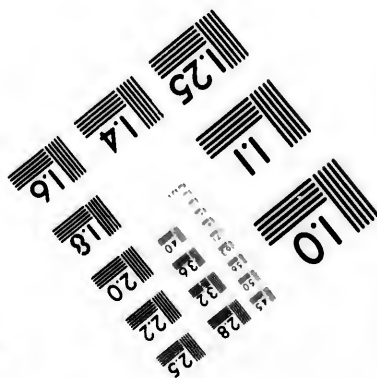
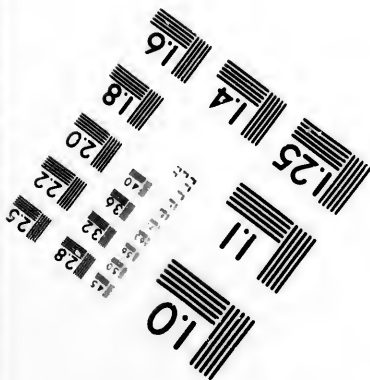
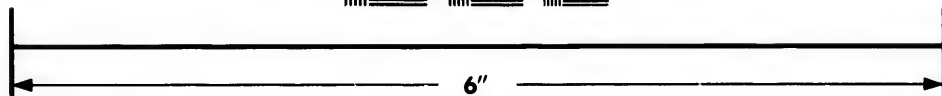
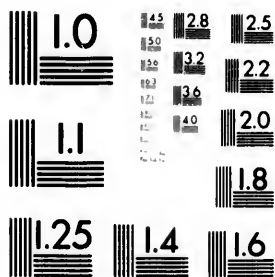


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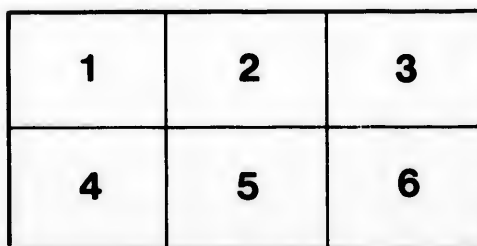
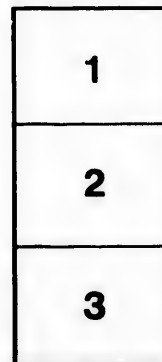
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Everlasting Punishment.

*Is the Popular Doctrine de Fide?
And if not, is it True?*

CONSIDERED IN

A LETTER

TO THE

RIGHT HON. W. E. GLADSTONE, M.P.

BY THE

REV. F. N. OXENHAM, M.A.

TORONTO:

Belford Brothers, Publishers.

1875.

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*Εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ καὶ κοπιῶμεν καὶ ονειδιζόμεθα, ὅτι ἠλπικαμεν
ἐπὶ Θεῷ ζῶντι, ὃς ἐστὶ σωτὴρ πάντων ἀνθρώπων, μάλιστα
πίστων.*

Παράγγελλε ταῦτα καὶ δίδασκε.

1. Tim. iv. 10, 11.

“ Behold, we know not anything :
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last—far off—at last, to all ;
And every winter change to spring.”

In Memorium, Canto LIII.

CONTENTS.

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS	10
§ I.	
STATEMENT OF DOCTRINE	21
§ II.	
SIX QUESTIONS	15
I. Does the word <i>αἰώνιος</i> necessarily and always mean “endless”?	15
II. Is there any other word used in Holy Scripture which has this <i>necessary</i> and <i>invariable</i> meaning?	16
III. Is there any statement in Holy Scripture which <i>must of necessity</i> mean the popular doctrine?	17
IV. Is there any decree of the Universal Church which expressly asserts or evidently and necessarily presupposes that doctrine?	20
V. Is there any express “consensus” on this exact point, such as to leave no room for doubt as to the mind of the whole Church?	25
VI. Is there any necessity, known to us, or even any probability, arising from the nature of the case, which would sustain the popular doctrine?	38
§ III.	
S. AUGUSTINE'S ARGUMENTS	39

	§ IV.	
S. THOMAS AQUINAS' ARGUMENTS		39
	§ V.	
DR. PUSEY'S ARGUMENTS		48
	§ VI.	
CONCLUSION.		68
	APPENDIX (A).	
THE FORMULARIES OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND		70
	APPENDIX (B).	
THE CANONS OF THE HOME SYNOD		72

39

48

A LETTER

68

TO THE

RIGHT HON. W. E. GLADSTONE, M.P.

G-
70

SIR,—

72

When I asked your permission to place on record the following considerations in the form of a letter to you, it might have been sufficient to recollect that no question of deep and general public interest could be without its claims upon you, and that such claims were certain to be met with no grudging response, more especially if the matter in question was inseparably bound up with the advancement of religion in this country. But beyond this, you yourself have lately referred¹ to the part which you took many years ago on a public occasion, when the question of human futurity was under discussion, and this reference would lead your readers to conclude that the subject on which you are permitting me to address you, is, at least, not foreign to your mind, and possibly that that aspect of the question which Tennyson has briefly described as "the larger hope," is not altogether unwelcome.

For these and other reasons I accept very gratefully your permission to inscribe this letter to you. But, in saying so much, I am not venturing to assume any assent on your part to anything which I shall say. How far you would admit, or question, or deny the correctness of any statement, or the force of any argument here advanced, which may be open to question, I am wholly unaware. You are, of course,

¹ *Contemporary Review*, July, 1875, pp. 201-2.

in no sense responsible for any part of this Letter, nor for any of its results.

I will proceed now to the questions which my title-page sufficiently indicates—"Is the popular doctrine of 'Everlasting Punishment' *de fide*? and if not, is it true?" The first of these questions is the most important, and to it I wish more especially to call attention. I am not concerned to discuss the truth of this popular doctrine, as an opinion, so much as to show that it is only an "opinion," however wide-spread, and nothing more. I am content to leave this doctrine to stand or fall on its own merits, if it is allowed to be only an opinion. I am most earnestly anxious to show that it cannot rightly claim to be anything more than an "opinion." And I am anxious to show this, because of the sad and ruinous work which this doctrine is doing among thoughtful and inquiring men in our day. It simply repels them utterly from any belief in a Christianity which includes among its articles of necessary faith this terrible doctrine. Partly for these I would plead, and partly too, and even more, for those who would give all they have, or hope for here below, rather than be disloyal to their Christian faith: the simple and faithful, to whom the love of God in Christ is the centre of all hope and joy, by whom the revelation of truth in Scripture and through the Church is accepted in unhesitating acquiescence. And yet to many of these this popular doctrine is as a horror of great darkness, into which they scarcely dare to look, lest the seeming distortion of all that they have believed and loved should make shipwreck of their faith.

An able contributor to one of our leading monthly periodicals, in discussing the difficulties which beset, or threaten to beset, the progress of Christianity, suggested that, with the view of winning the thoughtful and intelligent to a readier acceptance of the Christian faith, certain commonly received doctrines should be withdrawn as far as possible into the shade. He proposed as a probable success "a course of authoritative preaching from ten thousand pulpits persistent for an entire generation, which, without contro-

versy or ostentatious neglect, should allow Original Sin and Imputed Righteousness, the legend of the Fall and the story of the Incarnation, Baptismal Regeneration, Eternal Punishment, the Trinity, and the Atonement gently to fall into the shade as mysteries which it is vain to seek to penetrate, and regarding which silence is our least injurious and most respectful course.¹

I should shrink from using some of the expressions contained in this passage, though they may not, perhaps, be at all intended amiss. I should question how far all the doctrines, here thrown together on an equality, have really an equal claim to be considered essential items in the Faith of Christendom; and I should very seriously demur to the suggestion of allowing all these matters to be passed over in silence, e. g. and eminently, the Incarnation. Christianity without the Incarnation would certainly be such a Christianity as has not hitherto been taught, or known; it would be "another gospel," not merely *ἄλλον*, but *ἕτερον*.

There is, however, one among the matters here enumerated, as to which very many persons would join in the wish that silence might be kept, if indeed, silence on *all sides* could be kept; but such silence has not been kept, it has been broken on all sides. The doctrine of Eternal Punishment has not been treated respectfully "as a mystery which it is vain to seek to penetrate;" on the contrary, it has been often enlarged upon; it has sometimes been set forth in language which cannot be read without a shudder; it is prominently in our day before the eyes of all thoughtful persons who are interested in religious matters, and it is, to say the least of it, to many of them, a very serious difficulty; it is not a matter which can be passed over in silence; it is not a matter which can be removed out of sight. We had better look at it calmly and steadily and see what it really is, see how far the popular doctrine is indeed a part of the Christian faith.

¹ *Rocks Ahead*, W. R. GREG, *Contemporary Review*, August, 1874

§ I.

STATEMENT OF DOCTRINE.

I begin by stating the main factors in this whole "doctrine," from which the chief difficulty in accepting it arises, so far as I am aware. I understand this doctrine (as popularly held) to include the belief

(α) That there is no place for repentance or amendment beyond the grave; or at least, that if there be repentance, however deep and real, it will be futile,¹ and

(β) That the torments of the lost will literally *never* come to an end, that their misery and their wickedness will be hopeless and endless.

(γ) There is another factor in this doctrine very generally received, viz, that the great majority of mankind will be lost, a small minority only saved. It certainly seems difficult, on the face of such a statement as that in S. Matthew's Gospel (vii. 13, 14), to deny on Scriptural grounds the doctrine that the "lost" (whatever that term may mean) will be "many," and the "saved" "few."

Now these statements are difficult to believe, because they *seem* at least to *imply*

($\bar{\alpha}$) The charge against God of amazing cruelty and injustice. I say "*seem to imply*," because it is quite possible that our estimate of what constitutes "cruelty" or "injustice" may be mistaken; it is quite possible that we may be *incapable of judging* what is "just," or "unjust" in relation to matters which involve many mysteries of which we know little or nothing.

¹ "Dicunt etiam uri dolore animi *sero* atque *infructuose* pœnitentis eos qui fuerint a regno Dei separati."—S. AUGUSTINE, *De Civ. Dei*, xxi, 9.

- (β) The failure, to a very great extent,¹ not merely apparent and temporary, but a most real and eternal failure, to redeem and save mankind; i. e. the failure of that one great purpose which God designed "from the foundation of the world," which our Lord expended all the treasures of His love, and laid down His life to carry out, which is the centre and substance of His revelation to us.

(γ) That good will never fully overcome evil and destroy it, but that good and evil will be alike everlasting. That God will never fully and finally subdue or reconcile His enemies; but that His enemies and Himself will be eternal together. And further, (δ) if this (γ) be true, that the Almighty and All-merciful lacks either *the power*, or the *will*, to save His creatures from misery—not sorrow, or suffering temporary, corrective, purgatorial, didactic, refining, or serving *any other* conceivable ultimate purpose of mercy to the sufferer, or to anyone else; but misery utterly fruitless for good to *the sufferer*, because it will be endless; utterly useless to *all others*, because their unalterable lot in happiness or in woe will be already fixed.

For these reasons (*inter alia*) the common doctrine of "everlasting punishment" is at least very hard to be believed; and as that doctrine is supposed to rest on very express and repeated testimony of the Bible, it is important to ask and carefully to examine the question, Do the words of Holy Scripture *necessarily* mean what they are commonly supposed to mean?

It must, I think, be allowed that at first sight they seem to do so; that the common interpretation of many passages in Holy Scripture is the most obvious and natural; but where there are so many and so strong reasons for supposing that the most obvious meaning cannot be the true one, we are fully justified in looking carefully for some other.

¹ Vide A LAPIDE on *Apocalyp.* vii. 9; "Ex dictis æstimare licet quod in fine mundi omnium omnino sanctorum et electorum, qui quovis sæculo ubivis gentium vixerunt, numerus aliquot centenos; millones conficiet: *reproborum vero longe major erit turba*, quæ plures non tantum centenos, sed et millenos millones efficiet. Sæpe enim ex mille hominibus, imo ex decem millibus vix unus salvatur."

I may be met here *in limine* by the objection that the commonly received doctrine does not depend on the force of this or that particular word or phrase, but is implied in "the whole tenor" of revelation as to our future life. To this I can only reply, that the popular doctrine appears to me to be utterly denied by "the whole tenor" of all that God reveals to us about Himself.

It might be said further, that although "the whole tenor" of Holy Scripture does lead us to suppose (and a great part of Holy Scripture is unintelligible without the supposition) that evil-doers will meet with terrible misery beyond the grave, as surely as they that have done good will reap their reward of joy, yet there may be nothing to necessitate, or even to warrant, the further "supposition" that this misery will never end; this "further supposition" must rest on the *necessary meaning* (as it is thought) of certain special words and sentences; and it may fairly be asserted, that a doctrine so awful and tremendous *must* (if it is to be believed) rest on something more solid than "implication." It must be stated so clearly that there can be no room for misconception, or else it may not rightly be laid down as a necessary article of Christian faith. I would therefore ask, although the inquiry will lead me to traverse some ground already frequently trodden, the following questions :

§ II.

SIX QUESTIONS.

1. Does the word *αἰώνιος* necessarily and always mean "endless" ?
2. Is there any other word used in Holy Scripture which has this *necessary* and *invariable* meaning ?
3. Is there any statement in Holy Scripture which *must of necessity* mean the popular doctrine ?
4. Is there any decree of the Universal Church which expressly asserts or evidently and necessarily presupposes that doctrine ?
5. Is there any express "consensus" on this exact point, such as to leave no room for doubt as to the mind of *the whole* Church ?
6. Is there any necessity known to us, or even any probability, arising from the nature of the case, which would sustain the popular doctrine ?

This last question, though it needs to be distinctly put, will have to be practically and fully answered when we come to consider Question 5.

If all these questions can truly be answered in the negative, is there any ground remaining on which any Christian man can be required to accept the common doctrine of "endless punishment" as "*de jure*," and make it part of his religious belief ? I know of none.

To take these questions *seriatim* :

I.

"Does the word *αἰώνιος* necessarily and always mean 'endless' ?"

The word *αἰώνιος* is used in Holy Scripture "ut substantivum *αἰών*, de quocunque temporis spatio," says Schleusner, "ita ut quale sit judicari debent in singulis locis ex orationis serie et mente scriptoris, rebus adeo et personis de quibus sermo est." He gives instances of the word being used as referring to (α) "quod fuit superiori tempore;" (β) "quod est finis expers;" (γ) "quod sui finem et initium agnoscit." The word, therefore, does not, in Schleusner's opinion, necessarily mean "expers finis," although he himself assigns that meaning to it when used with *πῦρ*, *κρίσις*, *κόλασις*, etc., in the New Testament.

Bishop Wordsworth, on S. Matt. xxv. 46, observes, that "the radical idea in *αἰών*, as used in the Holy Scripture, is *indefinite time*: and thus the word *αἰών* comes to be fitly applied to this world, of which we do not know the duration, and also to the world to come, of which no end is visible, because that world is eternal;" he adds, that "this consideration may perhaps check rash speculations concerning the duration of future punishments."¹

Whatever, then, may be the meaning assigned by any commentator to the words *αἰών* or *αἰώνιος* when used with reference to future misery, it would seem to be admitted that the meaning "endless" is not the only meaning which those words may bear. Question 1, therefore, is sufficiently answered in the negative.

II.

"Is there any other word used with reference to the destiny of the wicked in Holy Scripture, which has this *necessary* and *invariable* meaning?"

There is another word used twice in the New Testament, and translated in the Authorized Version in one place "eternal,"² and in the other³ "everlasting." This word

¹ Vide A LAPIDE on *αἰών* in Hebrews i. 2. "Græcum *αἰών* respondit Hebræo *olam*, et proprie significat sæculum, ævum et tempus decurrens, subique succedens."

² Rom. i. 20.

³ S. Jude 6.

αἰδιος might be expected, from its root *αἰ* to mean "everlasting," in the strictest sense; and such is its force in Rom. i. 20, where it is applied to the "power and divinity" of God; but in S. Jude 6 the duration to which it refers is not merely doubtful, and possibly not everlasting in its literal sense, but a definite limit is expressly assigned: the angels are "reserved" in their "everlasting chains," not for ever, but *εις κριθιν μεγαλης ημερας*, i. e. *until a definite time*. What will occur afterwards we are not told. I am not aware of any other single word in which the doctrine in question has been thought to be contained. Question 2 is therefore answered in the negative, and we may proceed to

III.

"Is there any statement in Holy Scripture which *must of necessity* mean the popular doctrine?"

There are certainly several which are commonly so understood; we must look into them one by one. I take first (α) S. Matt. xii. 31, 32, "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world (*αἰῶνι*), neither in the world to come,"¹ where our Lord himself is thought to have asserted most expressly the endlessness of future punishment in hell. Now, on this verse I observe first, that our Lord says nothing about hell; and secondly, that what He does say bears on examination no resemblance to an assertion of the popular doctrine of endless misery. Our Lord declares that there is a sin against the Holy Ghost for which there is no *αφεσις* either here or hereafter. He uses the words *αφεσις* and *αφηναι*, the root-meaning of which is "sending away," "getting rid of." He declares of this sin that it can never be got rid of, i. e., something of the sin, its character, its

¹ *Vide* also S. Mark iii. 28, and S. Luke xii. 10.

consequences, will last on always—this is what He really says; and is it beyond the reach even of our present understanding to conceive that the penal consequences of wilful sin against the Holy Spirit, viz. e. g. loss of capacity to know and to love the truth and Him who is truth, may well be irremediable either here or hereafter? How great such a penalty would be, or in what manner it would be felt or received, we have no means of knowing; but we feel at once that this penalty is something wholly different from what is commonly meant by eternal punishment: it is compatible with existence in heaven.

(β) I pass on to another set of texts, S. Matt. xviii. 8, 9, S. Mark ix. 43, 44; and I quote from S. Mark, both because his words are the most express, and because they tell us where to look for their true explanation. ' "If thy hand offend thee, cut it off; it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

On these verses it should be remarked, first, that the words "never shall be quenched" are an incorrect translation: there is no word or idea in the original corresponding to "never." Our Lord simply says, τὸ πῦρ τὸ ἀσβεστόν, "the fire which is not quenched." He makes no assertion that the fire will "never" be quenched. No inference, therefore, as to eternity can safely be drawn from this mistranslation. But then the words which follow seem to endorse the meaning of this mistranslation as commonly understood. These words, however, "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched," are a quotation from the prophet Isaiah, who uses them with reference to the carcasses of the slain lying without the walls of Jerusalem, where, evidently, the "worms" were not "ever-lasting," nor the "fire" for ever unextinguished. Maldonatus, in commenting upon this passage in S. Mark, admits (as, indeed, he could not have denied), that the

¹Isaiah lxvi. 24.

“worm” and the “fire” spoken of by the prophet were both short-lived; but he thinks that our Lord “accommodated” these phrases to suit the matter of which he was speaking, and must be supposed to have meant that the “fire” and the “worm” to which He referred would devour and burn for ever. But there is no ground whatever for any such “supposition,” beyond the necessity of making this passage support a preconceived theory. If the common doctrine be true, *then*, of course, these, and all other of our Lord’s words must be “supposed” to agree with it. But the doctrine itself is not *proved to be true*, nor even shown to be probable, by any number of passages which are wrested from their natural meaning and arbitrarily “supposed” to assert it. It is quite certain that in their original use and in their primary meaning (in Isaiah lxvi. 24), the “worm” and the “fire” meant instruments of punishment which did not “die” and were “not extinguished” *until* their work was fully done; but when that work was done, the worm did die, and the fire was extinguished. Why should it be “supposed” that our Lord in using the same words meant something essentially different?

(*γ*) There are two more texts which are sometimes quoted to show that the fire of future punishment will be endless. [“He will thoroughly purge His floor, and gather His wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” S. Matt. iii. 12 and S. Luke iii. 17 in almost the same words.] On these it may be enough to say (i) that the original word (*ἀσβεστος*) does not mean “unquenchable,” but simply “unquenched,” and therefore implies nothing as to duration; (ii) that if any inference as to duration may be gathered from the simile of “chaff” burnt up, it would be that the process referred to would be as speedy as it would be effectual; very soon done and over, rather than lasting on for ever. There are six other passages—S. Matt. x. 28; xvi. 26; xxv. 41, 46; S. Mark xiv. 21; 2 Thess. i. 9; and Rev. xx. 10—bearing on this subject which will require close inspection further

on ; for the present, therefore, I leave the consideration of these. I am not aware of any other short texts besides those already quoted or referred to (and a few others, so similar that the same remarks would apply to them), which are thought to express the popular view on this question.¹ As to the general tenor of long passages, or whole books of Holy Scripture, or the tacit assumptions which may be thought to underlie some arguments in the Apostolic Epistles or elsewhere, it would be evidently impossible within brief compass to deal with this side of the question ; but it would, I believe, be found that the "general tenor" of Holy Scripture, and not a few "tacit assumptions," tell fatally against the common doctrine.

Leaving then the direct arguments from Holy Scripture, we come to the two next questions proposed, both of which require an answer at some length.

IV.

"Is there any *decree of the Universal Church* which expressly asserts or evidently and necessarily presupposes the doctrine in question?"

I am well aware that there are many persons, and not irreligious persons, to whom this question will appear of small moment, if not altogether superfluous, persons who regard the decrees of ancient councils, whether local or general, as nothing better than historical records of more or less interest, expressions of religious opinions more or less widely accepted and believed at the time when such decrees were agreed to. On the other hand, there are persons, and their number includes not only all Catholics, but many who would not usually call themselves Catholics, who believe that the decrees of general councils are something very much more than expressions of contemporary opinion ; per-

¹ There is a long paragraph in PEARSON *On the Creed*, Art. XII., in which these and several other texts are quoted, and supposed—but only supposed—to support the popular view ; they are repeated one after another as if there could be no doubt of what they all meant.

sons who would feel that, if any doctrine had been explicitly accepted or condemned by any general council, and subsequently so received throughout the Church, there could be, at least for them, no further doubt upon the subject. For such persons it is of vital interest to know whether the Church is, or is not, so committed to the popular doctrine of endless punishment. I will, therefore beg you, sir, to follow me while I inquire somewhat closely, though as briefly as I can, into the facts of the case.

It is often asserted that the doctrine of the non-endlessness of future torments was condemned by the Church at the fifth Œcumenical Council.¹ Now what are the facts? Origen's name is certainly mentioned, together with several others who are condemned as heretical by one of the decrees of this fifth Council. Origen was condemned certainly, but obviously it was not intended to condemn *all* his opinions, and it remains to inquire whether his opinion on this particular question was one of those which the Council did intend to condemn. Origen held several strange opinions unconnected with future punishment, for any one of which it is not unreasonable to suppose that he might have been condemned; but happily we are not here left to mere supposition. There are in existence records of what was done at the fifth Œcumenical Council, of the decrees then made, and also of another Council held twelve years earlier, and of its decrees. There are also two letters of the Emperor Justinian, stating the circumstances which led to the calling of that earlier Council, and the purpose which he desired it should effect. Those records are amply sufficient to put us in possession of the main facts of the case.

In the year A.D. 541 a council was called to meet at Constantinople, for the express purpose of passing anathemas on Origen and on his heretical opinions.² Justinian, who summoned the Council, in his letter to the Patriarch Men-

¹ Vide S. AUGUSTINE, *De Civ. Dei*, xxi. 17: and MOSHEIM'S *Ecclesiastical History* (Maclaine's translation; London 1826), vol. ii. p. 121, note.

² Vide CAVE'S *Historia Literaria* (Basle, 1741), p. 558.

nas, enlarges at great length on the folly, impiety, and heresy of Origen's opinions, which he specifies one after another; and he has a long passage condemnatory of the opinion that the torments of the damned would ever come to an end.¹ The Council, which had no sort of pretensions to be an œcumenical council, and is known as "the Home Synod," met and passed fifteen canons. I have given these canons at length in an Appendix, for a reason which I will presently mention. Twelve years later, i. e. A.D. 553, the fifth Œcumenical Council met also at Constantinople; it was summoned expressly for the purpose of condemning certain Nestorian errors, contained in writings known as *The Three Chapters*.¹ The Council met and passed fourteen canons, of which the only one that contains any direct reference to Origen is this: "Si quis non anathematizat Arium, Eunomium, Macedonium, Apollinarium, Nestorium, Eutychen, Origenem cum impiis eorum conscriptis, et alios omnes hæreticos qui condemnati et anathematizati sunt a sancta Catholica et Apostolica Ecclesia, et a prædictis sanctis quatuor conciliis, et eos qui similia prædictis hæreticis sapuerunt vel sapiunt, et usque ad mortem in sua impietate permanserunt vel permanent, talis anathematis sit."

All fourteen are given at length by Labbeus.¹ Not one of these canons makes the smallest allusion to the doctrine of everlasting punishment; but together with the Acta of this Council, held A.D. 553, the fifteen canons passed by the Home Synod, A.D. 541, together with the letters of Justinian addressed to that Synod, have been inserted and confused.

That the insertion of these documents among the Acta of the fifth Œcumenical Council is simply a confusion and an error is shown clearly, but at too great a length to be here quoted in full, by Cave in his *Historia Literaria* (p. 558), to which I have already referred. He points out, among the reasons which naturally account for confusion arising between those two Councils and their respective canons,

1 LABBEUS, *Sacrosancta Concilia* (Paris, 1671), vol. v. pp. 635 *et sq.*

2 MOSHEIM'S *Ecc. Hist.*, vol. ii. p. 121.

3 *Sac. Con.*, vol. v. pp. 568 *et sq.*

that both were held at Constantinople, both were summoned by Justinian, and, moreover, both were "the fifth Council of Constantinople." The Home Synod of A.D. 541 was the fifth of those councils which met at Constantinople. The Council of A.D. 553 was the seventh of those councils which met at Constantinople; but it was the fifth *Œcumenical* Council, and it met at Constantinople, so that both were called (though in different senses) "the fifth Council of Constantinople." As to the evident distinction between these two Councils and their respective decrees, Cave says, "In hac (i. e. the Synod of 541), sola causa Origeniana; in illa (i. e. the Council of 553), Trium Capitulorum causa unice agitata est; nec Origenis vel Origenistarum nisi capitulo xi. vel levissima mentio; multo minus causæ istius plenaria cognitio." (p. 558.)

I will not say more on this point, partly because I believe the insertion of these fifteen canons, together with the Acta of the fifth *Œcumenical* Council, is now generally allowed to be a simple mistake, and partly for another reason. It is urged that although these fifteen canons are not probably any part of the Acta of the fifth Council, nevertheless they must have been well known to the Fathers who met in A.D. 553, and they were probably implicitly accepted and endorsed under the head of the general anathema passed upon Origen and others, by the eleventh decree of the Council. In answer to this, it might be amply enough to say that something more than "inference" and "probability" may fairly be demanded before we can be required to believe that any doctrine, and much more such a doctrine (if, indeed, there is any other "such") as the one now in question, has received the solemn and final sanction of a general council; but for the purpose of this present argument I am willing to yield this point; I will allow the sufficiency of this "inference," and this "probability;" I will admit that the fifth General Council did accept and endorse all these fifteen canons of the Home Synod. What then? "Why, then," it will be said, "you have lost your cause, you have admitted that a general council did con-

demn the very doctrine which you are trying to defend!" I answer, "Not at all; and for this reason, because there is not in any one of those fifteen canons the remotest reference to the doctrine which I am trying to defend!" Baluzius gives them all in his *Nova Collectio*;¹ Origen's heretical doctrines are minutely recited in these canons, and seriatim condemned; but among the doctrines so condemned, the opinion that future punishment will not be everlasting is nowhere to be found. I have extracted these fifteen canons, as Baluzius gives them, and printed them in an Appendix, that they may be at hand for any one who cares to read them. Now, sir, unless there are forthcoming some other and strangely different records of these two Councils, I believe that in reply to my fourth question—"Is there any decree of the Universal Church, which expressly asserts or evidently and necessarily presupposes the doctrine in question?"—I am justified in answering "Certainly not." This might seem to be sufficient on this part of the subject; but since I have troubled you to follow me so far into an historical question, I will not resist the temptation of asking you to come one step farther. It has been shown (*a*) that the fifteen canons, so often referred to, have no oecumenical authority; (*β*) that, if they had such authority, they are *nihil ad rem* as to the doctrine of "everlasting punishment," because they do not mention it. But this is not all. Justinian in his letter to Mannes,² to which I have already referred, enumerates at great length—the letter fills twelve folio pages of Labbeus—the errors of Origen, and among them this opinion, that the torments of the lost would not endure for ever. He cites some extracts from Origen's writings in proof of the charges made, and then proceeds to dictate the very words in which he desires that Origen and his errors should be condemned. "His igitur ita se habentibus, factisque omnibus palam Origenis blasphemiiis, anathematismum in ipsum sic fieri convenit," and then follow nine formal canons, one of which runs thus:

¹ Paris, 1707. Pages 1548, *et sq.*

² LABBEUS, *Sac. Con.*, vol. v. pp. 635 *et sq.*

“ Si quis dicit aut sentit ad tempus esse dæmonum et impiorum hominum supplicium, ejusque finem aliquando futurum, sive restitutionem et redintegrationem fore dæmonum aut impiorum hominum ; anathema sit.” Besides this letter to Mennas the Patriarch, Justinian sent another letter, addressed to the Synod itself,¹ in which he exhorts the Fathers there collected to read diligently his “ exposition ” of Origen’s errors, and to “ condemn each one ” of them. The Synod accordingly met, and no doubt did “ diligently read the Emperor’s exposition ; ” at all events, they enumerated Origen’s heretical opinions in their fifteen canons, with careful minuteness, and condemned them. But there was one opinion which they did not condemn, to which, indeed, they made no allusion, and that one is the opinion that future punishment will not be everlasting.

It appears, then, that this Council was specially summoned to consider and condemn the errors of Origen ; that those “ errors ” were distinctly set out before them ; that an opinion as to the duration of future punishment was one of those “ errors ” which the Emperor expressly desired and required the Council to condemn ; and that the Council did not condemn that “ error.”

If the foregoing relation is historically true, and not a mere perversion of history, I trust we may not again be told that the popular doctrine of everlasting misery rests on the authority of the fifth Œcumenical Council, or indeed, on the authority of any council at all.

I pass to the next question :

V.

“ Is there any *express consensus* on this exact point, such as to leave no room for doubt as to the mind of *the whole Church* ? ”

I do not hesitate to answer this question also distinctly in the negative, for reasons which I will presently show.

¹ *Sac. Con.*, pp. 679, *et sq.*

But I must at once admit that an answer in the affirmative might certainly be given with some considerable appearance of plausibility; and further, I allow—and I must dwell in some detail upon this point—that a true answer might be given to this question which would supply the strongest argument that exists in support of the popular view; for there can be (I suppose) no doubt that the great body of Catholic theologians from the first, and of Protestants also in later times, have either expressly upheld this doctrine, or at least have used words and quoted passages of Holy Scripture usually thought to involve this doctrine, apparently assenting to, certainly not disclaiming the common interpretation.

Some account, therefore, must be given of this fact, unless we are prepared to accept the obvious conclusion that a doctrine so accepted and indorsed is sure to be true. I am not prepared to accept that conclusion, for reasons which in general I have already briefly given; but on this special point I venture to submit the following considerations:

(i) This doctrine was not a matter of controversy (at least not to any considerable extent) until the time of Origen, and consequently it was not stated with that carefulness and precision, by which in later times disputed doctrines were guarded from misconception and accurately defined. There was a general unquestioned belief in a "resurrection both of the just and of the unjust," in a separation of the one from the other "on the right hand and on the left," in a retribution "to every man according to his deeds," after his trial time here on earth should be ended. The word *αἰώνιος* was found applied to the future judgment, the future world, the future punishment, the future joy; it was applied indiscriminately to all these; one special meaning, notoriously (not its only, not its original meaning) seemed clearly to belong to it when applied to the future world, or futurity; it *tacitly assumed* to bear the same meaning in all the other applications. "Assumed," I say, not carefully considered; for a moment's consideration would

show that at least when applied to future "judgment" *αἰώνιος* could not possibly have exactly this same meaning. A "judgment" cannot "last for ever;" its results may conceivably last for ever; but not the *κρίσις* itself, which is essentially an act done and over. However, *αἰώνιος* being rightly taken to mean "lasting for ever" in some (and those, perhaps, the most important) passages in which it had been used, was supposed to mean the same thing elsewhere, and from long, customary, unquestioned use of words and phrases, which might and naturally would bear the meaning afterwards distinctly assigned to them, the doctrine of "eternal punishment," as signifying "punishment which would last literally for ever," gradually came to be, not thought out and well ascertained, but simply and quietly assumed.

It must be remembered, then, that to quote the statements of ancient theologians on this question, who wrote before it had become a question of controversy, is liable to be as misleading, as the quotations that might be made from ante-Nicene writers touching the *δμοούβδιον* controversy, which appear decidedly heretical in the light of the Nicene decrees. Yet they were not heretical.¹

When a theological term has received a definite, acknowledged, technical meaning, it is reasonable to assume that theologians, if they use that term, use it in its received sense; but when any word has not been so defined, when it has notoriously several meanings, it is entirely unreasonable to single out one of those meanings, and say as to any given passages that the word *must* have *that* meaning, and no other.

(ii) The wide acceptance of the popular doctrine on eternal punishment may well be accounted for, in great part, on the ground that it has been commonly *assumed* to follow of necessity in the train of certain other doctrines, the truth of which is not denied by any Catholic, but rather very jealously guarded and maintained: and hence it has come to

¹ Vide NEWMAN's *Arian's*, cap. v. sec. ii.

pass that when men have ventured to doubt, or to deny this doctrine about eternal punishment, they have been at once *supposed* to doubt or deny some, or perhaps all, of these other doctrines, and they have been rebuked, or reproached, pitied, or condemned accordingly.

Let me instance some of these "other doctrines," from which the popular doctrine under review is supposed to follow as of necessity.

(α) The doctrine of *the final judgment*, at "the end of all things" (whatever that phrase may mean), when "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."¹ This will be (so it is held) the *last* judgment. No review of its sentence is to be attempted, no reversal will be possibly ever. The sentence then passed will be absolutely final. Let it be so. But I would ask, does it follow that the penalty imposed by this "final" sentence must itself be final in the sense of lasting for ever? that the punishment inflicted by the "unchangeable" judgment must be itself "unchangeable" in the sense of unending? Most assuredly not. We speak of judgments given by earthly tribunals as being "final," or "irrevocable:" we do not mean that the penalties they assign are never to come to an end, but simply that they are finally pronounced, that there is no appeal nor escape. Why should we think otherwise of the judgments of that last and greatest "court," which we allow to be in the fullest sense of the word absolutely "final"?

() The popular doctrine is thought to follow from that separation of the evil from the good of which Holy Scripture speaks, and to the awful reality, the just necessity of which our hearts bear, whether willingly or unwillingly, their irrepressible witness. "When the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them

one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. . . . Then shall He say also to them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting (*αιώνιον*) fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." If these words are true—and no Catholic doubts them—here is a separation most real, true, and terrible: but is it said, is it implied, that the separation is to last for ever?

The sentence consigns some to great gladness and others to bitter grief; to these it is condemnation, to those it is acquittal. Certainly: but what then? Two men stand in our assize court, accused before the judge: the trial is over, the sentence is pronounced. The two men have left the court, one is acquitted, the other is condemned. One goes his way to life and liberty and joy, innocent, and reaping the reward of innocence; his acquittal is final, he is free, free for ever. The other goes his way in custody, perhaps in fetters, to the darkness of a prison, or the degradation of a convict's doom, to bear "in misery and iron" his heart-consuming solitude, or to work out in hard and fruitless toil, among companions more wicked, it may be, than himself, the long years of his appalling punishment. Is there not here a separation between the evil and the good, "real, true, and terrible"? But will it last for ever? Is it not possible that that convict, now in his chains, may be one day a free man, his sentence worked out, his punishment endured, his crimes blotted out from any further legal recognition, himself, perhaps, a new man in the highest and truest meaning of those words? with all the rights restored of freedom and of citizenship, standing, perhaps, side by side with him from whom he had long been parted by a separation most real and terrible, but not hopeless, not heart-crushing, not utterly despairful, because *not endless*. If

1 Vide the story of Jean Valjean in *Les Misérables*.

this is man's mercy in punishing, shall God's be less? At least, is it impossible to believe fully and unreservedly in a separation of the evil from the good at the final judgment, and yet to hope that that separation will not be endless, that it will last so long as the evil are evil, but no longer? Is it unreasonable, is it unchristian so to believe, or at least to hope? But I do not press the reasonableness or the Christianity of this hope; I am only concerned to show here that it is not inconsistent with the full belief in that "final" separation which is commonly but inconsiderately, and (I believe) untruly supposed to preclude any such hope at all.

(*γ*) There is a statement in the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus which is often quoted as proving the unalterable, and therefore (as it is urged) endless condition of "the saved" and "the lost." Abraham is represented as saying to the rich man that there is "a great gulf fixed" between them, and that it is impossible to pass across that gulf either way.

Now on this statement, viewed as an argument bearing on the question before us, I would plead (i) that this parable manifestly speaks of a time *prior* to the final judgment, and not subsequent to it; for Dives' five brethren were still living on this earth when he addressed himself to Abraham; therefore no statement in the parable has any proper or necessary reference to that state and condition which will be, not before, but after the last judgment; and (ii) that it does not follow of necessity (though it may be speculatively probable) that the same "gulf," or one similar to that which divides the evil from the good before the day of judgment, will also divide them afterwards. Still less is it necessary, or even speculatively probable, to assume that the "gulf" (whatever sort of division or distinction that figurative expression may imply) which is impassable during one particular period, will continue to be impassable always. In short, I would plead that no certain conclusions at all, as to the eternal conditions of the evil or the good, can safely be drawn from anything said in this parable.

(δ) Next it is urged that our final destiny is fixed at the hour of death, that our trial time is over, that for weal or woe our lot is cast. Pages of extracts from Holy Scripture might be quoted pointing this way—exhortations to work “while it is day,” “before the night cometh;” to “walk in the light, while we have the light;” to repent while “the day of grace” lasts; not to lose opportunities; not to reckon on the morrow; to remember that “the covenant of the grave is not showed” to us. All this, it is argued, implies necessarily that man’s destiny in the future is fixed unalterably at the hour of death. It would certainly seem so. I have no wish to deny or question it. His destiny for the future will be fixed finally unalterably. Let it be so. But I ask, “What destiny?” Why not—for the wicked—the destiny then inevitable, the sentence then irrevocable, that he must suffer $x + 1$ number of years or centuries of sorrow and suffering, the just penalty for his sins, the necessary issue of his earthly life; $x + 1$ number of years or centuries of bitter memory and keen self-reproach, “weeping and gnashing of teeth.” Years or centuries of painful waiting, of profound affliction, while the habits and desires of evil are denied and crucified and crushed and cast away; while the deep stains and memories of sin are burnt out or washed away; while the horror and misery and degradation of sin are felt to the uttermost, and all its seductive pleasantness is for ever gone; while the far off calm and joy of the land of light is seen in the immeasurable distance, and the sufferer again and again assails himself with the irrepressible ejaculation, “But for my sins, my own miserable sins, I too might have been there!”

Why not this destiny of sorrow and travail, to endure we know not how long—for there is no known measure of duration beyond the grave—before the end which God “willeth” for “all men?” Why not this destiny then, at the hour of death, at the day of judgment, finally, irrevocably fixed? I do not presume to say this will be so: I only ask, “Why not?” Is not such a supposition, such a belief quite in keeping with the truth that our future destiny is fixed at death?

Surely it does not necessarily follow that a sentence irreversibly passed must assign a penalty which shall be endless ; nor that a destiny inevitably incurred must be destiny to a condition which is unchangeable for ever.

(ε) There remains one more truth, often supposed, often expressly asserted, to include of necessity the never-ending punishment of the wicked; I mean, the never-ending reward of the righteous. It is frequently urged that any denial or even doubt as to the former implies also doubt or denial as to the latter; and on this point—the sure and certain “eternity,” in its largest meaning, of future bliss—all Christian people are agreed that there is no doubt. It would be perhaps impossible to find this supposition expressed more clearly anywhere than it is in the following verses, and here stated not as a mere rigid theory, but as the solemn, sad conviction of a profoundly and tenderly religious mind. Mr. Keble, in his hymn for the Second Sunday in Lent, has written—

“But where is then the stay of contrite hearts?
Of old they lean'd on Thy Eternal Word,
But with the sinner's fear their hope departs,
Fast linked as Thy great Name to Thee, O Lord ;
That Name, by which Thy faithful oath is past,
That we should *endless* be, for joy or woe ;—
And if the treasures of Thy wrath should waste,
Thy lovers must their promised heaven forego.”

I have quoted these words, trenchant and telling, as well as tenderly touching and persuasive, rather than many others which I might have chosen to the same general effect, because I desire to meet the argument here advanced in its strongest form, to give it every possible advantage, to admit to the full the power of its appeal to the faith and the hopes of Christian men, to their loyal and unshrinking acceptance of all that God has distinctly declared.

(1) Now, on these two verses I would remark, that in lines one and two it is implied that “contrite hearts” could no longer lean on God's “Eternal Word,” if it should appear

that "woe" was not "endless." This, of course, is simply assuming the whole question at issue, and, the refore, aslong as the question is *sub judice*, the appeal of these two lines cannot be admitted as an argument.

(2) In the third line it is implied that the "sinner's fear" will "depart" if the "woe" which threatens him should be thought anything short of "endless;" but this is an assumption as contrary to reason as it is opposed to all experience. Why, *a priori*, should any one cease to fear pain or punishment because it will not last for ever? Do we not shrink from pain, and take trouble to avoid it, though it would last but a few minutes if it came? Do we find in our criminal records that the fear of culprits has "departed," because they knew that their punishment would be over when they had received a given number of lashes, or spent so many months or years in prison, or in the hulks? Is it not rather true, on the contrary, and so well known as to need no mention, that fear of such finite pains and punishments is very keen and lively; that for the vast majority of mankind it always has acted, and always does act, as a powerful and stringent restraint upon those who are tempted to do evil? Why should it be otherwise; why will men do violence to all experience and all reason by insisting that it shall be otherwise, when the threatened "woe" lies beyond the confines of this world, dark indeed, and terrible beyond all that words can say, but yet not utterly hopeless because not endless?

It is, of course, true that the fear of an endless punishment would be much greater (so far as it is possible to compare the infinite with the finite) than the fear of a punishment which was not endless, i.e. it would be more horrid and heart-crushing; but it may well be doubted whether it would be morally effectual for good; and this is a "doubt" (to say the least of it) which has not, I think, been sufficiently considered by those who press the argument here used by Mr. Keble.

(3) A further argument of a different kind is found in lines five and six, an argument which, if admitted at all, is

unanswerable by those who believe the Bible. It is stated that the great Name of God is pledged on oath to the fact that "woe" as well as "joy" shall be "endless."

"That Name by which Thy faithful oath is past,
That we should endless be, for joy or woe."

If this were true, my pen would drop from my hand, all further argument would be worse than vain; but I ask respectfully, and before such a tremendous assertion as this is made and maintained there ought to be forthcoming a very clear reply to the question, "When and where was such an 'oath' passed? Where is the record of any such 'oath'?" I find it nowhere in the pages of Holy Scripture; and I know, and can conceive, no other record in which to search. That *we* ourselves shall be "endless" is no doubt generally admitted to be a truth of God's revelation. I know of no "oath" even for this; but it is a very different thing to assert that "woe" will be endless because we, some of whom that woe awaits, are endless ourselves. On these two lines I must venture, with all reverence for him who wrote them, to say that they contain an assertion so terrible and so momentous as to demand imperatively for its justification the most distinct and express testimony of Holy Scripture in its support, whereas no word of such testimony is at all to be found.

(4) Once more, as to these two verses; the last two lines imply that if the "wrath" of God were not endless His love could not be endless either.¹

"And if the treasures of Thy wrath could waste,
Thy lovers must their promised heaven forego."

But why? Where is the authority, ground, or reason for such an inference? Why must we suppose God's wrath to

¹ *Vide* also S. THOMAS. "Summa" Pars iii iii., Supplementum, Quæstio 99, art. ii. "Ejusdem enim rationis esse videtur bonos angelos in æterna beatitudine permanere, et malos angelos in æternum puniri. Unde sicut ponebat dæmones et animas damnatorum quandoque a pœna liberandas; ita ponebat angelos et animas beatorum quandoque a beatitudine in hujus vite miseriis devolvendas." He is speaking of the supposed opinions of Origen.

be endless and inexhaustible, *because* His love is everlasting? We are informed in Scripture¹ that God's "wrath" is His "strange work;" but His love is the very essence and outcome of Himself. God would cease to be what He is, if He ceased to love, for "God is love;" but it is nowhere said that "God is wrath." It is surely an unwarrantable conclusion to assume, that because that which is natural and necessary will be perpetual, therefore that which is strange and abnormal will be perpetual also.

(5) And this leads me to the last remark I would make on this argument in support of the popular doctrine; it is this, that the two conditions here referred to, compared, and assumed to be analogous, are not really analogous at all; one is God's known and declared will for mankind, the other is the contravention, the reversal of His will. He is "the Saviour of all men."² He "will have all men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth."³ It is nowhere said that He is "the Destroyer of all men," or that He "will have all men to be lost." Salvation, therefore, and destruction, the joy of "the saved" and the sorrow of "the lost," are not analogous, they are utterly disparate. And more than this, "salvation" is not merely God's known will in the abstract, but it was the very end and purpose of that great work of redemption, which is the centre and substance of Christian revelation; at least, if we will allow the testimony of that revelation to speak for itself. "Christ Jesus," we are told, "came into the world to save sinners."⁴ And as far as sinners "saved" (whatever may be the exact meaning, the whole contents of that expression,) so far the one purpose of His coming is gained. As far as sinners are "lost" (in the popular sense of that word,) so far God's purpose fails.

Is it possible intelligently to believe in Almighty God, and also to believe that His purpose—His greatest purpose ever made known to us—will be finally, fearfully, and everlastingly a failure? That He may work out that purpose

¹ Isaiah xxviii. 21.

² Tim. iv. 10.

³ Ibid. ii. 4.

⁴ 1 Tim. i. 15.

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to its final issue, its sure accomplishment, by means utterly mysterious to us; that He, with whom "a thousand years are as one day," may be tied to no limit of time in the achievement of what He wills to do—this is conceivable; but that He should fail finally is inconceivable—inconceivable unless we are prepared to resign our belief in "one God the Father Almighty," and fall back, in company with the ancient heathen, into a dim conception of some "fate" superior to the gods: the darkest and most dismal of all creeds.²

I have examined thus at length this particular argument, and laboured to show in some detail its unsatisfactory nature, because it is so frequently advanced as being *per se* conclusive on the question at issue, and because it does make at first sight an appeal both strong and touching to our hopes as well as our fears; an appeal often, no doubt, quite honestly used, but one which never ought to be used, since it is wholly groundless and delusive. There are then these five points of doctrine: the doctrines of "the final judgment," "the separation of the evil from the good," "the impassable gulf," "destiny fixed at death," and "the never-ending bliss of the righteous;" all of these have been

² I take the liberty of appending here, and further on in a note, the observations of a friend, which appear to me to be much to the purpose.

"It must be borne steadily in mind that the Christian revelation depicts Jesus Christ as claiming *all* the kingdoms of the world, and *all* souls and bodies therein, as His rightful domain, and as combating for their recovery with the evil spirits who have usurped them in part or entirely. To allege, then, that He can secure, as the result of this conflict, only an infinitesimal fraction of the objects contended for, leaving the incalculable majority to be the spoil of Satan, is to strip His title and crown of Victor from His brow, and to proclaim his utter, crushing, and irremediable defeat. The Calvinist argument, that the exceeding preciousness of the handful of ransomed souls is such as to outweigh a thousandfold the value of the innumerable lost, simply evades the fact of the *universality* of Christ's claim, and is besides an expression of the most inflated and arrogant spiritual pride.

"It may be added here, by way of illustration, that a king, who contended with a rebel chief for the possession of his wide hereditary realm, would certainly not be thought victorious in the issue of a war which left him but a small canton of territory, even if exceptionally fertile or rich in mineral wealth, while his revolted subject lorded it over densely-peopled provinces, of vast extent albeit of inferior productiveness."

generally held and believed by all Christian writers, of every school and every age, and all of them are commonly supposed to involve of necessity "the everlasting punishment of the wicked;" hence that doctrine has "crept in unawares," often when it has not been deliberately accepted and defended; and its defenders have taken advantage of this common acceptance, and of this supposed connection with other received doctrines, to construct new defences. I believe this consideration goes far to explain the fact (which certainly cannot be denied), that the great majority of theologians—or I should prefer to say of writers on Christianity—have expressly, or implicitly, accepted and endorsed the popular view. It must, however, never be forgotten, that there is nothing like an unbroken chain of evidence, nothing like universal consent; for from the days of Origen, in the third century, down to our own day, among the innumerable multitude of writers of sermons and commentaries, who have been content, without inquiry, to assume and then to improve upon the doctrine of endless misery, there have been here and there thoughtful and learned men, who have not been content so to assume, who have considered and examined a question so full of terrible interest; and again and again the issue of inquiry has been that they have disclaimed and rejected a doctrine which certainly appears to be more utterly and hopelessly dishonouring to God than any other which it is possible to conceive.¹ I am not aware that there exists any ancient record in detail of such an inquiry. We know the conclusions to which these men have come, we know little of the train of thought, or argument by which these conclusions were reached. But we do know a great deal on the other side; we possess lengthy and elaborate arguments advanced in support of the popular doctrine. We are at no loss whatever to know on what grounds, and by what sort of arguments, that doctrine has been asserted and maintained; and it might fairly be said

1. *Vide* a catena of opinions on this subject in an Appendix to Mr. Juke's interesting work on *The Restitution of All Things*. (Longman's, 1873.)

that I had failed satisfactorily to meet the difficulty raised by the fifth Question, which I proposed to answer, if I were not to examine in some detail the arguments by which writers of learning and authority have defended that doctrine, which it is the purpose of this Letter to discuss. I therefore proceed to make such an examination; and as it is evidently impossible to examine all writers upon this subject, I will chose three, one ancient, one mediæval, one modern; and I presume I shall not be charged with having made an unfair selection, or chosen feeble champions, if I fix upon S. Augustine, S. Thomas Aquinas, and Dr. Pusey, as advocates who shall be called to maintain the popular doctrine as best they can; and few, if any, could hope to do it better. I fix upon these three, partly because of the learning, ability, devotion, and orthodoxy which characterise them all, and partly because I know of no others, samples of their age and school, who have entered more fully—or perhaps I should say more at length—into the question, or taken more distinctly their side in the dispute.

But before I enter upon this examination, which properly belongs to the answer to my fifth Question, I will briefly recite and dismiss the sixth, viz.

VI.

“Is there any necessity, known to us, or even any probability, arising from the nature of the case, which would sustain the popular doctrine?”

I suppose it would be superfluous to argue that there is no such “necessity:” if there had been, the defenders of this doctrine need have been at no pains to search for other arguments; known necessity would have been conclusive alone. And as to any “probability” in favor of the popular doctrine, enough has been said already, and more will follow, to show that probability is clearly all the other way. And, so far as I know, no attempt has ever been made to defend this doctrine on the ground of inherent probability, much less of necessity. I will therefore say no more as to this, but proceed to inspect the arguments of the three theologians, just now mentioned, and first of S. Augustine.

§ III.

S. AUGUSTINE DE CIVITATE DEI. LIB. XXI.

Cap. i. to x. are occupied with questions not requiring special notice ; e.g. whether bodies could burn in the fire for ever without being entirely destroyed.

Whether the capacity to suffer pain does not involve of necessity the liability, and sooner or later the certainty, of death. Whether the pains of hell, arising from material fire can affect incorporeal spirits.

Cap. xi. Here a question of justice is raised, viz. whether it is not unjust that sins, however heinous, committed in a short time, should incur an endless punishment ? S. Augustine replies that even in this world sins which take but a short time to commit, e. g. murder or adultery, are avenged by long enduring punishments, *therefore* "it is not unjust," etc. But to this argument there is the obvious answer, that although the just proportion between a crime and its punishment is not to be reckoned by duration of time, yet there is a just proportion between the heinousness of a crime and the severity of its retribution, and the justice or injustice of any punishment invariably depends upon that due proportion being kept ; but there is no proportion between any temporal crime, however flagrant, and an endless punishment. It may indeed be true, as it has been said, that "sin has a bearing on the world to come, on the condition of spirits, and the eternal relations between God and the creature," and that "we have no line to fathom those depths ;" but if so, we at least cannot be held responsible for matters wholly beyond the possible reach of our understanding.

Cap. xii. to the same purpose. S. Augustine urges that we now cannot know how wicked (*quantum nefas*) the first

sin was, which deserved endless punishment, and involved all of us in that fate. But (passing over the question of one man's sin "deserving" punishment finite or infinite for all his descendants) it is always held to be of the essence of sin that it should be consciously committed; the guilt, therefore, of a sin cannot be, subjectively to him who commits it, greater than the sinner knows it to be, or might have known if he would; and consequently, to speak of an infinite penalty being justly due to any sin, *because* it was infinitely worse than the sinner knew, or could have known it to be, is to pervert the true idea of sin, and to destroy utterly all conception of responsibility. There *can be* no responsibility for an act of which the doer does not *and cannot* know the nature. In this same principle may be found the reply to the argument, that since the guilt of a sin depends (partly at least) upon the person against whom it was committed, and since sin is against an infinite God, therefore its guilt is infinite, and its *due* penalty endless. The reply is that "*infinite* guilt" is simply impossible in *any* act of a creature whose intelligence is not infinite, and therefore impossible in *any* man.

Cap. xiii. S. Augustine here notices the theory that *all* punishments are for the amendment of the offender; and if so, of course not endless. He replies simply that there are no doubt punishments, "*causa purgationis*," after death as well as before, but that all such punishments are previous to the Day of Judgment. This obviously is an assertion, not an argument.

Cap. xiv. xv. xvi. are not material to the question before us.

Cap. xvii. S. Augustine proposes "a peaceable argument" with those who think that the pains of the damned will not be endless. He observes that Origen thought this, and with consistency thought also that the fallen angels would be at some time restored. He does not argue the question, but simply says, (i) that for these and other opinions, "*et maximé*" for an opinion on an entirely differ-

ent subject,¹ "the Church condemned" Origen (reprobavit Ecclesia); how, or when, he does not say; and (ii) that this opinion is "against the plain Word of God" (contra recta Dei verba); but here, also, he gives no reference. He allows that this opinion is "misericors," and does not see why it should not apply to the angels as well as to mankind, if to either.

Cap. xviii. He says he has known person who think that the pains of the lost will be endless, because the saints will surely intercede for them when they stand to be judged, and God will surely hear their intercessions, and withdraw His threat, just as He did in the case of the Ninevites. S. Augustine makes here no answer to this argument (if it can be called an "argument"), but passes on to speak of others, viz. in

Cap. xix., that no one who has received Communion will perish everlastingly, because of the promise, "He that eateth of this bread shall live forever."²

Cap. xx., that no one who is a Catholic will perish forever, because he is a member of "the body of Christ;"³ or

Cap. xxi., because he has built upon "the one foundation," and, therefore, has the promise that "he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire."⁴

Cap. xxii., that no one who gives alms, and forgives his brethren, will perish everlastingly, because of the promise, "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you."⁵ A few other passages of Scripture to a like effect are also quoted. S. Augustine concludes this cap. by saying, "When I shall have answered all these arguments, Deo donante, I shall bring this book to a conclusion"! "All these arguments"! Is it possible to suppose that "these arguments" were "all" the arguments with which S. Augustine was acquainted? or that he attached any but the very slightest importance to "arguments" so pitifully feeble,

¹ "Et maxime propter alternantes sine cessatione beatitudines et statutis sæculorum intervallis ab istis ad illas, atque ab illis ad istas itus ac redivit in terminabiles."

² S. John vi. 58. ³ Ephes. v. 30. ⁴ 1 Cor. iii. 15. ⁵ S. Matt. vi. 14.

and founded avowedly on Scripture quotations so manifestly misapplied? However, he replies to "all these arguments," and we will see what he says.

Cap. xxiii. The opinion that the fallen angels, as well as lost human beings, will be finally saved, if refuted as being in contradiction to the words of our Lord in S. Matt. xxv. 41 and 46, and to the statement of Rev. xx. 10, and as obscuring the certainty of everlasting bliss. This argument has been already dealt with, except so far as regards the inference with reference to the salvability of the angels. On this it may be enough to say that it is the purpose of revelation to make known to us God's dealings with mankind, His dealings with the angels are only seldom, briefly, and incidentally introduced. We are not, therefore, justified in drawing conclusions about the angels *pari passa* with our conclusions about ourselves. It would be quite unwarrantable to conclude that the fallen angels *must* be salvable *because* men are (if they are), since we know too little about them to have any sure ground for such a conclusion.

Cap. xxiv. The opinion that the wicked will be saved from the full severity of a sentence to endless woe by the prayers, then offered, of the saints, is met by the argument that as the saints do not *now* pray for the devil and the lost angels, so neither will they *then* pray for lost mankind; in short, that regarding the matter as finally settled, they will not interfere with it. Several texts of Scripture, which are supposed to show that God will have mercy on the lost, are quoted in order to state that they do not mean this; and the idea that certain statements concerning the punishment of the wicked must be taken to signify the punishments which they deserve, not those which will be actually inflicted, is cited and dismissed. S. Augustine takes occasion here to state his belief in the salutary pains of purgatory.¹

¹ "Sicut etiam facta resurrectione mortuorum, non deerunt quibus post penas, quas patiuntur spiritus mortuorum, impertiatur misericordia, ut in ignem non mittantur æternum."—Sec. ii.

Cap. xxv. S. Augustine refutes the notion that those who are baptized, or who are communicants, or who are Catholics, however evil their lives may be, will not perish everlastingly, by reference to S. Paul's assertion, that "they which do such things (i.e. 'adultery,' etc.) shall not inherit the kingdom of God."¹ If they shall not inherit "the kingdom of God," then they must perish in hell, for there is no "middle place."

Cap. xxvi. S. Augustine, referring to the argument that those who have built on the one foundation, who have Christ for their foundation (*Christum in fundamento habent*), "will be saved, yet so as by fire," whatever their work may have been, objects, that to have Christ as our foundation means to put him before everything else, before all desires, aims, and affections, and that those who prefer the pleasures of sin to the obedience of Christ have not got "Christ as their foundation," and therefore this promise does not apply to them.

Cap. xxvii. And lastly he deals with the belief that those only will perish everlastingly, who have given no alms, or who have refused forgiveness to others, which belief rests on the words, "He shall have judgment without mercy who hath showed no mercy;"² and on the implied promise of our Lord, when he teaches us to pray, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive," etc.³

To this S. Augustine replies at great length, touching upon a number of collateral subjects, but chiefly to the effect that alms and forgiveness of others are not the *only* conditions of salvation; alms may be quite in vain; e.g., "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, . . . and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing;"⁴ and it is impossible to suppose that a man who persisted in all sorts of wickedness would be forgiven simply because he forgave the trespasses of others. Moreover, to whatever extent alms and forgiveness of others avail to win pardon, they avail to save us from being sent into condemnation, not to bring us out of it after we have been sent there.

¹ Gal. v. 21. ² S. James ii. 13. ³ Matt. vi. 11. ⁴ 1 Cor. xiii. 3.

This chapter concludes the book.

Now it is evident that not one of the arguments here refuted (except that of Origen) touches the broad question of endless punishment at all. S. Augustine has simply replied to a number of theories, more or less fanciful, which assert that certain persons will, for this or that supposed reason, be delivered from eternal woe. All these theories may have been shown to be quite baseless, but the main question is untouched. Origen's theory, the only one of real importance among all these shallow fancies, S. Augustine dismisses without argument, simply saying that it was rejected, among many others, by the Church, and that it is contrary to certain statements of Scripture. Both which assertions, if true, would no doubt render "argument" unnecessary; but S. Augustine does not prove, or attempt to prove either of them.

On the whole, therefore, it must be admitted that this lengthy treatise, to which reference is often made as if it were quite exhaustive, does in fact leave all the main issues of the question entirely untouched, except that one difficulty about justice, which is got over and dismissed by means of an analogy which has really no bearing whatever on the case.

S. Augustine then, although he here accepts, and elaborately defends the popular belief, has not attempted to grapple with any one of the really grave difficulties by which that belief is surrounded.

§ IV.

S. THOMÆ "SUMMÆ PARS III. SUPPLEMENTUM,"
QUÆSTIO 99.*"De Misericordia et Justitia Dei respectu Damnatorum."*

In the five "Articles" which fall under the head of this "Question," S. Thomas discusses some arguments for and against everlasting punishment. He follows so closely in S. Augustine's steps that it will not be necessary here to repeat texts and arguments already produced in analysing the twenty-first book of the *De Civ. Dei*. To that book S. Thomas constantly refers, and indeed his own short treatise is little less than an abbreviation of S. Augustine's lengthier work: the same objections started, the same replies given, the same texts quoted one after another. There are, however, some parts of this treatise which are not derived from S. Augustine.

S. Thomas throws his discussion here (as he does all through the "Summa") into the form of a series of questions, to which a supposed opponent answers in the negative, supporting his answer by such arguments as he can command; S. Thomas then replies to this negative answer, and attempts to confute its reasoning.

The questions here proposed are the following, entitled "Articles."

1. "Utrum ex divina justitia inferatur pœna æterna peccatoribus?"
2. "Utrum per divinam misericordiam omnis pœna damnatorum terminetur tam hominum quam dæmonum?"
3. "Utrum divina misericordia patiatur saltem homines in æternum puniri?"
4. "Utrum pœna Christianorum damnatorum per divinam misericordiam terminetur?"

§ V.

A SERMON, PREACHED BEFORE THE UNIVERSITY
OF OXFORD, BY THE REV. E. B. PUSEY, D.D.

On the Twenty-first Sunday after Trinity, 1864.

(Parker, 1864.)

In this very striking sermon Dr. Pusey is not dealing with the supposed objectors who confronted S. Thomas, nor with the misapplied texts of Scripture on which S. Augustine has expended so much toil. He is dealing with real difficulties, which he endeavours to remove, and he is urging very powerfully positive arguments in favor of the popular theory of endless punishment; although, as I shall notice presently, when he comes near a definition of what he himself means by "endless punishment," he speaks of something very different indeed from the popular notion.

Dr. Pusey begins by strongly deprecating the rationalistic tendency of conceiving for ourselves what God ought to be and to do, rather than simply accepting what He has revealed of Himself and his own purposes. "Is God," he asks, "our Maker, or do we make our God? Are we His creatures, the work of His hands, absolutely at His disposal, to whom He gives laws which at our great peril we must obey? Or is our God . . . the conception of our intellect, whose being and character *we* are to regulate, who is not to act otherwise than according to the laws which we assign to Him, what commends itself to . . . our moral nature?" (p. 1).

Now, admitting at once the righteousness of this protest against a dangerous tendency, I must observe that those who deny the popular doctrine of endless punishment, do so on the ground that that doctrine is irreconcilably opposed,

not to what they conceive, but to what God has expressly revealed as to Himself and His own purposes. It is, therefore, really quite beside the question to urge that we ought to believe what God has told us, and not mould theories about the future for ourselves—that is allowed on both sides; if there are any who will not allow this, I for one should differ from them as widely as Dr. Pusey does; the only question is, "What has God told us?" If any theory agrees with what He has told us, let it stand. If any theory violently disagrees, then we reject it, not because we dislike it, but because it is against God's truth.¹

Dr. Pusey's arguments may be divided (though he makes no divisions himself) into (I) arguments from express words of Scripture. (II) Arguments from the writings and actions of Christian people. (III) Speculative arguments. We will take all these in their order, and first

I.

Arguments from express Words of Scripture.

His first quotation is from S. Mark's Gospel (ix. 43-48). The reasons why this text cannot fairly be taken as proving the popular doctrine have been discussed already in this Letter, pp. 14 and 15.

S. Matthew xxv. 41 and 46 (to which I must return presently) has already been referred to on p. 11, just so far as the force of the word *αιώνιος* is concerned.

Our Lord's declaration to Judas is next quoted, "Good were it for that man if he had never been born,"² and Dr. Pusey argues that this must mean that the misery of Judas

¹ And in this connection it is not beside the mark to observe that the Calvinist system, which all Catholics reject, rests its claim to acceptance on this very argument, that however repugnant to man's corrupt mind, it is yet the revelation given by God concerning His own purposes and decrees. And it can quote quite as many texts in its favour as can the theory of endless punishment. Nevertheless, it has fallen as a creed, because of its incompatibility with the general scope of Holy Scripture.

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would be absolutely endless, because if he were *ever* "to be restored and to behold God," then it would be "good" for him to have been born, since he would in the end be happy after whatever ages of misery. (pp. 19, 20.) Now if these words about Judas are pressed rigidly to the utmost extent of their possible meaning, they do certainly appear to involve some such conclusion as Dr. Pusey draws. But is it allowable so to press the meaning of these words in such a way? Are we prepared to treat other passages of a similar character in the same way? e. g. our Lord in one place declares that "it were better" for a man "that a millstone were hanged round his neck and he drowned in the depth of the sea," rather than that he should offend one of these little ones."¹ This is very similar to the statement about Judas; and what is the conclusion that an inexorable logic would compel us to draw? Nothing short of this, viz. that to give offence in any way—for there is no limit assigned to grave or permanent offence—to one of Christ's people is so terrible and condemning a sin, that a man had "better" be suddenly killed with any number of other sins, it may be unrepented and unforgiven, that he had "better" be cut off from all hope of penitence and amendment, from all further opportunities and offers of grace, rather than live to commit this one sin; that no repentance, however deep and sincere, no power of God's absolving and then sanctifying grace, no subsequent growth in holiness—no! not if the man lived all the rest of his life in truest penitence and humblest, heartiest obedience, could suffice to restore him to so good a position (with a view to the future) as he had occupied before he was guilty of this particular sin. For if not, if he *could ever* become a better man than he was before he did this sin, then it would *not* be good for him to be drowned in the sea; it would be "better for him" to be allowed to do this sin, and then to live on to repent of it and rise higher; but our Lord declares it would *not* be better. Where is there any escape from this dilemma?

¹ S. Matt. xviii. 6.

Where, indeed, would there be any escape from a thousand dilemmas, contradictions, and falsehoods in which we should be involved, if we chose to take isolated passages, specially those of a rhetorical character, and insist upon all their strict logical conclusions? It would not be too much to say that this text, of which Dr. Pusey makes so much, has really no bearing at all on the question of endless misery. That misery, which is terrible, does await the wicked after death, this the text no doubt implies; but that it will be endless misery it does not imply, on any fair principles of exegesis.

The same remarks, *mutatis mutandis*, must be applied to Dr. Pusey's use of the next text which he cites: "What doth it profit a man to gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"¹ Here evidently some "loss" in the next world, far outweighing any possible "gain" in this world, is referred to; but must the loss be *endless* misery? Dr. Pusey argues that "to 'save his soul,' and to 'lose it,' are plainly contradictories. Such an one (i.e. one who should be in the end restored) would have saved his soul. It must mean something else, something irreparable, to lose it." (p. 21.) No doubt, to "save" and to "lose" are "plainly contradictories." To escape an awful misery, and to suffer it, are "plainly contradictories," whether the misery is "endless or not. And even granting that the loss must be "something irreparable," Dr. Pusey has himself just pointed out to us, only in the next preceding page (p. 20), that such an "irreparable loss" is quite possible for a soul which is (in the common phrase) "saved" and in heaven. "A stunted soul," he writes, "although full according to its measure, has still not the same capacity of knowing or loving God, or containing the everfilling ocean of His love. So far he is subject to great *irreparable loss*." Here then is a "loss," which, on Dr. Pusey's own showing, satisfies the necessary meaning of the text; but this "loss" is a very different thing from being "lost for ever," in the

¹ S. Matt. xvi. 26.

popular meaning of that phrase. If, however, we are bent upon pressing to the utmost this statement about losing his own soul, let us mark carefully the conclusion to which we are coming, and to which Dr. Pusey actually does come in dealing with the next three passages of Scripture, which he quotes, viz. Matt. x. 28, and 2 Thess. i. 7-9, and Rev. xx. 10, which two latter "do but say in other words the self-same truth" as the first, which is as follows: "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Upon which Dr. Pusey remarks, "Death is opposed to death, destruction to destruction, a destruction which is but partial, of this body, in this fleeting life, to a destruction which is complete, of body and soul, in hell. Temporary suffering is *not* destruction. Not until the last torturing pang had crushed out the last quivering remains of life, had men killed the martyr's marred and shapeless body. What, then, can destruction of soul and body mean, but that deathless death from which all life is gone?" (p. 21.)

All life gone! Is that to be the destiny of the wicked? That is a theory which certainly is not new, and it might, perhaps, possibly be reconciled with Scripture; but there is one thing with which it could not possibly be reconciled, and that is the popular theory, or indeed any theory of endless punishment and endless suffering; for where "all life is gone," both from body and soul, there cannot be conceivably any capacity for "suffering" of any sort. Conscious existence without life is a contradiction in terms, and without consciousness there can be no "suffering." "All life is gone!" this is simply the theory of *annihilation*. It is not to be supposed that Dr. Pusey intends seriously to support this theory; the whole drift of his sermon is against it; but that he should have been led in this passage expressly to assert a theory, absolutely fatal to the position which he is labouring to maintain, is a striking instance of the danger of pressing particular words and phrases of

Scripture with a rigid and ruthless literalism which can only lead in the end to a mass of contradictions and absurdities. This is the instance to which I referred (p. 59), where Dr. Pusey "comes near a definition" of the destiny of the wicked, and nearly defines something very widely different from the conception of popular theology.

These are all the texts of Scripture which Dr. Pusey cites. That none of them do necessarily assert the popular doctrine of endless suffering I have endeavoured to show; and as to the three last quoted, Dr. Pusey himself declares that they all teach a doctrine wholly irreconcilable with the popular view. Nevertheless, he proceeds in support of that view to make some remarks "on the meaning of the single word *αἰώνιος*" on which he says the doctrine of everlasting punishment depends very little. "Not that there is any doubt as to that word." (p. 22.) Scholars tell us that there is not "any doubt," i.e. there is not any doubt that *αἰώνιος* is used in other senses besides that of "endless." But this is, of course, the opposite of what Dr. Pusey means. I have already referred (pp. 15, 16) to Schleusner's article on *αἰώνιος*, in which he gives examples of three different senses in which that word is used in Scripture. But as Dr. Pusey says that "*to a Greek*," the word "had no other meaning" than endless (p. 23), I would here refer any one who wishes to prosecute a philological inquiry to the article on *αἰών* (the kindred substantive to *αἰώνιος*) in the *Scapulae Lexicon*,¹ where three different senses are attached to that word, and references given to classical authors; that "endless" was one of those senses no one thinks of denying. It is needless here to dwell longer on this special point; but it is necessary emphatically to enter a protest against the assertion that *αἰώνιος* "had no other meaning" than "everlasting;" because, although the popular doctrine is not supposed by learned advocates, such as Dr. Pusey, to rest at all exclusively on the necessary meaning of that single word, yet the passages in which it occurs are

¹ Clarendon edition, 1820.

constantly and habitually resorted to as the mainstay of the popular theory, and often (e.g. by S. Augustine and S. Thomas in the works just now analysed) quoted as of themselves having force to answer and demolish all opponents.

There is, however, one passage already referred to in which *αἰώνιος* is used, and on which Dr. Pusey finds an argument that requires special notice. (pp. 23, 24.) In S. Matt. xxv. 46 we read, and they are the words of Christ Himself, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment" (*εἰς κόλασιν αἰώνιον*): "but the righteous into life eternal" (*εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον*). Dr. Pusey argues, and the argument is familiar, that this word *αἰώνιος*, here used twice over in two evidently parallel clauses of the same sentence, must be taken to bear the same meaning in one clause as it does in the other. This must in fairness certainly be admitted. But what then? There is more than one possible issue of this argument.

Dr. Pusey would argue "*αἰώνιος* certainly means 'endless' in the second clause, therefore it must mean 'endless' in the first;" but it might be argued on the other hand, with at least equal reason and force. "*αἰώνιος* cannot mean 'endless' in the first clause, therefore it must not be pressed to mean 'endless' in the second." No doubt you cannot in any fairness force the word to mean more, or less in one clause than it does in the other; and therefore *the minimum* of necessary significance is all that you have any right to insist upon in either clause. The word might mean more; the statement might be quite true if the word did mean more in one clause, or in both: but we are not concerned with what the statement might mean, but only with what it must mean; and therefore since *αἰώνιος* does not always, or necessarily mean "endless," you have no right to insist that it shall bear that meaning in either of the above clauses, however plain it may be that that meaning would be very proper and true in one of them.

Dr. Pusey urges the necessity, for our own peace and comfort, of excluding all doubt as to the absolute endless-

ness of the joy of heaven. "Heaven could not be heaven, unless they (i.e. the blessed) were fixed in good." (p. 10.) I believe the endlessness of that joy as much as Dr. Pusey does, but I do not ground my belief on the forced interpretation of this, or any other particular text. I believe in the endlessness of joy and goodness, because that belief is in full accord with the revealed character, and the known will and purpose of God. I disbelieve the endlessness of misery and wickedness, because that belief is (to my mind at least) irreconcilably contrary to all that we know of God's will, purpose, and nature. I say, I "disbelieve;" I do not say, I "deny." That is a step farther, and requires more evidence, more perhaps than we can gain on this side of the grave. There is, indeed, a certain speculative view as to the endlessness of misery and wickedness, which I am not prepared to say I disbelieve, because it is, I think, speculatively possible. I mean the view that, since man is a moral and responsible being, and since "responsibility" involves the freedom to choose ill, or well, it must be speculatively possible for man, being for ever a moral and responsible creature, to go on for ever choosing evil. But this is simply a speculation; and it invites a further speculation as to whether it is not most likely that God would take *some* effectual means of inducing all men, sooner or later, to choose good and happiness, instead of persisting for ever in the choice of evil and misery.

II

Arguments from the Writings and Actions of Christian People.

We now come to Dr. Pusey's second set of arguments, i.e. arguments from the writings of the Fathers, and the acts of the martyrs. He says that a belief in endless punishment was general among Christians of old. "The converted world," he writes (p. 26), "ever believed that wrath to come, from which they had fled." No doubt they did; but does it follow that they had considered the question of whether "that wrath" would last on unabated for ever, and had arrived at the conclusion that it would? That all Christians (and many others, who were not Christians) have "ever believed" in a future retribution on sin, or, to use the phrase which Dr. Pusey quotes, in "wrath to come," no one thinks of questioning; but it is surely most unwarrantable to assume that all these people believed also that that "wrath" would inflict upon its victims a punishment which would never end, and a misery which would be utterly hopeless. When we venture to step beyond the grave we are on dangerous ground, which need cautious and reverent treading, and we cannot allow ourselves to be hurried along by rash and wholesale assumptions. "Wrath to come" and future punishment for sin are no doubt articles of the Christian faith; but that this wrath shall never be appeased, and that this punishment shall never end, is a mere popular assumption, "grounded upon no warranty of Scripture, but rather repugnant to the Word of God," an assumption which appears more and more improbable the more it is looked into.

Dr. Pusey passes from the general belief of all Christians to the special testimony of the martyrs, who "in the sim-

plicity of their faith, when they allowed themselves to be torn and mangled and burnt, their flesh shredded by the iron hooks, or scorched by the red-hot iron chair, sooner than incur, as they said, eternal death by denying Christ, were better witnesses to the truth which they believed, than the erratic, speculative mind "of Origen. (p. 26.) Would it not be more correct to say that they were "witnesses to what *they believed* to be the truth"? Their willing and noble sufferings bore conclusive witness to the strength and the sincerity of *their belief*, but not to the positive truth of *what they believed*. Some men have suffered death because they believed in the doctrine of transubstantiation; others have met their death because they refused to believe it. The faith of each may have been equally strong and equally sincere, but obviously one or other must have been mistaken. The natives of India who sacrifice their lives beneath the wheels of an Idol's car are no doubt "witnesses to what they believe to be the truth," but Dr. Pusey would be among the first to deny that "what they believe" is thereby proved to be "the truth."¹

"Who," asks Dr. Pusey, "are the witnesses that our Lord meant what He said? Not a single speculator (however original his genius), but the poor, rich in faith, who received simply what was simply said." (p. 25.) Just so: as many a "simple" Christian has understood many statements of Scripture in a literal sense, and has "simply" believed that sense—as many Christians in apostolic and sub-apostolic time believed the near approach of Christ to judge the world, understanding "simply" such statements as that of S. James,² "The coming of the Lord draweth nigh;" although as a matter of fact "the coming of the Lord" (as they understood it) was not by any means drawing "nigh" (in the ordinary sense of that word)—so

¹ It is a significant fact that Origen himself went down to the grave marked with the scars of horrible tortures cheerfully borne in his old age for the Name of Christ, albeit he did not hold that everlasting misery would have been his lot if physical anguish had forced an unwilling recantation from his lips.—*Vide* EUSEBIUS, *Hist. Eccles.* book vi. cap. xxxix.

² S. James v. 8.

the Christians of old believed "simply" in bliss, the sure result of righteousness, and punishment, the certain consequence of sin; and if they used a customary word or phrase which was capable of the meaning which popular theology has attached to it, we have no right to assume that they had considered and accepted all the necessary issues and accompaniments of a doctrine, which was possibly contained in their phraseology, but probably quite foreign to their "simple" faith.

Dr. Pusey makes reference expressly to three of the Fathers; and his three references, if they do not serve his purpose, will certainly serve mine, for they illustrate and endorse the truth of three arguments which it has been the purpose (in part) of this Letter to suggest; viz. (a) that the use by ancient writers of customary words or phrases of doubtful meaning is constantly referred to, as if *they* must have used them deliberately in the sense which *we* choose to adopt: that this is an unwarrantable assumption, that nothing whatever is really proved by any number of such references. Dr. Pusey supplies us with a sample; he says, "S. Irenæus, in paraphrasing the Apostles' Creed, distinctly mentions eternal punishment as a part of the universal belief derived from the Apostles." He quotes a long passage from Irenæus.¹ At the close of this lengthy passage Irenæus states as part of the received belief, that Christ would return in glory "the Saviour of all who are saved, and the Judge of those who are judged, and casting into eternal fire those who pervert the truth and despise His Father and His coming" ("mittens in ignem æternum"). This is all he says on the subject; and what is this, but just the accustomed use of a received phrase without any allusion to the difficulties and uncertainties of its possible meanings? Of course, *if* the received phrases could have but one meaning, then *cadit quæstio*, it is not worth while to quote this or that particular passage; these phrases occur perpetually; but if they are capable of more than one meaning, then it is useless to quote pas-

¹ *Adv. Hær.* iii. 4.

sages, however numerous, and simply assume that the writers must have intended your meaning. There is nothing in the passage of Irenæus, just quoted, to prevent our understanding *æternum* (the Latin equivalent of *αἰώνιος*) to mean "indefinite," and there is nothing gained in the way of proof by merely assuming that it means "interminable."

(β) Dr. Pusey's next reference illustrates and enforces another argument already (in substance) suggested in this Letter, viz. that for the "simple" minds of the majority in old times (and the same is true now) it was enough to teach that sin would lead to punishment hereafter, and that righteousness would bring its sure reward; and that this teaching and this faith was "received simply," and "simply said," without touching on the perplexing question whether the future punishment would be "infinite" or "indefinite;" *αἰώνιος* might bear either meaning, and at all events it meant something belonging to the ages to come, to the future world, and that was enough. All that world, its sorrows and its joys, lay far away, wrapped in impenetrable mystery. Men were told what it was good for them to know, the sure futurity of punishment for sin; but *how* to be inflicted? or when? or where? or for how long? or indeed what "how long" means when "time shall be no more?" these were questions which "simple" faith was not concerned to agitate.

Exactly to this effect Origen writes in a passage which Dr. Pusey quotes,¹ "All which might be said on this topic it is not suitable to explain now, or to all. Nay, neither is it without peril to entrust to writing the plain truth as to such things. *For the many need no further teaching than that of the punishment of sinners.*" That was the simple faith, which Origen thought sufficient for "the many," without entering upon difficult questions. It is true that in the continuation of the passage, as Dr. Pusey quotes it, he goes on to express an opinion that it is unwise to disturb the fear of endless punishment in certain people,

1 *Contra Celsus*, vi. 26.

because that fear acts as a wholesome restraint. "It is not expedient," he says, "to go farther, on account of those who scarcely through the fear of eternal punishment restrain the outpouring into any amount of wickedness." These words, Dr. Pusey argues, "imply, of course, that the eternal punishment was the belief of Christians." Certainly they imply that such was the "belief," or at least the "fear" of *some* Christians; but, so far as we gather from this passage, they were not persons whose belief or practice was much to be admired. But granting, for the sake of argument, that a belief in the endlessness of future punishment was a common popular belief, is it thereby shown to be scriptural and true? It was not merely popular belief, but the formal judgment of the highest ecclesiastical authorities, which, many centuries after Origen's time, declared that the assertions that the earth moved, and that it was not the fixed centre of the universe, were both clean contrary to Scripture. No reasonable man now supposes that that judgment was anything other than a mistake on both points, intended, no doubt, to be in keeping with Scripture, but with Scripture misunderstood.

(*γ*) Dr. Pusey next quotes a passage from the writings of S. Jerome, which appears to make the belief of that great divine quite unmistakable. Yet in this very passage S. Jerome gives us a proof that it is not only in popular language, but even in the writings of the most learned, that we may find words of definite and tremendous import (if rigidly pressed) used without any intention that they should bear their full significance, used indeed where it is plainly impossible that they can bear that full significance; this is the third of "three arguments" referred to at page 73: but of this presently. The passage which Dr. Pusey quotes is this: "If all rational creatures are alike, and if out of virtues and vices they at their own free will are either raised on high, or sunk in the deep, and after a long revolution and infinite ages there shall be a restoration of all things, and the glory of all who have been on probation be one, how will the virgin be removed from the prostitute?"

What difference will there be between the Mother of the Lord and (which to name is shame) the victims of the common lusts? Shall Gabriel then and the devil be all one? Apostles and demons one? prophets and false prophets one? martyrs and persecutors one? Invent what thou wilt, redouble years and times, and throng with torments infinite ages, if the end of all is alike, all the past is as nothing, for the whole question is not what we once have been, but what we shall be for ever." (p. 29.)

Now on this remarkable passage there are several observations to be made.

(i) S. Jerome assumes that if there shall be "a restitution of all things," then "the glory of all" will be "one," and that there will be no longer any "difference;" as if all who shall be finally "saved" must be equal in bliss and glory. S. Paul, on the contrary, teaches¹ that "as one star differeth from another star *in glory*, so also is the resurrection of the dead." The glory of the saved will not be "all one." They will all alike be "saved" (whatever that may involve), but they will not all be equal, so says S. Paul; and Dr. Pusey himself has pointed out, at page 20 of this same sermon, how a soul which is finally saved may yet suffer all through eternity "great, irreparable loss," because of past sins. Therefore if "the restoration of all things" is denied on the ground that the supposed necessary consequence of the final equality of all is incredible, it is only needful to point out that that consequence is not necessary, nor even suggested.

(ii) And further, in reply to the question (very painful and repulsive in its bare coarseness), "How will the virgin be removed from the prostitute? What difference will there be between the Mother of the Lord and (which to name is shame) the victims of the common lusts?" It may be asked, "What difference was there between the Mother of the Lord and that other Mary, when they stood together by the Cross of Him whose various grace had kept the one ever pure from stain or soil, and had cleansed the

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 41-42.

other from her manifold defilements?" They had been *once* as different as two creatures could be, they were *now* alike the objects of His love whom both had learned to love, both blessed in that love, both saved, though doubtless with a deep difference within, which perhaps will never in all eternity be effaced. So they stood together beneath the Cross on earth, why not so also before the throne in heaven?

(iii) In the last sentence of this quotation S. Jerome is arguing that long ages of torment are of no real account, "if the end of all is alike;" and, he urges, "all *the past* is as nothing." It may be so; but these long ages of torment are not now "past" to us, they are yet to come. It may be, possibly (though very improbably) that when a soul has gone through these ages of torment, and is about to enter into joy, all its past suffering may seem "as nothing;" it does not the least follow that all these sufferings "seem as nothing" when they are *not* past and gone, but still darkly and fearfully awaiting us.

Surely it is idle, if not worse than idle, to argue that long ages lying before us "thronged with torments" are not terrible, because at some time, we know not how distant, they will come to an end. The evidence of all history, the witness of our own hearts, the government of every nation under heaven, contradict absolutely such a palpable falsehood.

(iv) I have one more remark to make on this passage of S. Jerome. I would point out that it supplies us with two striking examples of that use of words bearing a definite and tremendous meaning (if rigidly pressed) without any intention on the part of the writer that such words should bear their full significance, and even where such a significance is evidently impossible. The words to which I refer are these, "If.....*after* a long revolution and *infinite* ages (*infinitis sæculis*) [the italics are mine] there shall be a restoration," etc. "*After infinite ages!*" How can there be any "after," if the ages are really "infinite"? And again: "Invent what thou willest, redouble years and times,

and throng with torments *infinite* ages (*infinitas ætates*) if *the end* of all is alike, all *the past* is as nothing," etc.? How can there be any "*end*" to torments which endure throughout "*infinite*" ages? How can "*infinite* ages" ever be all "*past*"? It requires no argument to prove that S. Jerome *must* be using "*infinite*" as merely synonymous with "*indefinite*;" he cannot mean literally "*endless*," for if so his words would be simply nonsense.

I would ask special attention to this use of the word "*infinite*," because what S. Jerome has certainly done in this passage is only what I believe others have done—and their name is legion—in a hundred and a thousand other passages. They have used the words "*infinite*," "*eternal*," "*everlasting*," or their equivalents in Latin, or in Greek, as applying to matters belonging to a future state, joy, sorrow, judgment, justice, retribution, punishment, often probably simply as customary and impressive epithets, often certainly without the smallest intention of pressing such words to their fullest possible meaning. But nevertheless these words have been used; some of them may, some in strictness must, mean absolutely "*endless*"; and consequently the popular doctrine as to endless misery (which this use of these words has so largely helped to foster and to spread) has to show in its support an imposing list of authorities, a long catena of quotations, all *apparently* agreeing to assert that the punishment of "*the lost*" will never end, while in reality very few of these "*authorities*" intended to express any opinion at all on that subject. I think this consideration deserves more weight than it commonly receives, when we have to meet the difficulty of a great consensus of authoritative opinion *apparently* supporting the popular doctrine. It is an appearance only, not a reality.

III.

Speculative Arguments.

I pass now to Dr. Pusey's third line of argument, which I have called "speculative." He begins (pp. 6, 7, 8) with a powerful pleading¹ to convince his readers that punishment is the "due reward" of sin. Unquestionably; nobody doubts it; but it has no bearing on the matter in dispute. The sole question is, not whether sin deserves punishment, but whether that punishment shall be "everlasting" in the strictest sense of that word; and not all the wise men in the world, from Plato to Bishop Butler (both of whom Dr. Pusey quotes), who are agreed upon the former point, help us in the smallest degree by any such agreement to settle the latter. Admit that a criminal "deserves" to be flogged, or sent to prison. It does not follow that he deserves to be flogged continuously *ad infinitum*, or to be kept in prison for ever.

Dr. Pusey proceeds to advance some speculative arguments in favour of the endlessness of future misery.

(1) He says that men go on sinning all through this earthly life, and never turn from bad to good, but by the grace of God; and then he asks, "Why, unless changed even then (i.e. 'at the hour of death') by the grace of God,

¹ A like "pleading" to that here used by Dr. Pusey is advanced in a very learned and elaborate essay in support of the popular doctrine of Everlasting Punishment, by the Rev. G. C. Cazenove. (Mozley, 1868.) He is arguing in favour of this doctrine on the ground of God's justice, and he tells (p. 23.) the story of Prince Orloff, the murderer of Peter III., of his deliberate treachery, and his base betrayal of his own wife; and then he asks, "Would any man with human feeling be pleased to think that this monstrous act of perfidious cruelty should remain *wholly unpunished*—that the offender should depart *scot free*?" (The italics are mine.) Of course not: but what bearing has this question on the justice of *everlasting* punishment? Does a great criminal "depart scot free" because he is sentenced to a penal servitude for twenty years, and not for all the rest of his life, much less for ever?

should it (i.e. a soul) change in eternity?" "Why should it change?" An array of reasons might easily be given if this question is to be looked on as a matter of probability; e.g. because probably it will desire and try to change; because probably sooner or later it will weary of its wickedness, and wish for something better; because probably it will groan under its misery, and long to be set free; because probably the happiness of goodness and the wretchedness of sin will be far more evident in another world than they are here, and will therefore produce a correspondingly greater effect on our minds: and because (leaving probability and passing to certainty) good is essentially superior to evil; because God is greater than the devil; because God "will have all men to be saved;" because this His will would be utterly, disastrously crossed and crushed if the vast majority of mankind were not saved, but lost for ever. These are some of the reasons which might be given in reply to the question, "Why should it change in eternity?" But surely it is not for us, from our side, to be asked for any reasons at all. The advocates of the popular doctrine come to us and say, "Future punishment shall be endless; sinners (i.e. the majority of mankind) shall be horribly tormented for ever; they shall never change; *why should they?*" We may fairly presume to reply, "There are ten thousand reasons why they should; but *you*, who make this awful assertion, are bound to show why it is true, not *we* to show why it should not be true, though that were easily done, if necessary."

(2) Next Dr. Pusey urges that "unchangeableness may be, for what we know, one of the laws of eternity." (p. 10.) And again: "It may be an equal law of our moral nature that they who reject God in time, even to the end, will, by a continuance of that same fixed will, reject him everlastingly." (p. 11.) Possibly "it may be;" certainly "it may not be;" either way there is here no sort of proof, not even a probable presumption. Dr. Pusey is of course incapable of writing on a grave subject otherwise than in the most careful and reverend spirit; but it is obvious that the wild-

est conceivable theories as to a future world might be started and supported, on the ground of the existence of some supposed "laws of eternity," which "may be, for what we know;" but this really is not argument.

(3) Dr. Pusey goes on to recite the example of Satan (pp. 11-14) as a speculative argument by way of analogy. Satan's malignity and his punishment are perpetual and changeless. He argues, *therefore*, the malice and the misery of sinners will probably be changeless also. Now I deprecate this argument, and hold it inconclusive for two reasons, (i) because we know too little about Satan and his future destiny to be at all safe in any analogies grounded on such slender and indistinct information; and next (ii) because the little which we do know goes far to invalidate this particular analogy on two accounts chiefly:

(α) Because there is an immense moral disparity between a being who had (as theologians tell us) no taint of original sin without to incline him towards evil, no temper without to lead him on; a being "gifted (as Dr. Pusey says) with most immense intelligence, once full of wisdom and perfect in beauty," who "beheld God face to face," who saw and knew all that a creature could see or know of the love of God, and the beauty and bliss of holiness; and then, in the light of all this knowledge, deliberately revolted and cast his bliss away—there is an immense moral disparity between such a being as this, and us human sinners, however sinful we may be, who have never "seen God," who know so little of Him, who live here below in the midst of doubts and darkness and ignorance and infirmities, from within inclined towards evil, and from without assailed by incessant temptations. And if Satan's sin and ours are indeed thus widely different, it is only reasonable to conclude that their consequences will be widely different also. This is one consideration which goes to invalidate Dr. Pusey's analogy.

There is another (), of no weight, of course, with unbelievers in Scripture, but of considerable force for any who accept the Holy Scriptures as a revelation of the truth. I

mean this, that Scripture declares that it was God's "eternal purpose," and is still His "will," that all men should be saved. There is no such declaration as to the final destiny of Satan.¹ I am not arguing that such a purpose cannot exist, because it is not revealed; but I am arguing that as this purpose is emphatically and repeatedly declared as to mankind, and never even intimated with reference to Satan, the supposed analogy between their future prospects, so to speak, is hereby destroyed. Therefore, granting that the sin of Satan and his punishment will be endless, it does not follow even in probability, much less of necessity, that man's nature and his destiny will be the same.

This is the sum of Dr. Pusey's pleading in support of the popular doctrine of endless misery.

And now I have completed an examination, which I believe has been full and fair, of these three illustrious advocates. How often they have brought their great powers to bear on questions which are quite beside the main issue; how entirely S. Augustine and S. Thomas have passed by the real difficulties and left them untouched; how far Dr. Pusey has succeeded in meeting those difficulties, or has failed, I must leave others to judge; I will only say, that if there are any who are ready to believe this fearful doctrine on the grounds here laid down, they must be (I think) persons who are able to believe, not on the strength of sufficient evidence, but in spite of it.

¹ *Vide* Epistle to the Ephesians iii. 11; and i. 9 10; and I Timothy, ii 4; and iv. 10.

§ VI.

CONCLUSION.

Here for the present my task is ended. I do not imagine that I have even touched, much less that I have grappled with, all the difficulties which have gathered round a question more profoundly interesting, and perhaps more impenetrably mysterious, than any other which could be raised. I have simply made one small contribution towards the consideration of that question.¹ I have tried to show that there are no sufficient grounds on which the popular doctrine, here dealt with, can rightly claim any place as a necessary article of Christian faith: so much and no more. Some arguments here used may be thought to warrant conclusions beyond any which I have drawn; and I will not conceal my own belief that the witness of revelation, as of reason, does certainly point towards a hope that all the "lost" will be restored. But I am very far from presuming to say dogmatically that it will be so. It may be so: I hope it will be so: I see much in favour of that hope, not much against it. But there is so much beyond our sight that is perilous to be positive. I have only ventured to assert, that the popular doctrine, if not certainly false, is certainly unwarrantable, that it is not "*de fide*;" and I have done so with the desire of helping to lift the veil of hopeless misery, and to quiet the risings up of horri-fied and indignant rebellion, which are two at least of the sad but sure results of believing that the God of Scripture

¹ May I call attention again to an essay, to which I have already referred, p. 81, in support of the popular doctrine? It deals with several points un-noticed in this Letter. It is, I venture to think, most interesting, as showing how completely great learning and labour have failed once again, as, indeed, every effort must fail, to sustain a theory which by its necessary results either dishonours God, or dethrones Him.

and of Christianity is such a God as this popular doctrine of everlasting punishment represents Him to be.

Before I conclude I will add—and you at least will, I trust, not blame me for adding—that, with reference to this whole subject, as a believer in the Holy Scriptures, I desire to submit *ex animo* to the testimony of those Scriptures, if (*per impossibile*, as I think) they can be proved to be against me. And, as a Catholic, I submit myself unreservedly to the judgment of the Church, if (here, too, as I think *per impossibile*) it should at any time be given in condemnation of anything which I have here, or elsewhere written, or said. And now I will tax your patience no more.

Believe me to be,

Your very faithful servant,

F. N. OXENHAM.

APPENDIX (A).

I HAVE in this Letter purposely avoided the question, How far, if at all, the formularies of the English Church can be taken to be in favor of the popular theory of everlasting punishment. I have done so for two reasons: first, because I desired to take broader ground in this discussion; and secondly, because I am satisfied that if this theory is unsupported either by Scripture or by the voice of the Universal Church, it cannot be the intention of the Church of England to require belief in that theory from any of her members. But as to the intention of the Church of England in this matter, I wish here to make two historical remarks.

(i) Among the Articles of Religion drawn up by Cranmer and some other divines, in the reign of Edward VI., A.D. 1552, was one (the forty-second) which condemned those who hold the opinion that the torments of the lost would at some time come to an end. In Elizabeth's reign, A.D., 1562, these Articles were submitted to the Archbishop and to Convocation. The Primate, on his own authority, struck out this forty-second Article to begin with, and the bishops and clergy in both Houses and of both provinces agreed. The Articles have been reviewed again more than once since 1562, but neither the Article then struck out, nor any one of similar intent, has ever been again received.¹

It has been argued, e.g. by the late venerated Principal of King's College, London,² that this Article as well as some others, was omitted in 1562, because the Anabaptists (against whom alone Dr. Jelf supposes the Article to have been pointed) had dwindled into insignificance; and he argues that the "temporary necessity having passed away," this Article was no longer needed. This is put forward in argument as a probable surmise unsupported by any direct evidence. The measure of its probability may perhaps be tested by the question, How far it is reasonable to call the need of denying an error, which had been in the Church since the days of Origen, a "temporary necessity." The "error" had been in existence for at least thirteen centuries: the denial lasted for ten years, and was then withdrawn.

(ii) There has been in our own day a decision of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council on this particular subject. I am not, of course, referring to that decision as having any force whatever to determine the doctrine of the Church of England; but for a different purpose.

In the case to which I refer, i.e. *Fendall v. Wilson*, 1863-4, Mr. Wilson was charged, among other offences, with denying (i) The full inspiration of Holy Scripture; (ii) the endlessness of future punishment. The Court judged him not guilty on either of these charges; and as to the second charge, their Lordships say, "We are not required, or at liberty to express, any opinion

¹ CARDWELL'S *Synodalia*, vol. i. pp. 34 *et seq.*

² Vide *Grounds for laying before the Council of King's College certain statements, etc.*, pp. 52 *et seq.* Parker, 1853.

Appendix.

upon the mysterious question of the eternity of final punishment, further than to say, that we do not find, in the formularies to which this article refers, any such distinct declaration of our Church upon the subject, as to require us to condemn as penal the expression of hope by a clergyman that even the ultimate pardon of the wicked, who are condemned in the day of judgment, may be consistent with the will of Almighty God." Among the judges who gave this decision were the Archbishops of Canterbury and York. Their Graces announced that they did not concur with the judgment so far as it related to the charge touching inspiration. They expressed no dissent from that part of the judgment which bore upon everlasting punishment.¹

I disdain any wish to impute to these eminent persons any opinion which they would disallow; I am simply calling attention to the course of conduct which, on an important occasion and under the gravest responsibility, they thought fit to take. They were asked to concur in the public judicial declaration, that the formularies of the English Church do not condemn the hope that the wicked may be finally forgiven, and they did concur.

¹ BROOKE'S *Privy Council Judgments*, p. 102.

APPENDIX (B.)

THE FIFTEEN CANONS OF "THE HOME SYNOD."¹

I.

Si quis fabulosam animarum præexistentiam, quæque ex illa consequitur monstrosam restitutionem asseruerit, anathema sit.

II.

Si quis dixerit omnium rationalium productionem fuisse mentes incorporeas et immateriales, absque ullo numero ac nomine, adeo ut eorum omnium fuerit unitas identitate substantiæ, potentiæ, et virtutis, atque unione et cognitione erga Deum verbum, satietatem autem cepisse divinæ contemplationis et in deterius ablisse juxta uniuscujusque proportionem inclinationis in illud, et assumpsisse corpora subtiliora vel crassiora, necnon accepisse nomen, et quod sicut nominum, ita et corporum differentiæ sunt inter supernas virtutes, hincque factum ut alii cherubim, alii seraphim, alii principatus et potestates, vel dominationes vel throni et angeli et quotquot sunt ordines cælestes, effecti fuerint ac vocati, a. anathema sit.

III.

Si quis dixerit solem et lunam astraque, ipsa quoque cum ex eadem rationalium unitate essent, ex deflexione in pejus, facta esse id quod sunt, anathema sit.

IV.

Si quis dixerit rationalia refrigerata a divina caritate, crassis corporibus, qualia sunt nostra, illigata fuisse et homines vocati, alia vero cum ad summum malitiæ pertigissent, frigidis tenebrosisque illigata esse corporibus, atque tum esse tum appellori dæmones sive spiritualia nequitiae, anathema sit.

V.

Si quis dixerit ex angelico et archangelico statu animalem statum fieri, ex animali autem dæmoniaco et humano, ex humano vero angelos iterum

¹ *Nova Collectio Conciliorum*, BALUZIUS (Paris, 1707), pp. 1548 *et sq.*

Baluzius calls these canons "Canones Concilii V.," and he gives as their superscription "Sanctorum CLXV Patrum Constantinopolitanæ sanctæ Synodi Canones XV.," from which it appears that he took them to be the Canons of the Council of A.D. 553, and not, as in fact they were, the canons of a previous council in A.D. 541. The history of this mistake has been already referred to in this Letter, pp. 18 *et sq.*

Appendix.

dæmonesque feri, et singulos ordines cælestium virtutum, vel cunctos ex inferioribus, vel ex superioribus, vel ex superioribus et inferioribus constituisse, anathema sit.

VI.

Si quis dixerit duplex extitisse dæmonum genus constans ex animabus hominum et ex præstantioribus spiritibus in hoc delapsis, unum autem animum ex omni utique rationalium unitate immotum mansisse ex Dei caritate et contemplatione, qui Christus cum fuerit ex Rex omnium rationalium, universam traduxerit corpoream naturam, cælum et terram, quæque sunt intermedia, et quod mundus antiquiora existentiae suæ elementa habens in se subsistentia, siccitatem, humorem, calorem, frigus, et ideam, ad quam efformatus est, ita est factus, quodque sanctissima et consubstantialis Trinitas mundum non creaverit, et ideo sit genitus, verum mens, quam aiunt creatricem, existens ante mundum, ipsique existentiam largiens, genitum exhibuerit, anathema sit.

VII.

Si quis dixerit Christum in forma Dei existere dictum, et ante omnia secula Deo verbo unitum, novissimis diebus exinanivisse semetipsum ad naturam humanam, misericordia ductum ob illam quam contigisse aiunt multiplicem eorum qui in eadem erant unitate prolapsionem, cumque vellet ipsos restituere, per cuncta extitisse, et corpora diversa induisse, nominaque sumpsisse, omnibus omnia factum, in angelis angelum, sed et in virtutibus virtutem, et in aliis ordinibus aut speciebus rationalium conformiter ad singula transformatum fuisse, postea eodem quo nos modo participem factum esse carnis et sanguinis, et extitisse etiam hominibus hominem, neque confessus fuerit Deum verbum exinanitum fuisse et hominem factum esse, anathema sit.

VIII.

Si quis non dixerit Deum verbum ejusdem cum Deo et Patre cumque Spiritu Sancto substantiæ, incarnatum et hominem factum, unum sanctæ Trinitatis, proprie Christum esse, sed abusive propter illam quam dicunt exinanisse mentem, ut ipsi Deo verbo unitam et proprie dictam Christum, sed illum propter hanc Christum, et hanc ob illum, Deum, anathema sit.

IX.

Si quis dixerit quod non verbum Dei incarnatum carne animata per animam rationalem et intelligentem descendit in infernum, idemque rursus ascendit in cælum, sed quæ ab iis dicitur mens, quam impii asserunt proprie Christum monadis cognitione effectum, anathema sit.

X.

Si quis dixerit Domini corpus post resurrectionem æthereum fuisse et figuræ sphæricum, taliaque pariter fore reliquorum a resurrectione corpora, et quod cum ipse Dominus prior proprium corpus deposuerit, ceterique eodem modo, in nihilum redigetur corporum natura, anathema sit.

Appendix.

XI.

Si quis dixerit per futurum iudicium interitum omnimodum corporum significari, finemque confictæ fabulæ esse naturam materiæ expertem, nihilque in futuro sæculo materiale remansurum, sed nudam mentem, anathema sit.

XII.

Si quis dixerit sic absque ulla diversitate uniri verbo Deo cælestes virtutes cunctosque homines ac diabolum cum spiritualibus nequitia quemadmodum ipsa mens ab illis Christi nomine donata et in forma Dei existens, quæque uti aiunt semetipsam exinanivit, ad hæc finem fore regni Christi, anathema sit.

XIII.

Si quis dixerit quod nullam omnino Christus habeat differentiam ab ulla creaturarum rationalium, neque essentia, neque cognitione, neque potentia et vi erga universa, sed cuncti a dextris Dei erunt quemadmodum Christus eorum, sicut et fuerant in fabulosa apud eos præ-existentia, anathema sit.

XIV.

Si quis dixerit universorum rationalium unam futuram henadem, hypostasibus et numeris sublatis una cum corporibus, post cognitionem quoque circa rationalia sequi mundorum interitum, corporum depositionem, nominumque sublationem, fore cognitionis identitatem sicut et personarum, quodque in fabulosa restitutione erunt soli nudi sicut et extiterant in illa præ-existentia quam delirantes inducunt, anathema sit.

XV.

Si quis dixerit vitam mentium eandem fore cum priori antequam decississent vel essent delapsæ ut principium cum fine consentiat, finisque sit mensura principii, anathema sit.

It will be seen at once, from reading these fifteen canons, that the Synod which drew them was concerned with "errors" that have no more connection with the popular doctrine discussed in this Letter than they have with the ordinary interests and thoughts of Christian people in our day. The only canon which could by any possibility be supposed to contain any reference to the doctrine in question, is the first, which condemns a certain "monstrous" theory of "restitution," that sprang from a belief in the "fabulous præ-existence of souls." It is obvious that the condemnation of one particular "monstrous" theory can never be taken as the condemnation of *any other* theory on the same subject, and specially not of another theory which is utterly different from the one condemned. How "utterly different" the theory that the "lost" may, or shall somehow, and at some period be restored, is from the "monstrous" theory of "restitution" which the Synod condemned, we may easily see by reading the fourteenth of these very canons, which tells us what that "restitution" was supposed to be. It was to be the restitution "of all rational beings" to the condition of "naked" spirits without "substance,"

Appendix.

'number," "bodies," or "names," into an "identity of cognition and of personality," such as that in which they had prae-existed. Will anyone seriously maintain that the condemnation of this theory of "restitution" has even the most remote reference to the hope that God will at some time and in some way restore the lost? Am I not then fully justified in saying that not one of these canons has any bearing whatever upon that mysterious question which they have often said to have finally settled?

corporum
, nihilque
na sit.

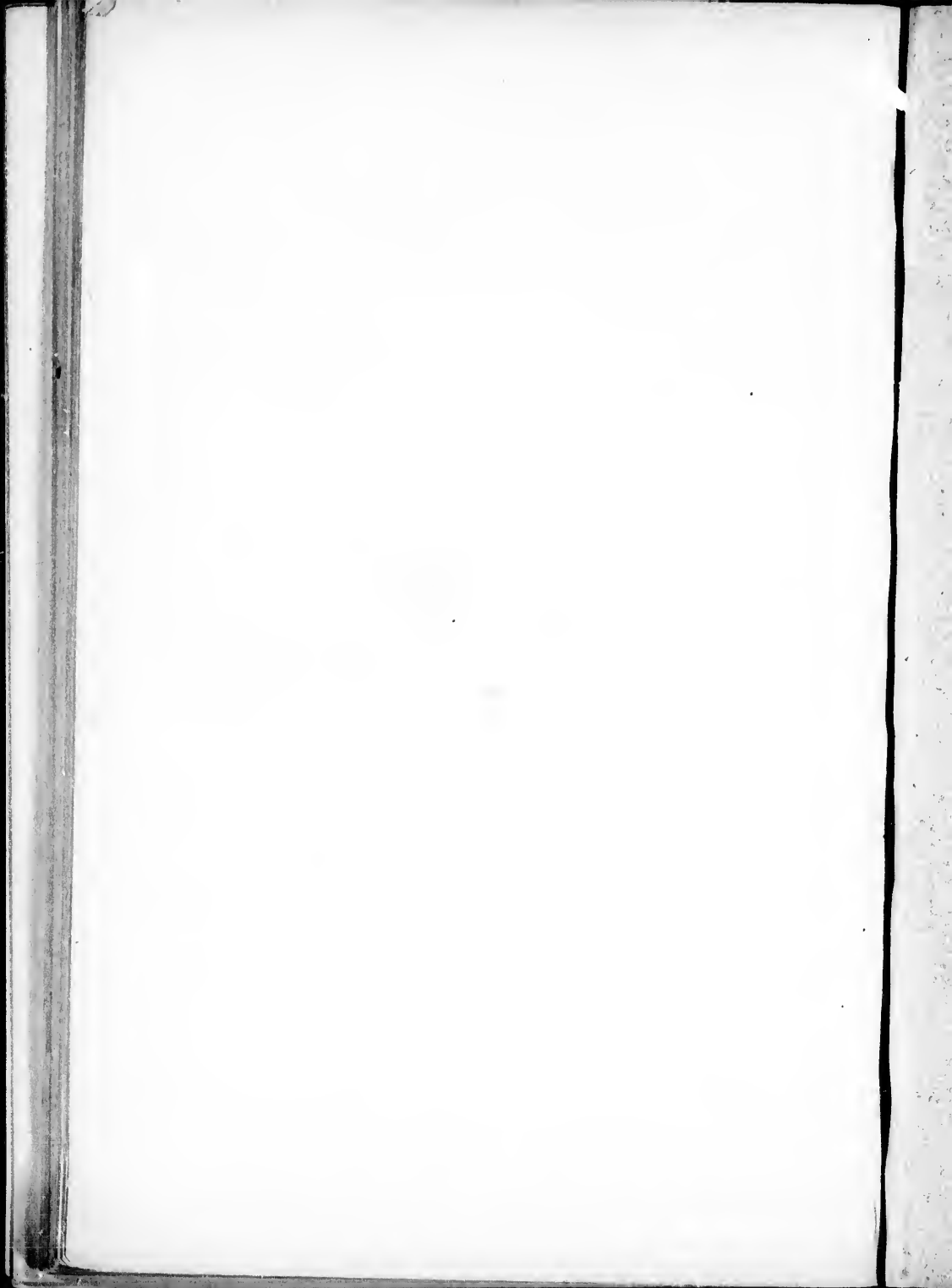
es virtutes
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ypostasi-
que circa
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