

PURGATORY:

A
"DOCTRINE OF DEMONS."

(1 TIM. IV. 1.)

BY

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PURGATORY:

A "DOCTRINE OF DEMONS."

(1 Tim. iv. 1.)

Purgatory may not be a very pleasant subject, but it is certainly one of considerable practical importance, especially among English-speaking people at the present time. The greater number of the human race are under the influence of this doctrine; the millions of China, millions in India, in Japan, and in Christendom are deluded by it, and numbers of persons in our Protestant land are being educated to believe in it.

Purgatory does not always appear exactly in the same form in the minds of men. It assumes a different colour in the mind of a Protestant, a Roman Catholic, a Mohammedan, and a Heathen, but though the colour be different, in substance, purgatory in these varied minds is the same. It is the belief that there is a place or means through which those who have departed this life shall be rendered pure by suffering, and so shall eventually attain to a state of bliss. By the means of purifying pains, the sins committed on earth are to be cleansed away, and thus, in a future state, a degree of purity is to be reached, which will enable the life of fool happiness to be lived, or at least the desired end to be gained. In this belief traces of truth remain. The allowance of man's sinfulness is contained in the necessity for his purification. An idea of holiness lies under the recognition of the necessity for personal purity in order to the enjoyment of future happiness. Also the belief consoles in it, with more or less vividness, the reality of man's existence in a future state, and the reality of the sinner being judged and punished for his sinful deeds done in the body. But lies prevail, and the truth is perverted.

The belief in purgatory is exceedingly ancient, and for some thousands of years it has reigned in the minds of generations of men.

We may well enquire, How is it that such a wide-spread belief should exist over the earth? How entered it the human heart? And again, Whence is it that the heathen, Jews, and Christian nations come to be possessed of the same, or at least very similar, ideas on so important a matter?

Egyptian monuments, owing their existence to the time before

the Exodus, supply us with pictures and teachings pertaining to purgatory; the ancient Greeks and the Romans held views on the subject similar to the Egyptians; some Jewish Rabbis believed in the same doctrine; the Buddhists, dating their existence some centuries before the time of Christ, teach a like faith, and the legends and ideas respecting the purgatory of the Papists, are so remarkably like those of the Buddhists, that in very many respects they may be termed identical. Here, then, is a long chain of belief reaching back to the era of the Pyramids.

The idea of purgatory, as filling the minds of the ancient Egyptians, is not precisely like that which to-day exists amongst the Buddhists, or in Christendom, but whether in pagans, ancient or modern, or in professing Christians, this notion prevails, that men, through sufferings in a future state, shall atone for, and purge away their sins, and that by such purification they shall eventually attain to purity and happiness. It is thus put by Cardinal Wiseman in his "Lectures on the Doctrine and Practice of the Catholic Church": "They" (the Fathers) "surely speak of purgation by fire after death, whereby the imperfections of this life are washed out, and satisfaction made to God for sins not sufficiently expiated." (Lect. XI, p. 894.) Christian and heathen are herein agreed that the being man himself still lives after death, and that he must suffer, until by suffering and misery he has worked out his own purification, thus reaching his hoped-for end, he that perpetual happiness or consolation. But such Christians as return to these ideas, "depart from the faith" and give heed to "doctrines of demons." (1 Tim. iv. 1.)

THE BELIEF OF THE ANCIENT EGYPTIANS.

Let us turn to the belief of the ancient Egyptians on this matter, to the golden days of Joseph and of Moses, when Egypt was a mighty nation and the eyes of the world were towards her. First, then, as to the being of man himself. "The doctrine of emanations from one great Soul, to which all returned again, after having been sufficiently purified from the contaminations to which each soul was subject during its earthly career, formed a principal feature of their religion; and not only was man, or the human soul, considered an emanation from the same great and universal Source, but every animated creature was supposed to partake of its divine essence." (Wilkinson's "Ancient Egyptians," Vol. III., page 255.)

"The evil propensities of man, and the sinful actions of which he was frequently guilty, were thought" by the ancient Egyptians "so to taint the original purity of the divine nature of the soul, that, on leaving the body, it was no longer in a fit state to reunite itself with the immaculate Source from which it proceeded"; these elements, "therefore, supposed that it underwent a proportionate degree of purification, according to the nature of the impieties each individual had committed. For this purpose it was condemned to a state of purgatory, by passing through the bodies of various animals. The most wicked were confined in those of the most

odious description, as the pig and others; . . . and those . . . who were guilty of injustice, tyranny, and rapine, outcast into the bodies of wolves, hawks, and kites." However, generally speaking, especially in the case of those who had had plenty of money, the souls of the dead were supposed to pass into happiness. (See Vol. III., p. 255.)

The accompanying picture, common enough in connection with



the dead, graphically represents the separate existence of the spirit from the body. The body lies in its mummy case, the spirit hovers

over it, bearing in its grasp two emblems of life, the one (the circle and the cross) betokening its perpetuity, the other (the coil) betokening its brevity; for as the wind fills the sail and dies away again, so does our breath cease and we lie lifeless on time's

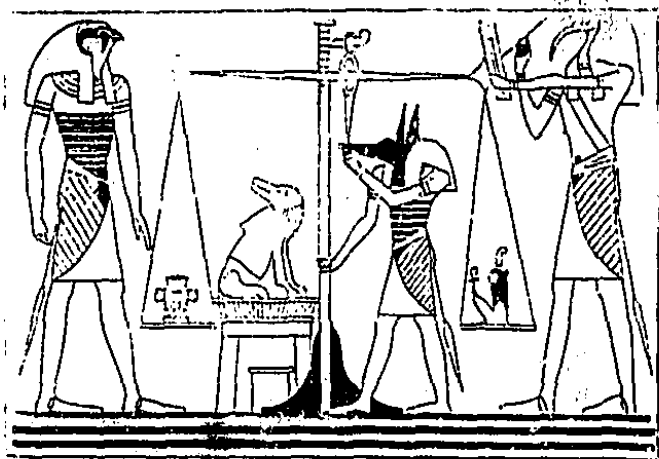
waters. The body being dead, testifies to the emblem of the coil; the spirit being living, testifies to that of the circle and cross. Some of our own wise Atheists might learn a sound lesson from these beautiful and poetic emblems. Nay, we may each wisely ponder over this strange picture, and supposing our own body dead within the mummy case, and our own spirit living in a state separate from the body, enquire, Where should I go? What would become of my spirit?

The picture represents the spirit hovering over the body. Why is this? In plain language, the spirit does not know where to go. The Christian's spirit is conducted home at the death of the body. We know whither we shall go! We shall be taken up to our Redeemer. "Absent from the body, present with the Lord."

(2 Cor. v. 8.) The pagan Egyptian knew not his end. To him, the destiny of man was not yet determined, the state of his future had to be decided. This great question had to be arrived at, and the question had to be settled by a judgment to be passed upon him on the basis of his manner of life on earth, while his spirit tenanted his body.

Those old pagans believed in a judgment to come, and wrote their faith all over their country in huge and wonderful pictures, and in great religious ceremonies.

As their religion developed, they came to imagine that there were forty-two assessors of the dead, each of whom enquired into the character of life the departed had lived, taking under his special control some particular sin. We cannot in our limited space give the picture of the whole of the judgment scene, but must content ourselves with the weighing in the balances.



There is a day of testing to come! Observe the balances; note carefully the scales. In one is a jar, in the other an image. The jar contains the heart of the deceased—a very admirable emblem of what man is, for we are o' what our hearts are. Out of our hearts proceed our thoughts and actions (see Matt. xv. 10). We shall be judged not according to our position in life, but according to our works. The image is a figure of Truth. Truth holds up the emblem of the eudlessness of life. Truth never changes. Truth shall stand for ever, and the truth which never changes shall be told, and the future life of the man will be in accordance with the verdict upon the manner of life lived on earth. This figure is so admirable that we enlarge it.

Over its eyes are coverings, for Truth cannot be influenced by appearances. Upon its head is the emblem of dignity and royalty—the ostrich feather—for Truth is great and noble as well as eternal.



Note now a most remarkable and suggestive teaching. The balances are held up upon the nose of a monster! This is Anubis, the director of the weights; half-jackal, half-man is he. He is a demon!—one of the gods of Egypt upon whom Jehovah executed judgment (Exod. xli. 12). A light is thrown upon the meaning of the plagues on Egypt by our study of their gods.

What! a demon upholds the balances of justice! A demon determines their exactness! Yes, indeed, and he has so placed them that he may exactly determine which side is the heavier. A demon, therefore, holds the scales of justice! A demon regulates the eternal destiny of man. Outrageous conception! "Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" (1 Cor. vi. 8); says the Scriptures.

As the scales are even, evidently the heart and truth are exactly balanced, and all will be well for this particular Egyptian. And as this picture was drawn by the head of man for human glorification, we need not be surprised at the pictured result.

We observe on the right hand of the balances another demon is standing; he is part man, part bird. His head is that of the Ibis, the sacred bird. This monster is Thoth, the god of letters; he is writing down on a tablet the result of the enquiry. How remarkable is this. We learn from the Scriptures of God that men's actions are weighed by God (1 Sam. ii. 8); that men are weighed in the balances (Dan. v. 27); that there are hooks which will be brought forth at the judgment containing the record of man's lives (Rev. xx. 12); that "all must appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. v. 10). But lo! the demon Thoth is seen about to hand the tablet to Horus, the hawk-headed monster on the left, who will present it to Osiris, the demon king, for demons preside over the fate of man!

Thus did Satan in those early days enwrap truth in lies, and by so doing usurp the place God alone occupies, introducing himself as in that place, thereby subjugating the hearts of men to himself, using the most solemn verities as regards man's future state for his own base and tyrannical end. God has said, "I have sworn by Myself, the word is gone out of My mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto Me every knee shall bow" (Isa. xlv. 23), and again, "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. xiv. 12).

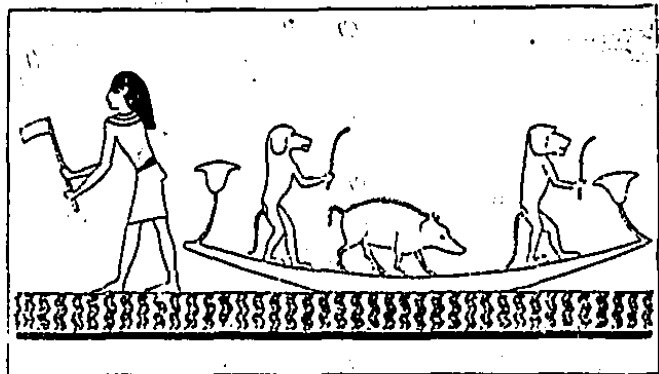
The dog-like monster watching the proceedings is Cerberus, the guardian of the lower regions. He sits near the scales of justice anxiously waiting the verdict, ready to welcome those who may

come in, and to devour those who might endeavour to escape from the gates of Hades.

Thus man's fate is portrayed as in the hands of demons. The supreme God exists not in this religion. Demons have usurped His place in the minds of men.

We now arrive at the doctrine of purgatory. A most fitting place it occupies, just that where God, the Judge of all (Job. xii. 28), is left out, and where the devil has usurped His sole place and authority.

On being weighed and found wanting by the demons the departed was rejected, and was barred entry into the abode of the blessed, and Osiris, inclining his sceptre, in token of condemnation, pronounced judgment upon him, and condemned his soul to return to earth under the form of a pig, or some other noxious animal, and thus to commence a period of purgatorial suffering. The sufferings the departed should endure in the future state were to be the atonement for his sins in this world. No notion of a new nature is to be found in the doctrine. No idea of new creation, but old sinful self, rendered holy by torture! But "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature" (2 Cor. v. 17); and "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John iii. 8).



Here we have such a soul being sent back to earth. It is being conveyed across the sacred lake in a boat, under the supervision of two monkeys, the emblems of Thoth. The appearance of these monkeys would indicate the new life, as Thoth, in one of his characters, is supposed to be the god who had the care of and who overlooked the actions and lives of men while on earth. At each end of the boat the lotus flower, held in great esteem by the Egyptians, is represented.

The man with the axe is figuratively cutting away the earth after the boat has left the shores of Amonti, of the Blessed, in order that there may be no return thither of the gluttonous man until after the period of his purgatorial misery is over.

The common cause of this doctrine of transmigration and

purification is certainly peculiar. We commend it to the wisdom of Theosophists and English believers in the transmigration of souls, and to such as are Vegeterians for fear of eating some displeasing ancestor. What noble thoughts, what common sense exists in such notions? A gluttonous man becomes the type of gluttony: a pig—and by living on a glutton attains to purity! We should think no life would be so agreeable to the subject of this purgatory, and that no other kind of life would be less likely to cure the love of over-eating. No animal looks more supremely dirtily happy when in the midst of its food than a pig! The dull-head becomes a shabby oyster, and so by shabbiness reaches wisdom. There is a grim folly inscribed upon this doctrine of evolution. But, if we are developed jelly-fish, we may evolve into jelly-fish again! This kind of wisdom is not wanting amongst some of those in England, whose "modern" thought moulds men's minds into paganism, into the "wisdom of the Egyptians" (Acts vii. 22), and who if they do not forbid to eat meat (1 Tim. iv. 8), do assuredly, as their printed papers prove, suggest the disagreeable probability which eating meat may involve. But why those pagan fears? Why the notion that oyster or pig may perchance be the envelope containing a soul in purgatory? Because these pagans in England reject the Word of God as to man's future state!

If such a doctrine lacks in common sense as to the future, it abounds with very practical wisdom as to this life, and to this we refer before leaving the ancient Egyptians, for it proves that these old priests were not so far behind modern priests in astuteness and business capacity, as we nineteenth century wisecracks are apt to suppose.

When an ancient Egyptian died, at the moment of his death the friends and relatives ran through the streets, tearing dust upon their heads and uttering bitter lamentations; his body was afterwards embalmed, and, later on, the mummy case was placed upon a funeral carriage, and the dead was conducted with fitting show to the borders of the sacred lake which, whether natural or artificial, was found outside every large city.

Then came the public announcement of the burial, and a judgment of the dead was prepared.

There were forty-two judges seated in a semi-circle, answering to the supposed forty-two assessors of the lower regions, and the body of the departed was declared worthy or unworthy of burial by the judges. Anyone in the crowd might be accuser, also there were present those who extolled the virtues of the deceased. Should the verdict be that he was worthy, then the body was placed in the sacred boat and was ferried across the lake or the river under Charon the boatman's care, and given an honourable burial. Here we note the practical side of this wisdom of the Egyptians, the honour thus given to the corpse ensured the departed a place in the regions of the blessed! An honourable burial by men was proof that the judges in the world to come, were satisfied as to the state of the soul of the departed! What then was required? Simply this, bury the rich man honourably, and so make him a saint.

The doctrine paid well, no one can doubt. Purgatory was, and is, a grand pecuniary success for priests. Those old priests of Egypt had much power in their hands to get at the right side of the judges, and as money inclined the direction of their fingers, the practical side of this wisdom is as evident as ancient. If the popular verdict, influenced by the priests, was against the dead, the body was not allowed a place in the sacred boat, but was buried upon the shores of the lake, in which case it was held that the spirit could not enter the place of bliss, but had to live again on earth in some form of purgatorial suffering.

The convenience of this ceremony is most suggestive. The priests had by it an enormous power over the living. But as the priests were able to influence popular opinion in obtaining for the deceased a worthy burial, the relatives and friends were satisfied. It was they who practically determined the fate of the deceased. It sounded very grandly that all this was done by Anubis, the director of the weights, and Thoth, the god of letters; these demons had no more to do with the matter than the scenes the artists represented on the monuments. But through the doctrine, Satan passed on his power over man's minds into the hands of his priestly servants.

Similar powers to raise souls to a seat among the blessed we find arrogated, sometimes by pagans, sometimes by professing Christians; sometimes by the senate of pagan Rome, sometimes by the council of popish Rome.

THE FABLES OF ANCIENT GREECE AND ROME.

The fables of the ancient Greeks and Romans as to the future state were chiefly borrowed from the Egyptians. They had their dark waters, their River Styx, which thrice three times ran round their infernal regions; they had their unquiet shades of men hovering over the marshes—an idea evidently borrowed from the dishonourably-buried Egyptians. They, too, had their boat which crossed the waters with its guide Charon. The dog Cerberus guarding the gates of hell, to whom the well-known sop was thrown, is a familiar celebrity to us all, as is the demon Pluto, their king of hell.

Now while it is true that there were high moral aspirations smog some of the pagan philosophers of Greece and Rome, the character of their deities was most disreputable. To such lengths in vice were they supposed to go, that proceedings such as theirs could not be published in England, at least in English, in our times. When the gods men worship are so atrociously bad, what can be expected of their votaries? We have only to refresh our memories on the lives of the gods to realise the awful picture drawn by God of the lives of the heathen in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. And monsters such as these, were the arbiters of the fate of men and the judges of man's actions—at least so did Satan make the wisest of man believe!

By the progress of human thought, Greece and Rome had gods

which were morally worse than were those of Egypt. Indeed, it might fare better for purposes of spiritual purification to live within the body of a pig, as the Egyptians taught, than to live in the infernal regions in company with such a deity as Pluto, as the Greeks and Romans supposed would be the case. Paradise with Venus would be paradise indeed, while Jupiter, the head of their gods, was a character given to the grossest abominations. The progress and development of human thought was not in these theories upwards by any means, but downwards, lower and lower into the depths of unmantionable wickedness. However, in such company many souls supposed to live at last, and by such means many were men's souls exposed, through suffering, to become purified.

These are various penances enjoined;
 And some are hung to bleach upon the wind;
 Some plunged in waters, others purged in fires,
 Till all the dregs are drained and all the rust expires,
 All have their manes, and those manes bear;
 The few, so cleansed, to their abodes repair,
 And breathe, in ample fields, the soft Elysian air.
 There are they happy, when, by length of time,
 The scurf is worn away of each committed crime;
 No speck is left of their habitual stains,
 But the pure ether of the soul remains."

ESSAY, VI., 1002 (Dryden's translation).

A belief as to purification similar to that of the ancient Egyptians, and coming from similar sources, obtained amongst the Rabbinical Jews.

THE BELIEF OF THE RABBINICAL JEWS.

From Josephus we learn that the Pharisees believed that the souls of the faithful—that is, of all who punctiliously observed the law of Moses and the traditions of the elders—would live again by transmigration into new bodies; but that the souls of all others, on leaving their bodies, were doomed to a place of confinement beneath, where they must abide for ever. Cardinal Wiseman tells us: "We have the practice and belief of the Jewish Church in testimony of our doctrine."

These old thoughts, infused into the human mind by demons, have been passed down to succeeding generations of men. Buddhism perpetuates the belief, though not exactly in the same form as that we have been considering. Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Buddhists, Fapists, link hands down some forty centuries.

The doctrine and the idea of purgatory in Buddhism and Romanism are remarkably alike in many ways, and as Buddhism is to be found in Theosophy, it is very interesting, though very horrible, to see the influence of demons over men's minds in our own time. We may include Romanism in this remark, for we are about to show the close similarity existing in this matter between the two systems of religion.

BUDDHIST BELIEFS.

Buddhism is the belief of very many millions of people both in China, India, and Japan, though shades of difference exist in these different countries. There is a grim honesty about a Buddhist's belief, for without cloak or question, man is seen under the power of demons.

CHINESE LEGENDS.

An emperor of China, called Yü Ti, who is accepted as a god, commanded a work, entitled Yü Li, or "The Divine Panorama," to be published, in order that man and women might repent of their faults and make atonement for their sins. This work informs us that on the birthday of P'u-sa, the ruler of the infernal regions, as the spirits of purgatory were thronging around him offering their congratulations, this ruler replied—"My wish is to release all souls . . . I would wholly or partially remit the punishment of erring shades . . . Any wicked soul that repents and induces one or two others to do likewise shall be allowed to set this off against the punishment which should be inflicted."

The judges of the ten courts of Purgatory then agreed that all who led virtuous lives from their youth upwards, should be escorted at death to the land of the immortals, and that all whose balance of good and evil was exact should escape the bitterness of the three states—hell, hungry ghosts, and animals—and be born again among men.

Virtuous acts, it was declared, shall enable a soul to obtain the salvation of others, and to redeem his wife and family from the torments of hell. These regulations were published in "The Divine Panorama," and at Yü Ti's bidding circulated on earth by the spirits of the city guardian. To those who are interested in P'u-sa we commend the perusal of "Strange Stories from a Chinese Studio," whence this information is derived.

Here is the same notion as that of the ancient pagans—namely, that demons rule over man and settle their destiny. The belief of a judgment upon sinners, the doctrine that good deeds may aid the case of souls in punishment, is also plainly evident, and we do well to observe that demons are represented as making their good intentions public on earth. Therefore Yü Ti, the old Chinese emperor, was long before our modern spiritualists, though to his honour be it said, he called demons, demons; and not as these moderns do, by the amiable names of the spirits of some departed human beings.

A LEGEND OF INDIA.

A Buddhist legend, emanating from India, shall now be put on record. The mother of a loving daughter had been condemned to the purgatorial hell, situated 280,000 miles in the heart of the earth; this filled the maiden with the keenest grief. Accordingly she, in her distress, went to a temple to pray for help. As she prayed, an ancient Buddha, whose image was there adored, in

reply to her offerings and prayers, addressed her, bidding her stay at home and meditate on the same Buddha. After a day thus spent, and while so doing, she fell into a state of deep reverie, and, after a while, found herself on the banks of an ocean. Here were many hosts of prey having iron bodies, which were roving over the sea, while multitudes of unhappy men and women were walking and swimming on the ocean, and were being constantly bitten and tormented by these ferocious monsters.

As she was observing these miseries, a demon-king addressed her kindly, and, encouraged by his attention, the maiden said, "I have heard that hell is here, how can I reach it?"

He answered, "Only by spiritual power and by merit self-acquired."

After having spoken to her of the unhappy beings in the sea, he told her that there were other seas of misery not far off, where greater punishments were inflicted. Then the maiden inquired after her mother, and the good-hearted demon-king answered her question by the question, "What sort of life did your mother formerly lead?"

"Oh!" answered the girl, "she ridiculed and slandered the three treasures—Buddha, the Law and the Priesthood."

However, the demon-king, influenced by the filial love that prompted such acts to save a parent, and by such piety towards the sacred Buddha, told her that such acts were not only sufficient to preserve her mother from hell, but also to raise innumerable persons to heaven. He then gave the girl to understand that, by reason of her goodness, the mother was now an inhabitant of paradise.

After this the Brahma maiden returned to consciousness as from a dream, and vowed she would perform during the rest of her life acts of merit for the deliverance of those who were in that place of torment.

Having read this legend of the Brahma maiden, will not our reader allow that what we observed concerning the resemblance between such legends and those of Rome are strikingly alike? Let him read on, and he shall have a legend, told upon the authority of an original, which will certainly carry conviction with it—at least of the resemblance existing between Romish and Buddhist thoughts on purgatory.

NOTIONS FROM JAPAN.

Before leaving the realms of Buddhism, we will interest ourselves with some pictures of the places of torment according to Japanese imagination, which are very similar to those so frequently found in the Buddhist temples in China. There are chapels or chambers attached to the temples in China, in which are figures and bas-reliefs representing the miseries of hell, and terrifying and graphic words they are. The demon-king presides at a table, and about him are his associates, and these are seen deciding man's future state, and not

only judging but tormenting men, burning, boiling, sawing, grinding, and in a hundred ways ill-using human beings. Perhaps some of our readers have seen such pictures in Roman Catholic countries. They may be seen in the old churches and in little chapels, or upon the walls of the mortuary attached to the chapel, or, may be, in some pious peasant's home, perhaps over the head of his bed. "How can you bear to have such awful pictures in your bed room?" said we to one of such: "Oh!" he replied, with a smile, "it is good to have solemn thoughts of death." And the good man looked kindly upon his graphic pictures of demons catching away the spirit of the dying man, and carrying it off to be burned, boiled, ground up with millstones, or torn by hooks.

Here is our Japanese picture.



See the king of hell, his eyes flashing with ferocity, his hand clenched with angry determination. At his side stands the accuser (Diabolus, the devil), whose excited hands clutch the tablet whereon the dark record of the culprit's misdeeds is written—an idea remarkably like that connected with the Egyptian monster Thoth. Will the reader compare the two, see page 5? The wretched culprit, his face wrung with terror, screams out his vain hopes, while held in the vigorous grasp of a savage demon. A monster like Cerberus gapes hungrily at this wretched human being.

Such is the picture of the king of hell as conceived by the Japanese artist! His vigorous design has written upon it the doctrine that demons are the judges, the accusers, the tormentors of the human race.

Here again is a picture, by the same artist, and intended to teach the same doctrine. A demon drags wretched men to doom.



a demon with transcendent gloom and hate dashes them down into the burning flame and holds them captive in his fiery furnace.

THE PURGATORY OF THE PAPISTS.

This is a place of torture and of fire which is like that of hell, and herein pious souls become purified. The Holy Ghost Himself is said to inflict the punishment upon the souls in purgatory. However, God is assisted in this work of purification by the meritorious acts of the living, and He is moved to compassion by the intercessions of glorified saints and of angels, and notably by the Blessed Virgin Mary. In purgatory atonement is made. Masses have a prevailing power to relieve the sufferings of souls in purgatory, and also to effect their release.

The knowledge of the nature and the sufferings of purgatory is derived from the revelations of saints, which is precisely the teaching of the Buddhists. Indeed, saints and angels perform for the Papist the kindly offices which saints and demons perform for the Buddhist.

The purification of the souls in purgatory is by means of fire—they are burned clean. No belief is here found of the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross, nor the cleansing of His blood. Neither is there in this doctrine any trace of the truth of God respecting the believer being a new creature in Christ (2 Cor. v. 17), nor of the truth that the believer has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, being passed from death into life (John v. 24). No, souls are purified by their own sufferings, which

"satisfy for the remains of their crimes" (Purgatory opened), or as the Latin poet puts it—

—"by length of time

The scurf is worn away of each committed crime."

Let us now turn to

AUTHORITATIVE TEACHING ON THE SUBJECT.

"The canons and decrees of the Sacred and Ecumenical Council of Trent," "Session xxv., "Decree concerning purgatory;" "Whereas the Catholic Church, instructed by the Holy Ghost, has from the sacred writings, and the ancient tradition of the Fathers, taught, in Sacred Councils, and very recently" (see sess. vi., can. xxx., following) "in this Ecumenical Synod, that there is a Purgatory, and that the souls there detained are helped (or relieved) by suffrages of the faithful, but principally by the acceptable sacrifice of the altar; the Holy Synod enjoins on bishops, that they diligently endeavour that the said doctrine concerning Purgatory, transmitted by the Holy Fathers and Sacred Councils, be believed, maintained, taught, and everywhere proclaimed by the faithful of Christ." "Session vi., canon xxx., referred to above, decrees, "If any one saith that after the grace of justification has been received, to every penitent sinner the guilt is remitted, and the debt of eternal punishment is blotted out in such wise, that there remains not any debt of temporal punishment to be discharged either in this world or in the next in Purgatory, before the entrance to the kingdom of Heaven can be opened (to him): let him be anathema."

Here we have the doctrine decreed by the most powerful authority the world ever knew, and enforced by its curse. Within the citadel of a Protestant circle we may hear the curse listlessly, but never let it be forgotten that Rome has a strong and a long arm, and that though now she cannot ely through the law, yet she can sanctify the hand of the assassin to fulfil her curses.

The catechism of the Council of Trent, as given in English by the Reverend Doctor Donovan, on the fifth article of the creed, states

THE REASON FOR THE EXISTENCE OF A PURGATORY.

"There is also the fire of purgatory, in which the souls of the pious are purified by temporary punishment, that they may be admitted into their eternal country, into which nothing defiled entereth." This is practically the reason given by the ancient Egyptians, the pagan Greeks and Romans, and others. A popular little book on sale in London, entitled "Devotion for the Souls in Purgatory," puts the reason in, perhaps, simpler terms; anyway, in terms so nearly identical with that of the belief of the ancient Egyptians, that we print the two side by side.

"The soul, in order to be reunited to its principal, should be as pure as when it came forth from one great soul to which all returned again, after having

* "The Canons and Decrees of the Sacred and Ecumenical Council of Trent," translated by the Rev. J. Waterworth (Cardinal Wiseman).

from it. It is necessary that the image of God should be fully established in the soul of man and with greater or less perfection in proportion to its elevation in glory." (p. 20).

Hence the purifying of purgatory.

been efficiently purified from the contaminations to which each soul was subject during its earthly career, formed a principal feature of their religion.

The soul on leaving the body underwent a proportional degree of purification, according to the nature of the impieties each individual had committed. For this purpose it was condemned to a state of purgatory. —Wilkinson's "Ancient Egyptians," Vol. III., p. 255.

THE TORMENTS OF PURGATORY.

In order to paint a picture of these torments according to Pagan ideas, we might avail ourselves of the powers of the Buddhist artists and for the descriptions of the place, of Buddhist legends of souls with their efforts to release souls there detained, but we shall, as we are bound to do, confine ourselves to Roman Catholic skill. One hour there, we are told, seems like years. "I have been years in the avenging flames," cried one, who appeared to his friend after death, and reproached him for not offering Mass for him. "Nay, you had no sooner closed your eyes," was the reply, "than I fulfilled my promise, and you may satisfy yourself by examining your body, which you will find to be not yet cold." The deceased answered, "Is that so? How frightful are the torments of purgatory when one hour seems more like a year." It is said the pains of purgatory are infinitely greater than those inflicted on the body martyred by every conceivable malicious ingenuity of barbarians. Purgatory is, therefore, more dreadful than mere men can make the sufferings of their fellow creatures.

In order to work terror in the soul, Scripture is perverted, thus we read—"No misery can be found like that of a person who suffers evils that *The eye hath not seen, nor the ear heard.*" Both italic and quotation are the author's. He has quoted the Scriptures of God, and has perverted God's sweet words of comfort by the prophet, to assist the base ends of priests—"For since the beginning of the world men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God, beside Thee, what He hath prepared for him that waiteth for Him" (Isa. lxiv. 4); and echoed by His apostle, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit" (1 Cor. ii. 9-10).

"This day shalt thou be with Me in paradise" (Luke xxiii. 43). not "Thou shalt go to purgatory," are the words of Jesus. And

* "Purgatory, according to the Revelations of the Saints," by the Abbé Leveillé.

because of God's word "We are confident, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord" (2 Cor. v. 8).

The book of devotions from which we have quoted gives us various details as to

THE DELIVERANCE OF SOULS IN PURGATORY.

We are informed "There is no means more conducive to the glory of God than the deliverance of the souls in purgatory" (p. 28), and an invitation is given to "all persons zealous for its (the Holy Trinity's) glory, and who tend to the pure love of God to do so" (p. 27), for Rome has a wonderful way of calling things utterly hateful to God, things to His glory. But before our pious efforts are called forth, our pity is aroused by a description of purgatory. We must bear in mind that it is a fundamental principle in this doctrine, that *souls in purgatory cannot relieve themselves*, hence their relief is cast upon the living; hence, too, the living are educated into making a provision for their own relief when their turn comes to endure purgatorial pains. This we might regard as a kind of Spiritual Assurance Fund, the money and the merits of which are in the hands of the Pope and the priests. When our pity for the poor souls in purgatory is sufficiently aroused by the contemplation of its horrors, the terrified reader is bidden cry, "Mercy! Mercy! O blood of Jesus Christ! appease the divine wrath; O, most holy Virgin, Mother of Mercy, have pity on us, and on the poor souls in purgatory! Blessed angels! hasten to their relief!" (p. 10). There is none of the "reet" Jesus gives here! None of the boast in God the true Christian lavos. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth?" (Rom. viii. 33, 34.)

There is, we have observed, however, a mode of stirring up compassion and fruitful penance for the poor souls in purgatory, which is far more effective than anything a book can offer. English liberality would at present hardly permit the method in this country, but it is common enough in Roman Catholic villages on the Continent. The skulls and bones of the departed are placed in rows upon shelves in a chapel, and close by is a little box having in it a slit for a coin, near to which is an appeal for gifts for the poor souls in purgatory.

A few years ago the writer happened to enter a little chapel, adorned with a variety of pictures, on a lovely mountain side overlooking the Lake of Lucerne, and observing an open door leading into a second chapel, he entered. There, ranged upon shelves, were the skulls of the former villagers, scraped and inscribed with their names, and the date of their death. Some of these had been dug up out of their graves within a few years of their burial. One especially was noticed as having upon it a very recent date, and as it had not been very artistically relieved of its remaining flesh, it savoured of corruption. This ghastly little chamber was ornamented with pictures of devils pitch-forking, burning, and otherwise

tormenting the poor souls in hell, and as the skulls of those suggested unfortunates, named and dated, put in their woful appearance upon the shelves, the appeal for their deliverance from purgatory, or, at least, for the money to be used towards it, was of a somewhat thrilling description.

Imagine a fond mother gazing upon the skull of her daughter, who had died but four years previously, and this mother believing her daughter's soul was being tortured into hellishness, and that the village priest had power to relieve her child—could she resist the necessary pence?

Here we pause a moment. Will our reader return to page 4 and observe the emblem of the spirit hovering over the corpse, and not knowing whither it shall go? Poor pagan! Such was thy conception of the opening of the future state; but thy darkness is excelled by that of men bearing the name of Christ, who declare that the soul of the saint goes after death to the fire of fire, agencies so inconceivable "that all the torments inflicted by hell could not equal" them, and who thunder out anathema upon all who do not believe the lie.

We cannot do better than follow our book of devotions a little further, which, having sufficiently aroused us to alarm, proceeds to invite its devout reader to do his part in assisting souls out of purgatory. The manner of assistance varies. He is

To OFFER TO GOD MERITORIOUS ACTS

"for their relief" (p. 20); indeed, to do as did the Buddhist maiden of whom we read on pages 11 and 12:

To OFFER PRAYERS.

"such as reciting the office for the dead, the seven penitential psalms, or the beads for the dead . . . on the large beads, Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; Holy Mary, Mother of God, blessed saints and angels, intercede for the poor souls in purgatory!" The Virgin gets the glory through her kindness and mediocrity. On the small beads this prayer may be said, "O, Eternal Father, I offer You all the satisfaction of Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, for these poor souls!" (p. 29), which is a sore insult to "God" who "so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John iii. 16):

HE IS TO OFFER ALMS.

"As water extinguishes fire, so alms destroy sin. Works of mercy procure for us mercy, and gain for us eternal life. This is not a human doctrine . . . it is a truth taught by the Spirit of truth" (p. 34). Money, in some form or other, ever plays an important part in false religion. We may safely assume that the louder the call for money, the less of divine life is there in the system of the begging religionist. Farther we read, "To pay the debts of those who are unable to discharge them . . . is one of the most efficacious means of satisfying divine justice" (pp. 35, 36).

Perhaps, if this view of the future begins to prevail in Protestant England, some of the money due to honest people and to defrauded widows, obtained by glaring commercial swindles and the like, may be refunded. But we will resume the money question presently, though assured no reverent Christian would do other than shudder at the thought of the supremely righteous God being satisfied in His eternal justice by metal won from the earth He has made, even should the coin go into the hands of Pope and priests.

HE IS TO OFFER ACTS OF MERITIFICATION.

Some of these are ridiculously small. "It is related, that some persons . . . offered to God the fatigues of a journey which they performed in behalf of the souls in purgatory"; others are wildly severe; "some have practised penances and austerities which have been the astonishment of their age."

For instances of some of these marvels, we place ourselves under the guiding hands of great men. On the authority of Cardinal Bellarmine, who, in his "De gemitu Columbæ," book II, ch. 9, uses "the narrative of Thomas Cantimpræsis," Saint Christina thus describes her vision of purgatory and the results it had upon her. She, like our Brahma maiden, once vacated the body for a short time, and saw sights very similar to those that girl beheld:—"Immediately as I departed from the body, my soul was . . . conducted to a dark and horrid place, filled with the souls of men. The torments which I there witnessed are so dreadful that to attempt to describe them would be utterly in vain. . . . Greatly concerned for their hopeless state, I asked what place it was, thinking it was hell, but was told it was purgatory." She was then conducted to hell and also to heaven, where one who is represented as the Lord Jesus Christ thus addressed her: "Will you stay for ever with Me now, or will you return to the earth, and there in your mortal body, but without any detriment to it, endure punishments by which you may deliver out of purgatory all these souls whom you so much pitied?"

Christina returned to earth, and, like the pagan saint, became a saviour of the souls of men. However, the pagan, according to the legend, fairly owned she had interviewed a demon, whereas Christina, according to the legend, saw the Son of God, and He it was that bids her perform acts for the salvation of men's souls from purgatory! Poor old blind Isaac was deceived by the skins on Jacob's hands, Jacob felt like Esau, though he could not speak like him; here, however, speech and touch, it is the devil himself before us, with but a feeble mark on.

The result of the vision was that Christina (so the cardinal assures us) "walked into burning ovens, and though she was so tormented by the flames that her anguish extorted from her the most horrible cries, yet, when she came out, there was not a trace of any burning to be detected on her body. Again, during a hard frost she would go and place herself under the frozen surface of a river, for six days and more at a time. Sometimes she would be carried round by the wheel of a water-mill, with the water of the river, and having

been whirled round in a horrible manner, she was as whole in body as if nothing had happened to her—not a limb was hurt. At other times" we read this most saintly and most marvellous person "would make all the dogs in the town fall upon her, and would run before them like a hunted beast; and yet, in spite of being torn by thorns and brambles, and worried and lacerated by the dogs to such a degree that no part of her body escaped without wounds, there was not a weal nor a scar to be seen."

The great cardinal who advances this story is very careful to assure us of its truth; he tells us emphatically, "that Cardinal prætensis said nothing but the truth is evident, not only from the confirmation given to his testimony by the bishop and Cardinal de Vitriaco, and from his only telling what happened in the very province of which he was a bishop, but because the thing spoke for itself."

When cardinals and bishops believe such things, we cannot do other than accept them to be honest in their belief, at least as much so as are the Buddhist priests, or the priests of the gods of old, and some of us are prepared to go so far as not to doubt that the visions were actually seen; but no one who believes the Scriptures has any question as to the source whence the belief originated, or who it was that sent the visions. None but demons would conceive a doctrine directly aimed at the atonement of the Lord Jesus, and the creation of various saviours for the souls of men; and if there is any truth in the visions being seen, without doubt the devil sent them.

These doctrines teach as plainly, as words can announce, and as authoritatively as curses can enforce, that it is not true that "God sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John iv. 10); and that it is not true that Jesus has "washed us from our sins in His own blood" (Rev. i. 5); but that the truth of atonement is that men, by their own suffering in purgatorial fires, and by the physical sufferings of people for them on earth, obtain the purification of sins.

TO OFFER TO GOD THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS

is a great means for the release of the souls in purgatory. "This adorable blood"—that is, the Mass—"indeed extinguishes the flames of purgatory" (p. 41). Without the Mass and Mary that Christian religion which upholds purgatory would have no pillars left, at least none that could support the belief. What does Scripture teach about "this adorable blood"? Nothing! But what saith the Scripture of the blood of Christ? "Having made peace through the blood of His cross" (Col. i. 20). How specific is God in His word. Peace has been made; it has been made by Himself; it was made through the blood of His Son; and through the blood of His Son which He shed on the cross. The blood of Christ given on the cross is in no way "this adorable blood" of the Mass. It is not even pretended that the blood which was shed upon the cross is the self-same as that called "this adorable blood." The Mass cannot do that which has been done.

Before we take leave of the practical issues bound up in this

doctrine of purgatory, we must dwell a little on the important subject of money! "Thy money perish with thee" is an apostolic sentence addressed to one who thought the gift of God could be procured with money. The apostle who uttered the words was Peter himself (Acts viii. 20), whom Rome claims as her great Bishop. Another apostle says, "The love of money is the root of all evil" (1 Tim. vi. 10). With such warnings about money, Christians should be very watchful when any religion proposes to buy and sell spiritual blessings.

Money being a very practical matter, we ask, Why are masses so loaded? Because they are worth the money they bring to the priests by whom they are sold. If the Pope and the priests really believe they can get souls out of purgatory, why do they want to be paid for the service? A layman would not stop pulling a child out of the fire until he had a shilling in his hand for doing it. No crime can be conceived more cruel than asking poor widows and orphans for money to get souls out of purgatory, and refusing to say the masses necessary to get the husband's or father's soul out, without receiving payment for so doing. At the day of judgment the cries of widows and orphans so robbed will not be forgotten! Priests must have iron hands indeed, or the widows' half-crowns would burn holes in them.

No doubt, from a "business" point of view it is good and profitable to keep poor souls in purgatory for a lengthened period, and to continue to lengthen out their stay there as the money keeps coming in, but it is a detestable iniquity. Most marvellous is it that "poor souls" on this side of purgatory can believe in it to the extent of laying down their money to keep the business going! What conceptions can they have of God? Do they think the Infinite and Eternal God is to be bought off His justice by pence?

The little book from which we have already quoted, at page 27 tells us our duty is

TO APPLY FOR INDULGENCES FOR THE SOULS OF THOSE IN PURGATORY.

"To know what indulgences are, ought to be quite sufficient to induce us to make a great use of them in behalf of the souls in purgatory. We have already said that it is necessary to pray, and fast, and give alms; but what is all that we can do in comparison to the application of the merits of Jesus Christ for the payment of their debts, which may be procured by means of indulgences? Here I would remark on the ignorance or forgetfulness of many persons who are associated in several confraternities, and who are possessed of beads and medals to which indulgences are annexed, but who make no use of them for these poor souls."

Again, we are told that it will aid souls in purgatory "to execute the last will of persons, and apply the sums of money as directed therein" (p. 41).

"A father will say to his child, 'I expect you will take care to have these masses said—these alms distributed.' But, if he were prudent, he would perform these things himself; for it is not likely that his son will be more concerned for his soul than himself" (p. 44).

"How many who have left wealth in abundance to their heirs are now in purgatory without comfort or mitigation! who, if they had given a portion to the poor, after discharging all necessary demands and amply providing for their family, might have been long since in heaven. Oh, what a pity that men depend so much on others, and do nothing themselves for what concerns their salvation!" (p. 45).

This is so delicately expressed that we must remind our reader that the writer of it is a Frsnechman. Yes! your soul must go to purgatory, and money is required to get it out. What, then, shall be done? Trust your soul to hand the money to the priests? No, indeed, confide not in your son. Secure yourself by giving the priests the money yourself, they will be sure to procure you the indulgences. We mentioned on page 8 that the ancient Egyptian priests were good men of business, but time has taught Papist priests to be better men of business still. Buy indulgences, masses, prayers. Give coin to the priests: they will set saints and angels in motion, their silver keys will unlock the doors of purgatory and open the gates of heaven.

THE REVELATIONS OF SPIRITS.

Papists and Buddhists obtain their descriptions of purgatory from the revelations of spirits. The legends of the saints are legion. Protector saints in relation to purgatory are also very numerous, and to these are prayers made. We saw on page 13 how that a kind demon delivered a soul from the torments of the Buddhist purgatorial hell; in like manner do saints deliver souls from the purgatory of the Papists. There is a regular intercourse with the unseen world in both religions. Now such intercourse cannot be kept up with the holy departed, for they are "with Christ." With whom then is the intercourse maintained? But we may have it suggested that the legends are mere myths—in that case those who circulate them, and ask us to believe them, are guilty of lying and deceiving. Allowing that the visions and revelations are real, we are met by the most solemn command of God against intercourse with spirits. Such intercourse is abomination in the eyes of Jehovah, the Most High. Indeed, from Gal. v. 20, 21, and Rev. xxii. 15, we learn that the kingdom of God is shut against those who indulge in it.

There are four fearful evils in the doctrine of purgatory which we now array in the presence of God's own Word.

(1) *Purgatory denies the truth of the Atonement* of the Lord Jesus Christ, of His sufferings for sin, and of the power of His purging blood which was shed on account of sin. To His blood Scripture alone refers as a purification of sin. "When He had by Himself purged [or purified] our sins" (Heb. i. 8). "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your consciences from dead works to serve the living God?" (Heb. ix. 14). "The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John i. 7). God allows no other sufferings whatever for the purging away of

the sinner's sins, save the sufferings for sin of His own Son. The humblest believer in our Lord Jesus Christ is loosed from his sins, is purified from his sins, and should anyone who reads this paper desire true purification from sins, God sets forth His Son a mercy-seat through faith in His blood for the remission of sins (Rom. iii. 25), and all that God requires of the seeker after salvation is faith in Jesus and His blood, and faith in God who gave His Son to die for our sins. The idea of a man suffering for sins in another state, and by such suffering atoning for the sins of this life, denies the one and everlasting atonement of the Son of God once and for ever made.

God never sells spiritual blessings to man. It is a crime against His character to suppose He does so. God gives.

When God teaches us of the purification of sins through the work of Christ, we have two things presented before our minds—First: God Himself, by virtue of the atonement of Christ, has had removed from before His eyes the sins of His people. This is the all-important question; our realization of what God sees is the secondary matter. We must hold with the utmost tenacity of faith the truth that the sins of God's people are removed from before the eye of God. Second: Our consciences are purged by virtue of the blood of Christ. God does not look upon us any longer in our sins, but as set apart to Himself—sanctified. "By one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified" (Heb. x. 14).

As to the will of God being carried out by men trying to get souls out of purgatory, God tells us that His will has been carried out by Christ His Son. "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (ver. 10).

(2) *The doctrine of purgatory denies the truth of the state of the departed.*—God tells us that when the spirit of the Christian leaves this body it is at once with Christ. To be absent from the body, is to be present with the Lord (2 Cor. v. 8). There is no thought of a moment's interval. "To depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better" (Phil. i. 23). "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise" (Luke xxiii. 43). "With Christ" is the one great Bible thought for Christians in reference to the spirits of those who have left this body and this life.

Let no troubled believer question the Word of God or the love of Christ Jesus. He has put away your sins by the sacrifice of Himself, and will send His angel, or, may be, He will come for you Himself in your dying hour. He will take you to be with Himself. You are the beloved of His heart, and nothing shall separate you from His love. "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. viii. 38-39).

The spirits of those who die without Christ are in prison (1 Peter iii. 10), they are detained in a place of darkness preparatory to the great day of judgment, and before the sentence of the day of judgment—when the books shall be opened—shall

be carried out. The spirits of the just are in paradise—with Christ. All are awaiting the day of resurrection and the final state, whether believers or unbelievers, whether heaven or hell. Some demons are already in chains and darkness, bound there before the final judgment (Jude 6); the devil and his angels will all eventually be cast into the hell prepared for them. They will never be man's judges or persecutors; they are his deceivers. They will be the most miserable of all the lost. Hell itself is prepared for the devil and his angels.

(8) *The doctrine of purgatory denies the judgment yet to come.*—Of this, concerning those who have not life, we read in Revelation xx, "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." Never does Scripture allow that people are being prepared by purgatory for the final judgment. But the Word of God is definite and clear respecting a final judgment. There will be set "a great white throne," before which all the dead shall be arrayed. All whose names are not written in the book of life will have sentence passed upon them according to the works that they have committed on this earth. The idea of purgatory is an impossible one if we believe in a day of judgment; for according to the notion of purgatory, some will live comparatively only a little while in a state of suffering, others thousands and thousands of years. Pope John XXII. offers 90,000 years of pardon for saying three prayers! Scripture gives us to understand that the day of judgment is by no means thousands and thousands of years off, but at hand.

(4) *The doctrine of purgatory denies the eternal state of man.* This follows after the resurrection. The Bible teaches us of two resurrections: the resurrection of life and the resurrection of judgment (John v. 27-30), and declares, "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection" (Rev. xx. 6). At the resurrection of life all God's people shall enter into the eternal state. Each one, spirit, soul, and body, will be like Christ. "We shall be like Him" (1 John iii. 2). All will bear Christ's image. "We shall know as we are known" (1 Cor. xiii. 12).

The eternal state is subsequent to the resurrection, no one can be said to enter it until his spirit be reunited to his body, thru a "spiritual body," in a condition never more again to die.

As men give up God's word so do they fall into some awful bondage of Satan. In a most emphatic way, Purgatory is "a doctrine of devils," but the Bible frees us from its chains. The growth of the belief in a state after death for the purification of man from the sins committed in this life, whether the belief be the doctrine of the Theosophist or of the Papist, calls the Christian to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, and to do his utmost to deliver, if possible, the captives Satan has made by the power of his lies.