribes, as weeping over the bloodshed, and the carrying away of her descendants into the land of the enemy, by Nebuzaradan, after his seizure of Jerusalem. She wept on that day, and many tears mingled with hers. In like manner, says the Evangelist, the murder of the babes caused wailing such as was known at the time when Rachel appears upon the ancient scene, summoned by the genius of the Prophet to heighten and vivify his picture of the national woe.

One remark more to guard against any misapprehension: much that has been written in connection with the verses from the chapter already discussed, is applicable to the text immediately before us. Saints, and saints

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only, are still the subjects of the elevated discourse; as we find in verse 50:—"Now this I say, *brethren*," etc.; in verse 57:—"Thanks be to God, which giveth *us* the victory," etc.; and in verse 58:—"Therefore, my *beloved brethren*, be ye steadfast," etc.

f—Colos. i., 19, 20.—"It pleased the Father by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven."

Peace, according to this Scripture, has been made through the blood of the cross; the reconciliation to God of all things in earth and heaven has also been accomplished by the same instrumentality. Now, an uncritical reader is, we suspect, very liable to misunderstand the subjects of the reconciliation here spoken of. How so? Because he will most probably, as a result of traditional comments, read the announcement as if the reference was to responsible intelligences. But the question is one of *things*, and not of creatures who have been living in opposition to the Divine will.

The adjective is in the neuter form, as the correct wording in our version "all things," not persons, may be held sufficiently to indicate. This view, moreover, seems to establish a harmony between statement and fact, for though sinful men on earth need morally to be reconciled to God, what sinners are there in heaven requiring that gracious transformation? But "things" in both regions, we are told, have been reconciled, though it may be hard for us Gentiles to catch the explicit import of the statement. It is essentially Jewish, ceremonial, and symbolic. Being such, it would come naturally to the pen of him, "an Hebrew of the Hebrews," who wrote the Epistle, and would be easily understood by such a mind with its national associations and strict religious training.

"*Reconcile* all things"—how, one may ask, can that be done, or what does the language mean?

Candidly, I have not such a clear and well-defined conception of what the word "reconcile" imports, when

so used, as to encourage me to attempt its exact expression. Fortunately there is at this moment no pressing call on us to search out the correct import of the term lying before us, be what it may. It has been said here, the language is Jewish and ritualistic; figurative, may also be added to the description. Nor does it stand alone in its remarkable peculiarity. Many verses in the Sacred Volume, as might have been expected, have a title to be classified along with it.

For example :—

Heb. ix., 23.—“It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens”—the tabernacle for Jewish worship. v. 2, etc.—“Should be purified with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.”

Here heavenly and also earthly things are said to be purified, as in Colossians the same sort of things are said to be reconciled.

Going back to Ezekiel, we meet the same order of speech as in the passage engaging our thoughts.

Chapter xlv., 20.—“So shall ye *reconcile* the house.”

That is, the temple of the Lord, with the blood of the sin-offering put upon the posts of the house.

And going still farther back in Sacred History, kindred language may be discovered; as in

Leviticus xvi., 19.—“And he”—Aaron—“shall sprinkle of the blood upon it”—the altar—“with his finger seven times, etc.,

v. 20.—“And when he hath made an end of *reconciling* the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar,” etc.

Other forms like these may be observed in several places,—purging with blood, hallowing the court with offerings, cleansing and purging the altar with blood.

It may be difficult for us, not of the race familiar during long centuries with these dispensational peculiarities of speech, to seize and appreciate the inner sense of the passage, and of analogous statements, quoted on this occasion, as to things in heaven and things in earth ;

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but that is no reason why we should load the verse, or any verse in the Bible, with a meaning favorable, say, to a theory of complete human recovery at last, when really such a meaning is not what it embodies. The sound of words is one thing, their real significance another. Those in haste are apt to be content with the first—the sound of words, for the second often demands much searching and patient thought.

k.—1. Tim., 2, 3, 4.—“God our Saviour—will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.”

This presents a blessed truth: God desires that all may be saved. But though He may will all men to be saved, they themselves may not be willing, and in consequence thereof perish at last. Jesus said to his prejudiced hearers, “Ye *will not* come unto Me that ye might (*Revision*—‘may’) have life.” He rolls the blame of their non-salvation on their cherished obstinacy and their aversion to His plans, whom they claimed as their Father in heaven.”

l.—Heb. ii., 9.—“that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man.”

Some have reasoned thus:—If he has tasted death, or died, for every man, then every man will ultimately be put in possession of all blessings resulting from his mediation and sacrifice on the cross. In the Bible, I find warrant for no inference of the kind. He, and only he, that doeth righteousness, in absence of the gospel, is accepted of God; he that obeys not—believes not—the gospel about his Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him. Salvation is in no sense a necessary consequence to any child of man from the death of Christ: it comes to him, under the ordination of grace, who honors the Infinite Lord of All by intelligently and thankfully receiving mercy through his well-beloved Son.

m.—2 Peter, iii., 9.—“The Lord is . . . not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”

This is substantially the same as the verse from Hebrews, just commented upon. It reveals an impressive truth, that if men perish it is not because the Lord wills so. His will is the very reverse. But there is no compulsion in the matter of salvation. His final destiny is left in each man's choice. Ruin need not overtake him, since "All things are ready," on Heaven's part, for his immediate salvation, however disobedient he may have been. Then, O sinful brother, when God is willing and waiting to be gracious, WHY WILL YOU DIE?

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VI.—CONCLUSION.

Be the estimate what it may of the foregoing pages, it will likely be conceded that the subject has not been treated as one of inferior moment. A very serious question it was felt to be, and many an hour of thought and anxiety went to their production. Nothing less would have satisfied the demands of conscience, when the "Second chance" theory had to be examined in the light of Scripture. The remark may be permitted that the hollowness of the scheme or promise of another opportunity became more unquestionable the longer it was surveyed; the teaching in regard to Sodom's future based on Ezekiel's language, was felt to be emphatically a delusive dream.

While inditing the sections, I had universalism, and at any rate some of the supports on which it is imagined to rest, frequently before my mind, and as I studied Scripture and reflected on many points, I became more thoroughly convinced that it is a fallacious hope, inviting attention mainly by its pleasant hues. So strong is my persuasion of this, that I admit there is exact truth in words spoken not long since by a gifted New England divine:—"The Bible contains," he said, "on any fair interpretation, not a suggestion nor a word extending the offer of salvation beyond this world," or, as I understand the expression, beyond the present life of man. Of this I feel profoundly assured that if a "second chance," or universalism, was a scriptural doctrine it would be very distinctly revealed, and dwelt upon at large, again and again. But instead of having such to lay before us, the "second chance" and universal theory appeals to a few doubtful texts, and in the instance of Sodom utterly misapprehends what is so simple, in its anxiety to exalt mercy, and to make the Saviour somewhat better than he appears, especially in his compassion for man.

To those who think the hope is countenanced by the Sacred Writings, let me suggest this reasonable and pertinent question :—If converting appliances fail here, and confessedly they do fail, may they not prove equally fruitless hereafter? May the Holy Spirit of God not be resisted yonder,—anywhere in the universe, as well as in this state? If the sorrows, and tears, and pangs of Jesus are inadequate to melt stony hearts here, is there any hope they will be efficacious in another scene? Nothing new will be added to the all-glorious character; nothing to the all-perfect sacrifice of Jesus. His silent, loving appeals are they not turned aside now, and what reason is there to conclude they would triumph were the moral or converting experiment repeated in different circumstances? The prospective trial, about which so much is written, brings with it no assurance of success; but in the realm of fancy all things are possible. That man, being a free agent, many resist to the last, ought never to be forgotten. The longer he resists now, the probabilities, in fact, would be increased that he would continue in opposition to God's will, and only make his existence, were it prolonged by infinite force, the more degraded, and perhaps the more wretched.

But while these thoughts cannot fairly be pronounced a waste of time, they need occupy a considerate mind but for a little, when it is known that Scripture foretells no such experiment. The accepted time is now; the day of salvation now! At the present moment, men are sowing for corruption, or for life everlasting. Only in great error, great delusion, or great sin, it may be in all of them combined, can any one resist the pressing invitation of Jesus, in expectation of another call in some other sphere, or circumstances.

The promise of such a call may be regarded as a deep-laid scheme on the part of the enemy, going about in quest of whom he may devour. Inspired and misled by the deceitfulness of evil, as an eloquent French preacher has said, "Wandering from the source of life, the sinner takes his slow funeral way towards eternal

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death," and nothing will tend more infallibly to render his perdition a certainty than the notion that though he may disregard invitations to mercy now, there will be abundant gracious opportunities hereafter for retrieving the loss. And if it is considered that postponing the business of salvation is not merely declining the blessing for the present, as one may innocently delay accepting the gift of a friend; but is positive opposition to the authority of God Almighty, who *commands* all men everywhere to repent, perhaps a better and surely an alarming estimate of his conduct might rise before the conscience of him who continues unsaved. It is immense ingratitude for what the Saviour has done. Would that every one resisting the claims and attraction of mercy, would yield now!

And while it may be viewed as a device of the Arch-enemy to further procrastination, which is sure to end in ceaseless privation of life, it may also be viewed as his malign contrivance to turn men aside from present duty, that is, earnestly preaching Christ for salvation now. They, the insensate hearers, will have another chance, tends and inevitably must tend, human nature being such as it is, to quench zeal, to encourage inaction, at least sadly to cripple efforts in heavenly evangelizing work, be it on a large or limited scale. These may be denied by some to be natural results of faith in a second season of grace, but any one who has studied our common weaknesses, and especially the disinclination in average man even when really christianized for toilsome effort, knows that such a consequence is almost inevitably to be expected.

In this theory—another chance for all—some find a relief in meditating on the case of friends who died unforgiven, so far as human judgment can determine. Perhaps a necessity for comfort in those painful circumstances helped to bring the new remedial provision into existence. And now, unless it be true, what is the comfort worth? It may have a pleasant look, but deception lies under its alluringly-tinted rind. "Their vine is the

vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah; their grapes are grapes of gall; their clusters are bitter." Rather leave those who have passed away in the Lord's hand, knowing that in each case he will do what is absolutely right, than devise comfort that in the end will be put aside as the product of a visionary brain. "To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

To those who accept, and to those who propagate this, as it appears to me, exceedingly perilous expectation, I would address my closing words:—O friends, reflect solemnly on the work you have undertaken! To a private individual the doctrine you advance may be fatal, leading him to expect hereafter a season when the unfading crown may be seized with impatient hands,—a season that will never break on him while the interminable cycles move round and forward. But to one who publicly, by pen or speech, advocates the misleading idea what shall be said? I will not beg such an one to take my word for it that he is in error: that conviction can only reach his understanding by devout prayer and inquiry. I will not suffer one harsh feeling towards him to become a tenant in my breast; for he is doubtless sincere and earnest in his testimony, having a desire to honor the blessed Master over all thereby. But I will say to him:—My brother in the love of truth, my brother in the love of Christ, think most seriously of the risk that may attend a proclamation of what you have espoused. Should it be a mistaken idea, and *that* events hereafter may, as in a blaze of light, demonstrate it to be, for even now on what substantial basis it rests, utterly perplexes me and many others to discover,—should it turn out, I say, a thrice-lamentable mistake, how many may come short of eternal life under its misleading direction; how many, the last records will declare, that might have loved Jesus and beheld the glories of his crown and kingdom have had, in consequence of obeying the siren counsels, a portion assigned them in the blackness of darkness for ever!

VII.—VERSES.

Enough, O Christ, that open foes should aim
 To lure men into deadly paths of sin ;
 To quench the virtue of thy saving name
 With speech of doubt, or mocking impud grin.

But when they come who cherish love for thee,
 With songs of hope, to thy sweet word unknown,
 For voyagers across this troubled sea ;
 Shall eyes not weep, except when hearts are stone ?

Forgive them, Lord, who bring the specious tale,
 Not well-discerning how their words mislead ;
 And pity those who when life's bulwarks fail,
 Shall find the promise but a broken reed.

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EXPLANATION.

That this new work, "Sodom; or, Another Opportunity," might be printed at once, the Author felt justified in postponing the publication of the *Second Part of the Supplement*; which he begs again to intimate, will be issued without any unnecessary delay.

APR 22 1964

