

a community called ...

The Copyright law of the United States (title 17, United States code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Under certain conditions specified in the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specific conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be “used for any purpose other than private study, scholarship, or research.” If a user makes a request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excess of “fair use,” that user may be liable for copyright infringement. This institution reserves the right to refuse to accept a copying order if, in its judgment, fulfillment of the order would involve violation of copyright law.

By using this material, you are consenting to abide by this copyright policy. Any duplication, reproduction, or modification of this material without express written consent from Asbury Theological Seminary and/or the original publisher is prohibited.

© Asbury Theological Seminary 2010

Will a God of Love
Punish Any of His
Creatures *Forever*

? ? ?

BY
ALEXANDER MARSHALL

No. 43

The Evangel Booklets

BRIEF, TIMELY messages of supreme importance, and gospel stories, by evangelical preachers and teachers, Christian workers and laymen. Prayerful co-operation of distribution solicited. 32-page booklets, self-cover.

1. God Is Love. An appeal to the unsaved. D. L. Moody.
2. God Reaching Down. Messages to the unconverted. C. H. Spurgeon.
4. Jack Winsted's Choice. A Gospel story. Lillian E. Andrews.
6. Ruined, Redeemed, Regenerated. C. H. Mackintosh.
7. By the Old Mill. Story. Katherine Elise Chapman.
8. The Day After Thanksgiving. Story. Mrs. S. R. Graham Clark.
9. True Stories About God's Free Gift. Alexander Marshall.
10. Lois Dudley Finds Peace. Story. Anna Potter Wright.
12. The Penitent Thief, and Naaman the Syrian. D. L. Moody.
13. Adder's Eggs and Spider's Webs. H. A. Ironside.
14. Samuel Morris. The true story of a Spirit-filled African.
16. Saved and Safe. Salvation, Assurance and Security. Fred J. Meldau.
17. "In the Beginning God—" and other Talks. Mark A. Matthews.
18. Christian Science: Pedigree, Principles, Posterity. Percy W. Stephens.
19. Modern Education at the Cross-Roads. M. H. Duncan.
20. Is the Bible True? Nashville address. Wm. Jennings Bryan.
21. The Public Reading of the Word of God. A. T. Pierson.
22. "The Most Important Thing in My Life." The testimony of Dr. Howard A. Kelly, world-famous surgeon. William S. Dutton.
23. Where Are the Dead? H. C. Marshall.
24. Gold from Ophir. Homilies. Northcote Deck.
25. Mary Antipas. Story. Howard W. Pope.
26. Four Old Fals. Story. Frederick Burnham.
28. Deus Amor (God Is Love). Spanish edition of No. 1.
29. Forethought in Creation. W. Bell Dawson.
30. Bryan's Last Word on Evolution. William Jennings Bryan.
31. Why I Do Not Believe in the Organic Evolutionary Hypothesis. James Edward Congdon.
33. The Double Cure. A Gospel appeal. Melvin E. Trotter.
35. Old Truths for Young Lives. For children.
37. How to Have a Happy Home. Harold Francis Branch.
38. The Peril of Unbelief and the Danger of Doubt. D. L. Moody.
39. Moody the Evangelist. Joseph B. Bowles.
40. The Only Begotten Son. H. A. Ironside.
42. Tom Bennett's Transformation. Story. Howard W. Pope.
43. Will a God of Love Punish Any of His Creatures Forever? Alexander Marshall.
45. Intercession for Revival. Helen C. Alexander Dixon.
46. With Everlasting Love. Story. Elzoe Prindle Stead.
47. How the Word Works. Fred J. Meldau.
48. Why I Believe the Bible. M. H. Duncan.
49. Caught. Story. C. S. Knight.
50. The Fruit of the Spirit Is Joy. John R. Riebs.
51. A Life Decision in the Sand Hills. Story. Ronald R. Kratz.
52. Love's Danger Signal. John G. Reid.
53. Pictures That Talk, Series One. E. J. Pace.
54. Pictures That Talk, Series Two. E. J. Pace.
56. My One Question Answered: Was Jesus Christ a Great Teacher Only? R. D. Sheldon.
57. Modern Miracles of Grace. John Wilmot Mahood.
58. How to Study the Bible. A helpful outline. B. B. Sutcliffe.
59. What is Your Answer? Oswald J. Smith.
60. Deus E Amor (God Is Love) Portuguese edition of No. 1.
61. The True and False in Christian Work and Worship. M. H. Duncan.
62. What Must I Do to be Saved? George E. Guille.
63. The Man in the Well. Other religious faiths. Oswald J. Smith.
64. Why All "Good People" Will Be Lost. J. E. Conant.
65. Two in One. Believer's two natures. Herbert Lockyer.
66. The Compromise Road. Story. Paul Hutchens.
67. An Hundredfold. Stewardship. David McConoughy.
68. Death or Life, Which? A clear presentation. Oswald J. Smith.
69. Bernard Enters the Race. Story. Anna Potter Wright.
70. The Trial of Jesus. Harold F. Branch.
71. The Christian's Citizenship. M. H. Duncan.
72. Atheism and the Bible. A startling revelation. Oswald J. Smith.
73. Galatians. God's answer to legalism. B. B. Sutcliffe.
74. O Sanguis. (The Blood) Portuguese. D. L. Moody.
75. Who is a Christian? Timely questions answered. Oswald J. Smith.
76. Broken Life-Line. Story. Paul Hutchens.

Each, 10c; 12 copies (any assortment), \$1.00; 100, \$7.00.

Attractive rates on large quantities.

The Bible Institute Colportage Association

843-845 North Wells Street Chicago, Ill., U. S. A.

Printed in the United States of America

Will a God of Love Punish Any of His Creatures For Ever?

THE title of this booklet was announced as the subject I was to speak upon in an American city over thirty years ago. A friend of mine observed a man reading a poster announcing the meeting. Turning to Mr. G——, he drawled out the words, "I—SAY—NO." Mr. G—— quietly remarked, "It matters little what you say or I say, the important thing is, WHAT DOES GOD SAY?"

Let us look at this question carefully, honestly, and fearlessly. Hobbes, the infidel author, spoke of death as a "leap in the dark." His outlook in view of eternity was an exceedingly gloomy one. Colonel Robert G. Ingersoll, the silver-tongued orator, penned the following sadly suggestive lines:

"Is there beyond the silent night an endless day?
Is death a gate that leads to light? We cannot say.
The tongueless secret locked in fate,
We do not know, we hope and wait."

Thank God we have a revelation of His mind and will, of His plans and purposes, regarding the future, in His Holy Word.

The Love of God

To know God is to love Him. "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love" (1 John 4: 8). He daily loads us with favors, mercies, and blessings, the least of which are undeserved by us. Calvary's Cross reveals to us the measures of God's hatred of sin and the magnitude of His love to the sinner. Christ's atoning sacrifice was not the cause of His love to us, but the *manifestation* of it. "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3: 16).

He is holy and just, as well as merciful and gracious. His attributes do not conflict. His holiness is not controlled by His mercy, nor is His justice regulated by His love. In proclaiming Himself to Israel as "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin," He added, "and that will by no means clear the guilty" (Exod. 34: 6, 7).

The Evil of Sin

Our conceptions of the value of Christ's atonement depend largely on our thoughts of that which made the atonement necessary. God's estimate of sin's vileness and offensiveness is vastly different from ours. Man looks at the outward appearance, whilst He looks at the heart. God reads thoughts, feelings, and motives; but we poor, blind creatures, here to-day and gone to-morrow, living in an atmosphere of weakness and infirmity, have but faint apprehensions of sin's enormity. To comprehend more clearly the exceeding sinfulness of sin we must view it in relation to the holiness and righteousness of God. All true conceptions of His character commence with His holiness. John Ruskin in one of his books says that the whitest paper when exposed in sunlight appears grey, but if the background be gaslight it seems white. If we don't begin with the holiness of God we will not see sin as high-handed rebellion against the Almighty. Every heresy has its root in defective views of sin.

The Sole Court of Appeal

In considering the subject of future punishment we should not allow ourselves to be guided by our feelings or our desires. Our sole appeal ought to be to God's HOLY WORD. There is nothing in the Scriptures opposed to reason, but there are many things in them transcending reason.

Some have asserted that they would not accept the doctrine of eternal conscious punishment on any authority. With such we do not at present enter into controversy. Their minds are made up, and seeing they are unwilling to believe God, we leave them in His hands.

In the investigation of such a solemn and momentous subject, we should endeavor to be uninfluenced by prejudice or sentiment, and follow the example of the Bereans of old, of whom it is said they "received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, *whether these things were so*" (Acts 17: 11). It is to be feared that in these days of false liberalism and spurious charity there are numbers of professing Christians who are not prepared to bow to the authority of Holy Writ on *everything*.

Popular Ideas

"An effeminate sentimentalism, an unconscious yielding to popular taste, have all but excluded the doctrine of eternal conscious punishment from pulpit ministrations," is the testimony of a gifted Edinburgh minister.

A Chief Justice of the United States of America has given it as his belief that the extraordinary increase of crime in recent years in his country is largely due to the lack of faithful preaching of future punishment. It is to be feared that far too little is said in British as well as American, pulpits about the doom of the finally impenitent. When allusion is made to it, is there not encouragement given that somehow or other all will eventually be saved?

During a recent conversation with a Christian lady in a town in Scotland, she told me that she asked her minister why he did not mention hell in his sermons. "Because I don't believe in it," was the astounding reply. What right have ministers to subscribe to doctrinal declarations, and confessions of faith, if they don't believe in them? Alas! this is not an exceptional case.

"Hell Abolished"

An Ayrshire paper gave an account of the eighty-sixth anniversary and dinner of the Irvine Burns Club, which was held in the King's Hotel. The writer states that the Rev. Henry R——, the parish minister, replied to the toast of "The Clergy." "Referring to Burns' statement that the fear of hell was the hangman's whip to keep the wretch in order, he declared that he

would still hug to himself the belief that he and his brethren had *completely abolished hell and put away the need of fire insurance.*” When preachers don’t believe in hell, and fail to warn the unsaved of wrath and judgment, we need not be surprised that the masses of the people are losing faith in the Bible, and are doing their best to persuade themselves that there is no day of reckoning and no future punishment.

God’s Word declares that “the wicked *shall be turned into hell*, and all the nations that forget God” (Psa. 9: 17). If there is a heaven there must be a hell, for the same Book that speaks of the one place tells us of the other.

A Poor Doctrine to Go Over the Falls With

A number of years ago four men were fishing from a boat in the Niagara River some distance above the world-renowned falls. As the fish were not very hungry the fishers got into a controversy regarding future punishment. Three of the number contended that there was no such place as hell, whilst the fourth accepted the testimony of Scripture on the subject. The discussion became so heated that they failed to observe that their boat was getting perilously near the sweep of the current. Perceiving their danger, they seized the oars, and rowed with all their might to a safe spot on the river. “If there is no such place as hell,” said the believer in God’s Word, “why were you so afraid to go over the falls?” One of them replied, “The ‘No-Hell’ doctrine is good enough to go a-fishing with, but it is very poor to go over the falls with.” Let us look at some of the plain

Scriptures on Future Punishment

MATTHEW 25: 41. “Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into *everlasting fire*, prepared for the devil and his angels.” Here we are told that the Lord Jesus, at the judgment of the living nations, will pronounce this terrible sentence upon those on His left hand. They are to depart from Him in whom salvation alone is found—to depart

accursed, cursed by Him who came to earth to seek and save them; to depart into *everlasting fire*—a fire not made nor meant for them, a fire “prepared for the devil and his angels.” Could language be plainer?

MATTHEW 25: 46. “These shall go away into *everlasting punishment*, but the righteous into *life eternal*.” Many have sought to tone down or explain away these solemn words of the Lord with the object of limiting the duration of the punishment of the obdurate. The Greek word *aionios* used by Christ to describe the duration of the life of the believer is employed to describe the duration of the punishment of the finally impenitent. The life and the punishment are co-extensive as to duration. They are both *limited*, or they are both *perpetual*. No one questions the eternity of the duration of the happiness of the redeemed. Why then question the duration of the punishment of the wicked? If the one is eternal, so is the other. “To say that the adjective *aionios* has one sense in the first half of the sentence, and another in the second, is the counsel of despair” (Professor Salmond, in *Christian Doctrine of Immortality*).

The Rich Man and Lazarus

LUKE 16: 19-31. “There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day; and there was a certain beggar named Lazarus. . . . And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom; the rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.’ But Abraham said, ‘Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.’ ”

Can any unprejudiced seeker after truth imagine that these solemn words were spoken by the Lord in order that His hearers might believe in the *temporary* punishment of the finally lost? The teaching, first of all, demolishes the theory of soul-sleeping. The rich man in hell (or hades) was possessed of thought, consciousness, and memory. Hades, the unseen world, was the abode of disembodied spirits; it consisted of two divisions, separated by an impassable gulf; one of these was for the righteous, and the other for the unbelieving. Paradise was the place of bliss, and Gehenna the place of punishment.

"Oh, but it is a parable," says one. The Lord did not say so. Whether it be a parable or an incident, it is a representation of facts. Some assert that it is a parable drawn from Jewish traditions. There is no proof whatever of this. "The Lord Jesus," as Mr. F. W. Grant remarks, "never adopted the superstitions He condemned, nor made the traditions of men the basis of His own authoritative teaching" (*Facts and Theories*, p. 109). One thing is certain, and that is, He could not possibly exaggerate by a hairbreadth the happiness of the redeemed, or the miseries of the lost. And if the figurative language describing the rich man's doom is so terrible, what must the reality be? When the rich man prayed to Abraham for a drop of water to cool his tongue, even that, the smallest of all mercies, was denied. As a reason for its refusal Abraham said, "Between us and you there is a *great gulf fixed*: so that they which would pass from hence to *you* CANNOT; neither can they pass to us that would come from thence." The passage clearly proves that the punishment of the wicked is eternal.

A Final Fixed State

Here is a class of texts showing that the final state of the unbeliever is fixed:

MATTHEW 18: 8. "Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee [cause to stumble], cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire."

In the parallel passage (Mark 9: 43-48), according to Revised Version, it is three times spoken of as the "fire that *never shall be quenched.*" We read of "*eternal damnation*" (Mark 3: 29), "*everlasting chains*" (Jude 6), and of some it is said that for them "the mist of darkness is reserved *for ever*" (2 Peter 2: 17). Do these scriptures not prove that future punishment is eternal?

REVELATION 14: 11. "And the smoke of THEIR torment ascendeth up *for ever and ever*, and they have no rest day nor night."

REVELATION 20:10. "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and *shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.*"

Notice it is not the smoke of *the* torment, but "the smoke of THEIR torment," that ascends "*for ever and ever.*" This passage surely proves the doctrine of eternal conscious punishment. The second scripture (Rev. 20: 10) speaks of Satan, the beast, and the false prophet cast in the lake of fire to be "tormented day and night *for ever and ever.*" The "beast" and the "false prophet" were men, and exist in conscious punishment for one thousand years, therefore may exist in this condition for ever. This prove the possibility of *men* existing for ever. It is objected by some that though the *fire* is eternal, the *sufferings* will not be eternal. Surely if the "fire" burns "for ever," and the "worm" gnaws "for ever," and the sufferers are "tormented day and night for ever and ever," there can be no annihilation!

Sin That Cannot Be Forgiven

MARK 3: 29. "But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost *hath never forgiveness*, but is in danger of eternal damnation," or, as in the Revised Version, "is guilty of an *eternal sin.*"

The one who commits this sin, according to the teaching of Christ, "hath never forgiveness." "Whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost *it shall not be forgiven him*, neither in this world, neither in the world to come" (Matt. 12: 32). If this particular sin will not be forgiven in this age, or that which is to come, *when will it be forgiven?* The answer is "never."

Sodom and Gomorrah

JUDE 7. "Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the *vengeance* [R. v., punishment] of *eternal fire*."

The words "Sodom" and "Gomorrah" surely do not refer to the dwelling-houses of the inhabitants, but to the inhabitants themselves. The fire that consumed the cities of the plain was not eternal, therefore the inspired writer must have referred to some other fire of which this was the symbol. Note that it is said that they are *suffering*—not that they *suffered*—"the vengeance [or punishment] of eternal fire." They cannot be "SUFFERING" if they were annihilated; and does the Lord Jesus not say, "It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment" than for Capernaum? (Matt. 11: 24). In Jude, verse 13, it is stated that to some is "reserved the blackness of darkness for ever." This scripture certainly gives no countenance to the theory of destructionism.

Everlasting Contempt and Wrath

DANIEL 12: 2. "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to *everlasting life*, and some to shame and *everlasting contempt*."

The ultimate states of the believer and unbeliever are placed in striking contrast. If the "*life*" is "everlasting," surely the "*shame*" and the "*contempt*" must be everlasting!

JOHN 3: 36. "He that believeth on the Son *hath everlasting life*: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God *abideth on him*."

From this scripture we learn that those who believe on the Lord Jesus are the present possessors of everlasting life, whilst those who do not believe on Him have God's wrath abiding upon them, and should they die in that condition they would perish eternally.

"Eternal Does Not Always Mean Eternal"

This is how some try to get rid of the doctrine of eternal conscious punishment. They tell us that the words "eternal," "for ever" and "everlasting" are sometimes used in a limited signification, the duration of the punishment of the lost may not be endless. Surely few will dispute the generally received canon of Biblical interpretation that the literal meaning of the word should be taken unless there are strong reasons for adopting a different one.

Sir Robert Anderson makes a very pertinent observation regarding the meaning of words. "Every tyro in philology," he says, "is aware that it is the *use* of a word that decides its meaning, and to be guided only by its *derivation* is as unwise as to accept a man of sixty on a character given to him when he was a schoolboy" (*Human Destiny*. p. 22.)

The Appeal to the Greek

The ordinary Greek word for eternal is *aionios*. It occurs seventy-one times in the New Testament, and except in four passages it is invariably rendered by "everlasting" or "eternal." Of the sixty-seven remaining instances it is used forty-four times of the life of the saved. In all these passages it is rendered by "everlasting" or "eternal." It is used in the following passages of Scripture:

- John 3: 16, - - - "everlasting life."
- Hebrews 5: 9, - - - "eternal salvation."
- Hebrews 9: 14, - - - "eternal Spirit."
- Hebrews 9: 12, - - - "eternal redemption."
- Romans 16: 26, - - - "everlasting God."

Compare with the above the following passages that speak of the doom of the finally lost:

- Matthew 18: 8, - - - "everlasting fire."
- Matthew 25: 46, - - - "everlasting punishment."
- Hebrews 6: 2, - - - "eternal judgment."
- 2 Thessalonians 1: 9, - "everlasting destruction."
- Jude 7, - "suffering the vengeance of eternal fire."

If *aionios* does *not* mean eternal, regarding the duration of future punishment, how may we know that God is the “*everlasting* God,” that the Holy Spirit is the “*eternal* Spirit,” and that believers are possessors of “*everlasting* life,” seeing that the same Greek word is used of all?

Two other forms of the word are employed in the following passages:

Romans 1: 25, - “The Creator, . . . blessed *for ever*.”

1 Timothy 1: 17, - “The King, . . . glory *for ever and ever*.”

Hebrews 1: 8, - “Thy throne, O God, is *for ever and ever*.”

Revelation 15: 7, - “God who liveth *for ever and ever*.”

Revelation 22: 5, - “They shall reign *for ever and ever*.”

Let us compare these passages with the following, where the same expressions are used:

Revelation 14: 11, “The smoke of their torment ascendeth up *for ever and ever*.”

Revelation 20: 10, “And shall be tormented day and night *for ever and ever*.”

Annihilation and Destruction Theories

It is difficult at times, in examining the publications that are scattered broadcast advocating NON-ETERNITY principles, whether the writers are “Annihilationists” or “Destructionists.”

Destructionists disclaim any connection with annihilationism for two reasons: (1) They think that by doing so they escape the philosophical objections against annihilation; (2) they judge that they are better able to explain such Scripture terms as “Death,” “Destroy,” “Perish,” and “Lost.” “From the language of its advocates, often vague and self-inconsistent, it is difficult to understand precisely their theory (if indeed it is clearly conceived by themselves,) of the ultimate destiny of the spiritual nature of the condemned. One calls it ‘annihilation,’ and another in a foot-note adds ‘rather *destruction*.’ And yet they apply to it such expressions as ‘blotting out of existence’; ‘the utter destruction of organisation, the utter loss of life, and being, and existence’; ‘passed away out of being’; ‘loss, not only of happiness, but themselves’; ‘termination of conscious existence’; blotted out

of creation'; 'wrapped in the slumber of eternal death.' No wonder, therefore, that to other minds their distinctions between annihilation and destruction should sometimes appear without a difference, and call forth argument of equal force against both (*For Ever*, by Dr. M. Randles, p. 217).

It is contended that the "destruction" of the wicked spoken of in Scripture is the cessation of their *being*, not of their *well-being*. Nowhere does the word "destruction" in God's Word mean annihilation. "The term destruction denotes ruin," says Dr. Wm. Reid, "but does not define the form of the ruin; it signifies to pull down—to separate a whole into its parts, or to reduce to disorder—to change the mode of existence, so as to disqualify that which is destroyed from its original purpose, but to annihilate is to blot out of existence" (*Everlasting Punishment, and Modern Speculation*, p. 231).

Everlasting Destruction

As the meaning of a word can only be properly ascertained by its usage, we shall look at various scriptures which prove that the term "destruction" cannot mean the reduction of a human being into nonentity.

EXODUS 8: 24 [Margin]. "The land [of Egypt] was *destroyed* by flies." Egypt, as we all know, remains to this day.

HOSEA 13: 9. "O Israel, thou hast *destroyed* thyself." Yet Israel is the indestructible nation amongst nations.

MATTHEW 2: 13. "Herod will seek the young Child to *destroy* Him." Herod never thought of annihilating the Lord. When the new wine bursts the old (skin) bottles, they are *marred*, or destroyed. The bottles do not cease to exist, but they are useless for the purpose intended.

LUKE 19: 10. "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was *lost*." When the Lord used the word "lost" He employed a term which describes the doom of the unbeliever. Surely Christ did not come from the Glory to save men from nonentity! He came to save them from everlasting misery.

JOHN 2: 19. "*Destroy* this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" could not possibly mean annihilation.

ROMANS 14: 15. "*Destroy* not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died." The Apostle surely did not imagine that the Christians at Rome could blot the brother out of existence!

2 CORINTHIANS 4: 3. "If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are *lost*," or destroyed. The sheep that was *lost*, and the son who was *lost* and found (Luke 15), were not put out of existence.

2 THESSALONIANS 1: 9 is one of the supposed strongholds of annihilationists. It reads: "Who shall be punished with *everlasting destruction* from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power." Instead of it proving the extinction of the wicked, it proves the exact opposite.

Utter Extinction

I cannot do better than quote the wise words spoken by Dr. M. Randles on the passage. "This passage," he says, "is decisive against utter extinction:

1. "Because it declares the doom of the disobedient a state of punishment which supposes a sentient nature to endure it, whereas non-existence in itself is no punishment, for where there is no being to punish, no punishment can be inflicted.

2. "Because the nature of the destruction is explained as consisting in exclusion, not from the universe, but from the presence of the Lord, and 'from the glory of His power,' which exactly corresponds with the doctrine of endless pain.

3. "Because everlasting, as it teaches perpetuity of punishment, presupposes perpetuity of being. If the punishment were not everlasting, neither could the destruction be so. The one is the form or mode of the other; that is, the everlasting destruction, or form of the punishment; a thing cannot be less enduring than its mode or form. The duration of the banishment is affirmed to be endless, which could not be if existence ceased.

4. "Because the destruction is the infliction of righteous vengeance or retribution. But to annihilate is no real infliction, for there is no being who can feel it. *To a nonentity justice and injustice, pleasure and pain, they are all alike; that is, they are nothing*" (*For Ever*, pp: 200-1).

The Devil Destroyed

HEBREWS 2: 14 is often quoted by annihilationists and destructionists to prove the extermination of the existence of the finally lost. In this scripture we are told that the Lord Jesus became a partaker of flesh and blood that "through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver them, who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

Did Christ's death annihilate or put an end to the being of Satan? The Greek word rendered destroy (*luse*) means to undo, or dissolve. The Apostle John tells us that Christ was "manifested that He might *destroy* the works of the devil" (1 John 3: 8). By His death this was gloriously accomplished.

Everlasting *ruin* is really the meaning of everlasting *destruction*. Numerous passages of Scripture adduced by destructionists to prove that the ungodly will *cease to exist* refer to God's dealings *with sinners on earth*. Their tracts are filled with such phrases as "pass away," "destroyed," "wither," "perish," "consumed," "plucked up by the root," "broken to shivers," "melt like wax," etc.

MALACHI 4: 1-3. This scripture is frequently quoted by them. "Behold the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, said the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. . . . And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts."

The question may be asked, Is it on earth or in hell that the righteous shall tread under their feet the wicked? Surely not in hell, for they will never be there. Then it must be *on earth* in a future age. Yet verses like these are often quoted to prove the extinction of the wicked. The quotation of such scriptures for such a purpose betokens a lack of care in dealing with God's Holy Word.

What Is Death?

The word "death" is used in three senses in Scripture.

1. The separation of soul and body. This may be called for clearness NATURAL DEATH. Man is a tripartite being, composed of spirit, soul, and body. The Apostle Paul distinguishes between the earthly tabernacle and its inhabitant. "For we that are in this *tabernacle* do groan" (2 Cor. 5: 4). "The time of my *departure* [or dissolution] is at hand," (2 Tim. 4: 6). The Apostle Peter speaks of death as the "putting off of my tabernacle" (2 Peter 1: 14), and the Apostle Paul describes it as being "*unclothed*" (2 Cor. 5: 4). The death referred to in these passages cannot possibly mean cessation of being, but a change in the mode of being. Death is followed by judgment (Heb. 9: 27), sin's penalty being inflicted after the great white throne judgment, proving that death does not end all.

2. It is used to express the SEPARATION OF THE SOUL FROM GOD. "*Dead* in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2: 1). "She that liveth in pleasure is *dead* while she liveth" (1 Tim. 5: 6). "Let the *dead* bury their dead" (Matt. 8: 22). The persons referred to in the preceding verses had mental and physical life, but were spiritually dead. Unbelievers are not literally dead: should they die in their sins, will they cease to exist in the abode of woe?

3. It is used to describe the STATE OF THE FINALLY IMPENITENT as eternally separated from God—body, soul, and spirit. "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth *death*" (James 1: 15). "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall *die*" (Rom. 8: 13). "The wages of sin is *death*" (Rom. 6: 23). "The *second death*, even the lake of fire" (Rev. 20: 14, R. V.). When the rich man of Luke 16 *died*, he did not cease to exist. His death was but the beginning of existence in another state, a state of conscious suffering. We are told that the seed put in the ground "is not quickened except it *die*" (1 Cor. 15: 36). Does the germ cease to exist? "If it die it bringeth forth much fruit." If the first death meant ceasing to exist, there would be no second death at all. If death is the *extinction of being*, what is meant by such

expressions as “*everlasting fire*” and “*everlasting destruction*”? When the subject of the punishment ceases to exist, you cannot punish that which has no existence. We have as good a right to speak of hanging as “*everlasting punishment*” as call annihilation *everlasting punishment*. I have heard of a madman fishing a dead dog out of a pond and beating it with a stick. When asked what he was doing he replied that the dog had bitten him, and he was punishing him for it! A stone, a tree, a dead dog, or an annihilated being, if there were such, could not be “*punished.*”

Does the Soul Die?

In proof of the assertion that the soul ceases to exist, the scripture, “The soul that sinneth it shall die” (Ezek. 18: 20), is frequently quoted. The word “soul” is not here used of the vital principle; it being employed to indicate the *person*. It is so used throughout Scripture, as proof of which see the follow-cases. “If a *soul* sin” (Lev. 5: 1) means if a person sin. “Eight *souls* were saved by water” (1 Peter 3: 20), that is, eight persons were saved in the ark. The King of Sodom said to Abraham, “Give me the *persons*” (Gen. 14: 21). God’s message to Israel, through Ezekiel, was designed to show that the son was not to bear the iniquity of the father; that each *person* was to suffer for his own sins, and he who sinned would die.

Not Able to Kill the Soul

MATTHEW 10: 28. “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.”

From this scripture we see that man is able to “kill the body” for a season; he cannot hinder its resurrection. Killing means taking life. “Man is not able to kill the soul” is Christ’s declaration. A soul that cannot be killed when the body is killed is *deathless*.

“What about God being able to *destroy both soul and body in hell?*” inquiries one. Of course God is able to destroy both body and soul in hell. But destruction does not mean annihilation! No passage in Scripture can be given which proves that

destruction means the *extinction* of the existence of human beings. "If the soul be not *killable* or *destroyable* till God puts forth His hand, it must be constitutionally indestructible."

What Is Life?

Destructionists confound "life" with existence. They say the "life" mean "being," or "existence"; "eternal life," "eternal being," or existence, and death non-existence. Grant Destructionists their definition of terms, and annihilation is proved. Anything that has form or essence *exists*. "Life" is not the same as existence; "eternal life" is not synonymous with eternal existence.

JOHN 6: 47. "He that believeth on Me *hath everlasting life*" were Christ's words. This "eternal life" is "in," and abideth in, the believer, and is not a mere *promise* or *pledge* of it. He who does not believe on Christ, though he has existence, is not a possessor of "everlasting life." "We know that we have passed from [out of] *death unto life*" (1 John 3: 14). "He that hath the Son *hath life*; and he that hath not the Son of God *hath not life*" (1 John 5: 12). From the latter verse we see that he who has Christ has life, and he who has not Christ as his personal Saviour "hath not *life*," though he has *being*.

JOHN 6: 53. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood hath eternal life." This scripture proves that the unbeliever has not "life" in the Bible sense, and that believers, and believers only, possess "eternal life," though all have eternal existence. The persons to whom Christ spoke these words, though physically active, were spiritually dead—"dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2: 1).

JOHN 17: 3. "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." "Eternal life" is obtained through the knowledge of God, as He is revealed in Christ. He who dies in his sins *exists eternally*, though he has not *eternal life*. Everlasting life is not the continuation of natural existence; it is a superadded gift, and involves the thought of everlasting happiness. Mere existence is

a questionable boon, as it may be wretched and miserable. Its condition depends largely upon its character. To speak of *life* as mere *existence* is to confound things that differ.

“Conditional Immortality”

The advocates of “Conditional Immortality” flood the land with publications in which readers are exhorted to “seek for immortality,” emphasizing the words “to them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life” (Rom. 2: 7). The Scripture does not give any countenance to “conditional immortality,” as the word in our Authorized Version rendered “immortality” should be translated “incorruption.” The following are all the passages in which the Greek word (*aphtharsia*) occurs:

- Romans 2: 7 “glory and honor and *incorruption*” (R.V.).
 1 Cor. 15: 42 - “it is raised in *incorruption*.”
 1 Cor. 15: 53 - - “must put on *incorruption*.”
 1 Cor. 15: 54 - - “shall have put on *incorruption*.”
 Eph. 6: 24 - “love our Lord Jesus in *incorruptness*” (R.V.).
 [Incorruption.]
 2 Tim. 1: 10 - “brought life and *immortality* to light through the gospel” (R. V.).

The Revised Version has the word *incorruption* in Romans 2: 7 and 2 Timothy 1: 10 instead of *immortality*.

“It is not the seeking of *immortality* that is spoken of in Romans 2: 7, but the incorruptible state in which resurrection, or the “change,” will put the saints at the coming of Christ” (*Facts and Theories*, p. 164).

The Greek word for immortality (*athanasia*) is only to be found in three places in the New Testament, *viz.*, 1 Corinthians 15: 53, 54; “This mortal must put on *immortality*.” It is used once of God. Of Him it is said, He “only hath *immortality*” (1 Tim. 6: 16).

Scripture does not speak of “conditional immortality.” Mortality is our condition on earth. Immortality is not endless existence; it is deathlessness. And who will say that we do not die?

The *spirit* does not die; the *soul* does not die; but the *man* dies. "It is appointed unto *men* once to die" (Heb. 9: 27). We may be reminded of the word which tells us that God "only hath immortality." True; He and He alone possesses it *inherently*. In that sense angels have it not. Will they, then, die?

Eternal Life and Immortality

ETERNAL LIFE IS NOT THE SAME AS IMMORTALITY, though it is often said so. Believers have *eternal life* now, but they have not yet obtained *immortality*. Immortality is a condition of existence under which the possessor is for ever freed from death. Believers, and believers only, will obtain it at the resurrection of the just. "Man was created with the power of an endless conscious existence. If man was not thus endowed at his creation, then at some period this power must have been conferred on him, or he can never be endlessly happy or endlessly miserable" (*Endless Being*, Barlow, p. 95).

Extinction of Being

The champion of the "Conditional Immortality" movement, Mr. Edward White, taught that the penalty God threatened Adam with if he ate the forbidden fruit was the **UTTER EXTINCTION OF HIS BEING**. When confronted with the fact that Adam lived 930 years afterwards, and was asked, "How could a holy God threaten Adam with a punishment He never intended to impose?" his reply was this: "From the moment of the sin the action of redemption began to unfold itself."

This is an exceedingly unsatisfactory explanation. Whatever the penalty was, it was imposed on the day that the sin was committed. God's Word is silent about any such doctrine as that advocated by Mr. White.

We cannot do better than quote Sir Robert Anderson on the subject: "Whatever be the death which is the penalty of sin, that death was endured by Christ. This is at least a statement which none will gainsay. If, then, death be the destruction, that is, the extinction, 'of the life of humanity,' 'death for ever, dissolution without hope of the resurrection,' did *this* death be-

fall the blessed Lord? To this Mr. White answers as follows: 'When Christ died He was *as a man*, destroyed' (p. 92). What, then, is the cost at which the theories of the annihilationists may be accepted as an article of extinction of being which the Scriptures unequivocally teach it is *not*. Next, we must believe that God's first solemn warning against sin was an idle threat which He had no intention of fulfilling, and that the truest word was that which for six thousand years men have called 'the devil's lie,' 'Ye shall not surely die.' More than this, we must recognise that the death of Christ was the destruction of His humanity, and His resurrection a piece of transcendental jugglery to conceal the devil's triumph and deceive the saints of God, who for nineteen centuries have believed that the Blessed One who wept at the grave of Lazarus was upon the Father's throne as MAN, whereas His manhood perished at Calvary, and He is no longer MAN but only God. And all this mingled folly and error must be accepted, forsooth, to screen the reputation of the Almighty God, now endangered by our belief in hell, in the midst of the nineteenth century enlightenment" (*Human Destiny*, pp. 110, 111).

Figurative Language

MATTHEW 3: 12. "He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." This text is claimed by annihilationists as proof of the "utter blotting out of existence" of the finally impenitent. The resemblance of punishment in hell to the burning up of chaff only applies in *some respects*. "Where *their* worm dieth not" shows that the subjects of the punishment are as lasting as the fire. The "burning up" must be as figurative as the "chaff" is.

"Material destruction," says F. W. Grant, "is not a figure of material destruction; it must figure something else. Material destruction will figure *spiritual* destruction, which is, however, a very different thing. There is no doubt that annihilation has been helped in many minds by the tendency to take literally the expressions used in Scripture to image to us the awful realities of eternal punishment. A lake burning with fire and

brimstone,' if taken literally, would suggest to many the utter extermination of the bodies of those at last cast into it. But how should the devil, a spirit, be tormented there? And what was the flame which tormented the rich man in hades? The truth is these are figures which Scripture itself explains, where over and over again GOD'S WRATH IS COMPARED TO FIRE. Thus in the Lord's solemn words in Mark 9: 48, the 'worm' that 'dieth nor' is the gnawing of awakened conscience.. Who will suppose a literal undying worm? And so the fire that is not quenched is *as surely the wrath of God which abideth on the wicked*" (*Papers on Eternal Punishment*, p. 9).

An annihilationist once visited a Christian and sought to turn him away from the truth. The young believer referred him to Revelation 14: 11: "The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever," to prove that the punishment of the finally impenitent was conscious as well as eternal, dwelling on the fact that it is not "the smoke of *the* torment ascendeth up for ever and ever," but "the smoke of *their* torment ascendeth up for ever and ever." During the youth's absence from the room for a short time the non-eternity advocate filled a pen with ink and scored out the two letters from the word "their" making it to read "*the* torment." Some time afterwards, when lying on a sick-bed the sin that he had committed troubled him greatly. The words of Revelation 22: 19 laid hold of him like a voice and made him despair. The words are: "If any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life," and he declared that he was guilty of committing the unpardonable sin.

Few and Many Stripes

The question has been asked, "How can there be different degrees of punishment if the sufferings are endless?" Let me illustrate. Three men are severally sentenced to a term of twelve months' imprisonment. In one case it is simple imprisonment, in another imprisonment with hard labor, and in the third it is solitary confinement. Are there not different degrees of *severity* in each of these cases, though all have the same sentence? So

with the finally lost. Some will be beaten with "few," and some with 'many stripes.'" Scripture recognises the fact that there are fifty-pence, five-hundred-pence and ten-thousand-talent debtors. To whom much is given, of them shall much be required (Luke 12: 48) is a divine principle. Some have had greater privileges and corresponding responsibilities. Various degrees of guilt will be punished by *intensity* as well as *duration*. It will be "more tolerable" for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for highly favored Capernaum. How could it be "more tolerable" for some than others if *extinction of being* were the doom of all? The fact that there are different degrees of punishment of the unsaved shows that it cannot be extinction of being. Bliss and misery may vary in degree, though alike in extent of duration.

Universalism; or, a "Larger Hope"

Some maintain that all men will ultimately be saved. According to "Larger Hope" ideas impenitent sinners will pass through purgatorial fires, and after ages of suffering be purified and restored to God. God's Word gives no countenance to such a theory. The teaching of the Scriptures is, as we have already seen, that those who die rejecting, or neglecting the Saviour, will suffer everlasting punishment. All are not saved now; all will not be saved at Christ's coming, and all will not be saved during His millennial reign.

The Scriptures that apply to the theories of annihilationism and destructionism apply in great measure to Universalism.

Acts 3: 21. This scripture is quoted by some to prove that all men will be saved. The words referred to were spoken by the Apostle Peter to the Jews. We quote from the Revised Version: "Repent ye, therefore, and turn again that your sins may be blotted out, so that there may come seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord; and that He may send the Christ who hath been appointed for you, even Jesus: whom the Heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, *whereof God spake* by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have been since the world began."

Old Testament prophets spoke very little of the *final* condition of things, and it could not be of that they wrote. The "restitution" or "restoration" referred only to the things spoken of by the "holy prophets," and clearly speaks of the time when all the nations shall be blessed, and a reign of righteousness shall be established on the earth.

PHILIPPIANS 2:10-11. "At the Name of Jesus *every knee should bow*, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the Glory of God the Father."

There is certainly a day coming when every knee shall bow to the Saviour, and every tongue shall confess Him as Lord. This acknowledgment, however, will be obtained from some by grace, and from others by judgment; but the passage does not support Universalism.

1 TIMOTHY 2: 3, 4. "This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have ALL MEN TO BE SAVED."

The Apostle does not say that all men *will be saved*. The scripture proves God's willingness to save all men, the proof being the fact that Christ "gave Himself a ransom for all." "God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him *might be saved*" (John 3: 17). Men are subjects of moral, not physical, government; some *resist* the Holy Spirit and perish, whilst others *yield* to Him and live.

Eternal Punishment Inconsistent With God's Justice

It is said that it would be inconsistent with God's justice to punish eternally any of His creatures for sins committed during a brief lifetime. To this objection it may be replied that God is the only One who can properly estimate sin's vileness and hatefulness, and He is, *therefore*, the only One who knows the penalty it merits. The holier a man is the more he loathes sin. God, who is 'glorious in holiness' must abominate it.

In earthly courts the length of time taken to commit an offence has nothing to do with the severity of the penalty. A man who forged a name in a moment suffered seven years' imprisonment for the deed. A man who shot a neighbor in a

moment was sentenced to death, yet no one thought there was any miscarriage of justice. Adam's sin, committed in a few seconds, brought untold sorrow and woe on all his posterity. To strike a neighbor is bad, to assault a parent is worse, but to attack the King is an exceedingly grave offence. The seriousness of sin must be measured by the dignity of Him against whom it is committed. Sin is committed against God, and is high-handed rebellion against His authority. It is setting up the will of the creature against that of the Creator.

"I cannot see it," says one. "Cannot see what?" "I cannot believe in eternal punishment." Are you willing to "see" it in God's Word? "If any man *will do His will*, he shall know of the doctrine" (John 7: 17) is a divine principle.

Important Questions

Is sentiment, prejudice, or reason keeping you from bowing to the teaching of the Word of the living God? God speaks to us in His Word, and it is ours to listen, believe, and obey. Allow me to suggest a few questions for consideration:

1. Can fallen man adequately apprehend the exceeding evil of sin?
2. Can sinful beings accurately determine the duration, or extent of punishment deserved by a despiser of the salvation of God?
3. Is a criminal a proper judge of the amount of penalty his misdeeds merit?

To be capable of understanding sin's deserts one must be *sinless*, with no tendency to evil. He must also be *omniscient*, so as to be able to see the workings of sin in all its ramifications. We are absolutely incapable of pronouncing a proper judgment regarding sin's guilt and desert, our consciences being blunted, and our spiritual sensibilities dulled; we are therefore compelled to fall back on THE WORD OF GOD AS OUR SOLE GUIDE.

What temerity and hardihood for worms of the dust to say that they will not believe the Bible doctrine of eternal conscious punishment because they consider that it is inconsistent with their ideas of the love and justice of God! "My thoughts are not

your thoughts; neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord" (Isa. 55: 8). Do not let us forget it! "Let God be true, but every man a liar" (Rom. 3: 4).

Endless Sinning and Endless Punishment

A teacher of annihilation doctrine declares it to be his belief that the finally lost are incapable of sinning in the place of woe. If they are not capable of sinning in hell, they are not responsible for their acts. Responsibility does not exceed ability. Death is not a moral but a physical change. It is ever the tendency of sin to produce sin. If such is its tendency *here*, with Gospel light and privileges, and the strivings of the Holy Spirit, what will it be where such influences are withdrawn? Men are deterred on earth from committing gross and glaring sins by social restraints, and what would they do if such restraints were gone?

Scripture gives no encouragement for the theory that there will be a "second chance" after death. "He that is unjust, let him be unjust *still*; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy *still*" (Rev. 22: 11), will be the divine decree. There will be *perpetual sinning*, and there will therefore be *perpetual punishment*. "God would cease to be holy if He ceased to hate sin, and He would cease to hate sin if He ceased to punish it."

Results of Denial of Eternal Punishment

If the unsaved were persuaded that there was no hell and no eternal punishment, many of them would give free reins to their lusts, and plunge deeper and deeper into sin. Some would ignore God's existence, and with the rich farmer of old say, "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease—eat, drink, and be merry."

A man who heard a non-eternity lecturer preach stood at the door of a tavern with a glass of whiskey in his hand, and said to his fellows, "Here goes! a hundred years in hell, and that will be the end of it." As the "No-Hell" theory has spread in France and America, suicides and murders have increased.

The nearer a believer lives to God, the more earnest he toils for the salvation of the perishing, and the more likely he is to believe in the doctrine of eternal punishment. When Christians are absorbed with the world, its business, allurements, and pleasures, they become lax in their views of punishment.

Dr. R. A. Torrey has observed that "INCREASING LAXITY OF LIFE AND INCREASING LAXITY OF DOCTRINE GO ARM IN ARM." Most persons who accept non-eternity views of the doom of the finally impenitent, even though they were once devoted Christian workers, seem to lose interest in the salvation of souls, and become engrossed with other matters.

"Will by no Means Clear the Guilty"

Those who believe in the endless punishment of the Christ despiser and neglecter would do well to utter frequently the prayer of that wholehearted soul-winner, Duncan Mathieson: "Oh, God, stamp eternity on my eyeballs!"

Duncan Mathieson's awakening is exceedingly interesting and suggestive. Dr. A. A. Bonar preached a sermon on Exodus 34: 6, 7. When he came to the words, "Will by no means clear the guilty," Mathieson says: "I felt the burning, piercing eye of God upon me. A mountain of wrath seemed to crush me down, and hell was opened beneath me. Louder than the loudest thunder came the words, 'By no means clear the guilty,' and 'cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them.' The congregation was dismissed, the people departed, but I remained fixed to the spot. Some as they passed gave me a look of pity. At last I rose and reeled home to my lodgings, realising with awful vividness God, heaven, hell, judgment, and eternity. . . . I saw the mass around me hurrying unsaved into eternity. I wondered they could laugh. It seemed to me like the condemned dancing on the scaffold. The heavens seemed as if clothed in sackcloth. Wherever I went I felt the burning eye of God upon me, and the threatenings of the Word came like peals of artillery in quick succession. I feared I should drop into hell at every step," etc. Thank God,

the awakened soul found peace through the glorious message contained in John 3: 16. If preachers and Christian workers were more faithful in warning the unsaved of the awful doom that awaits them, there would be more people inquiring the way heavenwards.

Popular Objections

"WOULD A KIND FATHER WILLINGLY ALLOW HIS CHILD TO SUFFER ETERNALLY?" is a question asked by an annihilationist. Our answer is "No." God swears by His own existence that He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked (Ezek. 33: 11). None of God's *children* will suffer eternally. Every one of them being a possessor of eternal life, "the torments and the fire their eyes will never see." Though all men are God's *creatures*, all men are not His *children*. Scripture shows that the unsaved are "children of wrath" (Eph. 2: 1), and "children of disobedience" (verse 2). Sinners become children of God by faith in Christ (John 1: 12, 13; Gal. 3: 26). Though God is the Father of His children, he is the moral Governor of the universe, and as such He takes care that His righteous laws are obeyed, or the penalty inflicted.

"I COULD NOT BE HAPPY IN HEAVEN," say some, "IF MY LOVED ONES WERE SUFFERING IN HELL." This is mere sentiment. Earthly relationships, for aught we know, may not have the same power over us in eternity. Get the great question settled for yourself, and then work with all your might for the salvation of those who are near and dear to you. Believe God's Holy Word in spite of sentiment, popular opinion, prejudice, or human reasonings.

Misrepresentations of Bible Views

We regret to notice in non-eternity publications misrepresentations of the views of evangelical Christians on the subject of future punishment. An annihilationist expresses himself as follows: "We nowhere [in Scripture] find God set forth as purposely prolonging the existence of His wretched victims, drawing it out of His own free will, age after age, to all eternity, in

order that He may fill and saturate it with most exquisite, and unutterable, and unceasing misery."

What a travesty of the views of those who accept the Bible doctrine of eternal conscious punishment! It is a perversion of what we hold. Destructionists make the mistake of supposing that as life is obtained through Christ, those who do not accept Him will cease to exist. Not a line of Scripture can be adduced to support the theory. Endless conscious existence must have been bestowed on man, or he could neither be endlessly miserable or endlessly happy.

None Need Perish

Men and women are lost because they reject, or neglect, God's "great salvation." At an infinite cost He has provided redemption for all. The crowning, the damning sin of the sinner is this, that he will not accept of God's pardoning mercy as a *free gift*. "The wages of sin is death, but the free GIFT OF GOD is eternal life" (Rom. 6: 23, R. V.). Salvation can neither be earned, merited, nor purchased. "He that believeth not is condemned already, *because he hath not believed* in the Name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3: 18). The one who despised the law of Moses died without mercy, but a deeper, darker doom awaits those who trample under foot the Son of God, and despise His precious blood. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and *he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him*" (John 3: 36).

Though there is a hell for every sinner out of Christ, thank God, there is a Christ for every sinner out of hell. There is no need whatever that a single reader of these lines should perish. God longs to bless you, and waits to save you from everlasting misery, remorse, and despair.

Remember, however, that He will not *compel* you to accept of His salvation. "How often *would I* have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, *and ye would not*" (Luke 13: 34), is the testimony of the Saviour. This is why men suffer eternal conscious punishment. "*Ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life*" (John 5: 40) was

the Lord's complaint to the Jews of His day. "Ye *will not* come." It is so still. "What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it? Wherefore when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?" is Jehovah's lament over His earthly people.

Salvation Provided for All

What more can God do for YOU? He has given His beloved Son to die that you might be delivered from sin's penalty and slavery; He has sent the Holy Spirit to convict you of sin, and has made known to you His glorious Gospel. If you continue keeping the door of your heart closed against His entreaties, He will not break it open. "If any man hear My voice, and open the door" (Rev. 3: 20), is His condition of blessing. Why not now hearken to His voice of entreaty, draw back the bolt of unbelief, and let the Saviour in? He is waiting now, standing at the closed door, and may soon leave. You are a sinner, and need a Saviour. All of us *deserve* punishment. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and THE LORD HATH LAID ON HIM THE INIQUITY OF US ALL" (Isa. 53: 6).

"All thy sins were laid upon Him,
Jesus bore them on the tree;
God who knew them laid them on Him,
And *believing* thou art free."

"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1: 29). Gaze by faith on the Saviour bearing our sins in His own body on the tree (1 Peter 2: 24), and obtain eternal life as a free gift and a present possession.

GOD IS SATISFIED WITH WHAT CHRIST DID FOR US, and He desires that we should be satisfied with that which satisfies Him. Think of His attitude toward you. Ponder the words "Be ye reconciled to God; FOR He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5: 20, 21). "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16: 31).

No Hope Beyond the Grave

“TO-DAY if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts” (Heb. 3: 15), is the divine exhortation. “Hear, and your soul shall live” (Isa. 55: 3). There is no time to lose. The present is the only time you are sure of possessing, so don’t procrastinate. There is no forgiveness beyond the grave. “Fast to its close ebbs out life’s little day,” and all who do not accept of God’s “unspeakable gift” will perish in their sins. “Whosoever was not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire” (Rev. 20: 15). “Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in and shall not be able; when once the Master of the House is risen up, and hath shut to the door” (Luke 13: 24,25). The “Master of the House,” the Lord Jesus, is still seated at the right hand of God. “*Strive* to enter in.” The door of mercy may soon be closed. When Christ “rises up” it will be too late. Now the door is open, enter while you may. Don’t delude yourself by believing the lie of the arch-enemy that a God of love won’t send any of His creatures to hell. “The wicked *shall* be turned into hell” (Psa. 9: 17). He will send every one there who neglects or rejects His proffered mercy. “If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins” (John 8: 24) are the Saviour’s own words.

Why not now believe on Christ, who died to save you from going to hell. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth My Word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life” (John 5: 24).

Conclusions

1. Because of the conflicting views being propounded on the subject of future punishment our safety lies in clinging fast to the Scriptures. “To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them” (Isa. 8: 20).
2. God created man in innocency, but he sinned and fell.
3. All have sinned, and all merit sin’s penalty.

4. God has provided salvation for all at the cost of the sacrificial death of His beloved Son.

5. Forgiveness is obtained through faith in the "finished" work of the Lord Jesus Christ.

6. God, who alone can properly estimate the exceeding evil of sin, has declared that those who despise or neglect His pardoning mercy will suffer eternal punishment.

7. Neither the theory of Annihilation nor Universalism is taught in God's Word.

8. Punishment must follow sin. The impenitent do not become holy after death, but continue to sin, and will continue to be punished.