### PLAIN PAPERS

ON

## THE FUTURE STATE

AND

## ETERNAL PUNISHMENT

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## THE FUTURE STATE.

# ETERNAL PUNISHMENT AND THE DEITY OF CHRIST.

THE various phases of belief which set aside the truth of eternal punishment, though far from being anything new, are being widely spread abroad by means of books, tracts and sermons, both in these countries and in America. It is, therefore, all the more important that Christians who desire to abide by the scriptural faith, should be put on their guard against these errors.

The systems of doctrine in question—Annihilationism, Universalism, &c.—profess to be supported from Scripture, and even to be proved by it: but, when really brought to the test, it will be found to be Scripture misapplied and accommodated to suit the theories of each particular school. The authors and teachers of these doctrines generally assume to speak with the greatest certainty and authority, even on the most critical points of revelation: and they pose as possessing the light, whilst all others, who do not agree with them are in darkness.

A delusive feature in connection with these phases of belief is that they are frequently linked up with a certain amount of truth, and, it may be, some truth more or less neglected and forgotten generally, which is much pressed and brought forward. The result is that people are attracted by the truth, and are therefore more easily entrapped into accepting the lie of Satan which accompanies it.

It will also often be found that those who advocate the doctrines referred to, are unsound respecting the Person of Christ, His atonement and man's responsibility: the question therefore becomes a very solemn one, involving, as it does, the most vital truths of Christianity.

The object of this paper is to take up briefly some of the points involved, and examine them in the light

of Scripture.

#### SPIRIT, SOUL AND BODY.

Words have in English, as in other languages, a primary or essential meaning, as well as a secondary or derived meaning; or, it may be, various secondary meanings. Thus, the English word "soul" not only means "the spiritual, rational, and immortal part of man, which renders him a subject of moral government," or simply, "the intellectual principle or understanding," but it is constantly used in the sense of "a person."

This variety in the use of the word does not lead to any real difficulty, because, when the context is understood, the true meaning of the word is at once apparent. It is, therefore, most important to understand what the context really means, in order not to be led into believing that a word signifies something different from its true meaning in any particular

passage.

We may take as an illustration of this certain words relied on to prove that the soul dies, in Ezekiel xviii. 20, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Now Scripture never speaks of the death of the soul, if the

word "soul" be used in its primary sense of the word soul be used in its primary sense of the immortal part of man. The word "mortal" is invariably applied to the "body." But let us quote the passage referred to in full—"The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him."

Israel complained that God was punishing them for their fathers' sins; saying, "The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge." The prophet shows them that it was not a question of the son bearing the iniquity of the father, as they pretended was the case; each one would die for his own sins. The emphasis is on the word "it," without raising the question of what becomes of the sinner after death. As to this, our Lord Himself raises the veil in Luke xvi. It is the person who sins who will die; the judgment is individual. This is the evident force of the passage.

In the Greek Testament the word "soul" (psukee)

is used in various ways—we may notice the following:

(i.) For the inward, spiritual and immortal part of man, as contrasted with the body, and closely connected with the "spirit." "Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hades."-Acts ii. 27. "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."—Matt. x. 28. "I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless."—1 Thess. v. 23.

(ii.) For the seat of the affections, desires of the heart, &c. "My beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased."—Matt. xii. 18. "My soul is exceeding sorrowful."—Matt. xxvi. 38. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul," &c .- Mark xii. 30.

(iii.) For the mind. "They were all of one heart and one soul."—Acts iv. 32. "Made their minds evil affected against the brethren."—Acts xiv. 2.

(iv.) For "life"—very frequently.

(v.) For persons. "Three thousand souls."—Acts ii. 41. "Fear came upon every soul."—Acts ii. 43.

The "soul" being closely linked with the body as that which causes it to live, is, as has been just remarked, largely used for life\* itself. The spirit, soul and body are intimately connected—the "spirit" is, we may say, the higher, intellectual, energetic part; the "soul" being linked rather with the affections.

The apostle, taking in the whole man in his desires, prays that the whole spirit, and soul, and body may be preserved blameless. Man is therefore tripartite—the body being of course a material thing that we can see; the soul and spirit being intangible to us, cannot be seen. They exist nevertheless, and are none the

less real, according to Scripture.

Now, taking up first of all the "soul," we would draw the reader's attention to the fact that our Lord, warning the disciples against those who would persecute them, tells them not to fear those who could only kill the body, and could not reach the soul. Was the soul, therefore, the less real on that account? Not so. We should also note the order of the words in the passage already referred to, "spirit, and soul, and body;" and so, too, our Lord speaks of destroying "both soul and body in hell"—the "soul" is put before the "body." Both soul and body being in hell is clearly after death—so that there is that which exists after death, even with the wicked. "Destroy" does not mean "to annihilate," as we shall see more fully later on. "It is appointed unto men once to die,"

<sup>\*</sup> That is the life of the body: not life in its spiritual sense—life eternal—for which quite another word is used, viz., zōee.

says the apostle in Heb. ix. 27, "but after this the judgment." Death, and "after death" judgment, is the common lot of man, as a sinner and unrepentant: there is, therefore, that which outlasts death and

which is the subject of judgment.

It is argued by some that the soul ceases to exist, but that the body will be raised. Now what has ceased to exist never can be raised, and if there is a cessation of existence at death, God must create a new being at resurrection; so the identity is gone, and with it the responsibility which attached to the man when in this world.

In this connection, we have a very striking passage in Job xix. 25-27, which we quote from a revised translation—"And [as for] me, I know that my Redeemer liveth, and the Last, He shall stand upon the earth; and [if] after my skin this shall be destroyed, yet from out of my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another." Thus, in those early times, there was the knowledge given of God, that he would see the Redeemer for himself. It is not a new Job replacing the former one, "not another," but the identical man in a new position and state.

Scripture proof is abundant as to the existence of the soul after death, and is perfectly plain to all save those who are blinded by a determination to support a theory. We learn from Psalm xvi., as to our Lord Himself, that His soul was not left in Hades, i.e. the disembodied condition: neither, as to the body, did

He see corruption.

Many false conclusions have been drawn from the fact that in Genesis i., "living soul" is applied to animals as well as man. It is, of course, true that they have life connected with the body; but he who denies a difference between man and the animals, debases man to the level of the beasts which were "made to be taken and destroyed." To put the matter as it has been well stated by another—Scripture,

when patiently studied under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, will always be found to speak in a way which, in a few sentences, sets aside all the speculations of men. In the leading text giving the revelation of God on the subject, we read that God formed man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. Here we find that it was by God's breathing this highest power of life from Himself, that man became a "living soul." He had previously formed his body as He saw fit, and it was by the communication of life from Himself that He animated the form He had made. The animals had, at His will and by the word of His power, issued from the earth. He had said, "Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind," and it was so, the living creature came forth. Not so with man. God consulted solemnly as to his creation, and resolved to make man in His image, after His likeness. So God created man in His image, gave him dominion, and blessed him. God also spoke to him, and gave him to know his place, his food, as well as the beasts' food, &c. Being the object of the divine counsels, and having received the divine breath of life, he was also the vessel of divine communications. But more than this, God put him into conscious relationship with a known Creator, so that he might learn his responsibility, teaching him obedience by a command not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Man is said to be of the race—the offspring of God (Acts xvii. 28), and Adam, as a created being, is even called "son of God" (Luke iii. 38). "In Him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts xvii. 28), and though fallen, are still recognised as made after the image of God (James iii. 9.)

Now it is undeniable that, not only was the creation of man quite distinct from that of animals, but he was set in a position of relationship and responsibility to God. in which, of course, no mere animal ever stood.

The false theories on this subject dislocate the whole truth of Scripture; and they set aside the atonement itself. If man be only a higher kind of animal, without an immortal spirit or soul, then the atonement goes for nothing, because its effect would be limited to things done in the body, consequently human responsibility would, if this system were true, differ in no essential way from that of a beast, if such there be!

Again, in Rev. vi. 9, we read of "The souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held;" and in Chap. xx. 4. "The souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus," &c. True, it is a vision, but it clearly conveys to us the reality of the existence of the soul after death, and the fact that these, who had suffered martyrdom, were awaiting the moment of "The first resurrection," when body and soul would be united and when they would share in the blessings of the millennial kingdom.

Now, as to the word "spirit"—the spirit is distinct from the body and soul, and is put first in the apostle's desire for the Thessalonians—he prays that their "whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless." As distinguished from the "soul," the "spirit" is the energizing or directing part, if we may so say. Thus, the word of God penetrates "to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit."—Heb. iv. 12, that which is of the feelings and affections; and that which is of the mind and will, and which may be, and often is, the fruit of the divine work of God in the man.

In 1 Cor. ii. 11, we read, "What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him." Plainly, here, the spirit is looked at as a distinct entity; as distinguished from the body, which is its vessel. Similarly, in 1 Cor. vii. 34, we have "holy both in body and in spirit," a further proof that the "spirit" is a definite part of the person; as distinct from the body and soul.

Now it is false to say that death can touch the spirit—the body is mortal, but this is never said of the spirit. We find Stephen, when dying, says, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" (Acts vii. 59); and our Lord Himself" yielded up His spirit" (Matt. xxvii. 50), and said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my minit" (Taberniii 46). spirit" (Luke xxiii. 46.) He could say to the thief, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." It is in vain to try to avoid the force of this passage by changing the punctuation, and placing the comma after "to-day." The contrast is manifestly between his having to wait for the kingdom, and his being with the Lord that very day in Paradise. "Remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom," said the thief: our Lord's answer is as much as to say. "You will not have to wait for the kingdom, you will be with me to-day in Paradise." Now the thief did not go with Him in body, of course, but his spirit was in Paradise as soon as death released it from the body, on that very day, as was the case with the Lord Himself. And, remark, so closely identified is the "spirit" with the personality, that the Lord can use the terms "thou" and "me."

We may now turn to a passage in the Old Testament put forward in support of their theory by those who deny the immortality of the soul—"For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them; as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no pre-eminence over a beast: for all is vanity. All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again. Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?" (Eccl. iii. 19-21.)

Any impartial reader must know that it is not the

Any impartial reader must know that it is not the object of the Book of Ecclesiastes to enter into the question of the eternal destiny of the soul. The Preacher is looking at things "under the sun," and he gives us, by inspiration no doubt, his own

experience of the inability of the resources of this world to give lasting satisfaction. God allowed him to prove the things of this world, and to record his experience for our instruction, and so he says, "I said in my heart," &c. Are we to conclude that all he "said in his heart," in his search for something satisfying, leading up to the discovery that all was vanity, was right? Certainly not. The "who knoweth" of verse 21, is not the language of faith, but of uncertainty. Later on in the book the true state of the case is given when he says, "There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit" (viii. 8), and at the close, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it," (xii. 7.) Now, if the spirit returns to God who gave it, clearly it does not cease to exist with the death of the body.

We find in Zech. xii. 1, a plain evidence that the spirit is that which God has placed within the man. "Thus saith the Lord, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him." What is here stated, is not said concerning believers only, but man in general: there is that within the body which God has formed. It is not, as some assert, merely the emotions, or something which man possesses in common with the lower animals, it is a distinct entity

formed by God Himself.

The whole testimony of Scripture on this point is most emphatic; not only as to the saved but as to the unsaved. As to the former, the apostle Paul says, contrasting his present state as in the body, with the disembodied condition, "Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better" (Phil. i. 23.) That did not lessen his hope in the resurrection state, as being better still, as chapter iii. 11, proves. Again, he looks at this body as a "tabernacle," in which we "groan," desiring to be "clothed upon" with the body of glory, which the Christian will receive at the

coming of Christ. But, in the meantime, he asserts that whilst we are "at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord." Here Scripture leaves us in no kind of doubt, for, he adds, we are "willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." (2 Cor. v. 8). There can be no possible gainsaying such a passage as this. It proves beyond a question that the condition of being "absent from the body" though not a final one, is nevertheless far preferable to being here. Nor is the being "absent from the body" in any sense a cessation of existence, or "sleep of the soul" so called; it is to be "present with the Lord."

There is no such idea in Scripture as the sleep of the soul: "sleep" is often used to express the condition after death of a true Christian, and is applied regularly to the body. Our Lord uses it in the case of Jairus's daughter: "she is not dead, but sleepeth." The Jews did not understand, for "they laughed Him to scorn, knowing that she was dead." In the case of Lazarus, the Lord employs it to explain to the disciples what He was about to do. They did not understand, any more than the Jews; and Jesus then explicitly states that what He referred to was his death—"Lazarus is dead." In the Epistles it is used as "sleeping in Jesus" or "by Jesus:" and such dead persons are called the "dead in Christ." At death our connection with this world is severed for the time being; but our spirits are "present with the Lord."

Scripture therefore is plain that there is no cessation of existence after death, in the case of the righteous; and it is just as explicit with regard to the wicked.

The Lord Jesus, who knew all that passes in the other world, draws aside the veil, in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke xvi., and permits us to look in. It is alleged that this is only a parable: granted that it is a parable; but it must be admitted that every parable spoken by our Lord was intended

to convey definite instruction for us, and the following conclusions from it cannot be gainsayed—(i.) That there is a state of blessing and of punishment after death: the beggar "died," the rich man also "died and was buried." (ii.) After their death no hint is given of a cessation of existence, but one is in a place of happiness, the other in a place of torment. (iii.) There is no possibility of passing from the one place to the other. (iv.) There is consciousness and memory in the lost condition. (v.) The word of God is a sufficient and adequate testimony to man during his lifetime on earth. It is, indeed, a most solemn testimony from the One who alone was competent to unveil the condition of man after death.

Let us now turn to chap. xx. of this same gospel, where we have an absolute statement, made by our Lord in answer to the Sadducees; who not only denied the existence of the spirit after death, but the resurrection also. As a conclusive demonstration of their error, the Lord quotes the words, "The God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." They had died hundreds of years before, as we know, but the force of the argument lies in the absolute statement which follows, introduced by the word "for"-"for all live unto Him." Now, our Lord says, "God is not a God of the dead, but of the living." He does not say "was not," as though referring to the past time of their existence upon earth; but He insists on the fact that He is God of the living to prove that, though dead as regards men, they still lived as regards God. Consequently all, whether wicked or righteous, live unto Him. Men die, it is true, their state is changed; but their existence is not annulled, for they "live unto God." Could we have proof more conclusive that while, as all admit, death reaches the body, it cannot touch the immortal soul or spirit, which must live to God? At death the

spirit returns to God who gave it.

#### HELL.

There are two words translated "Hell" in the New Testament—"Hades," answering to the Hebrew "Sheol," and "Gehenna." Hades, which means "invisible," signifies the place or state of departed spirits, the unseen world. It is temporary, because, as we learn from Rev. xx., death and Hades are "cast into the lake of fire." The scene there described is at the close of the world's history, when the wicked dead are raised, to stand before the "great white throne;" and the last of those who were in the disembodied condition having received a resurrection body; Hades, which represents that condition, ceases to exist, and being here looked on as personified, is cast into the lake of fire. \*

The other word "Gehenna," also translated "Hell" in our Bible, is never, in scripture, confounded with Hades. Out of the twelve times it is employed, it is used eleven times by our Lord Himself. The word was derived from "the valley of Hinnom," or Tophet, where the Jews offered their children to Molech, and where continual fires were kept burning to consume the refuse and pollutions out of Jerusalem. In this way it became a figure of the future judgment of the wicked. We have several allusions to this in the prophet Isaiah. In chap. xxx. 33, "For Tophet is ordained of old; yea, for the king it is prepared: he hath made it deep and large: the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it;" and in chap. lxvi. 24, "And they shall go forth, and look upon the carcases of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched; and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh."

The language here used is plainly intended to convey the thought of an enduring punishment: but

<sup>\*</sup>Cessation of existence is never applied to a *person* in Scripture: it can, of course, be applied to a state or condition in which persons are for a certain period of time.

its meaning became even more decided at a date later than the prophet Isaiah. In the words of Professor Barrows, of Andover, America—"The Greek Gehenna had come—in well-established theological usage nad come—in well-established theological usage—probably long before the beginning of the Christian era—to signify hell, i.e. the place of torment for the wicked; and this was the only sense of the word." Lightfoot, referring to the Hebrew synonym, says, "The Jews do very usually express hell, or the place of the damned, by this word, which might be shown

by infinite examples."

The manner in which the word is used by our Lord Himself is stamped with the impress of eternal duration; indeed His language as to punishment is decisive. He speaks three times at the end of Mark ix. decisive. He speaks three times at the end of Mark ix. of the danger of being "cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched" (Mark ix. 43, 45, 47.) "Everlasting fire," He says, was "prepared for the devil and his angels." He does not say "prepared" for men, though, indeed, we read of two men being the first to be cast in there, namely, the beast and the false prophet (Rev. xix. 20.) But He speaks of "everlasting fire," and "everlasting punishment" in the same part of the chapter as He speaks of "everlasting life;" and He lays the same emphasis on the word "everlasting" in all three cases.

The various schools of those who deny eternal punishment may try to explain away Scripture but

punishment may try to explain away Scripture, but to the honest mind there is no possibility of evading the obvious meaning of such statements as, "a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." (repeated in Matt. xiii. 42 and 50, "everlasting fire" (Matt. xviii. 8; xxv. 41); "the fire that never shall be quenched" (Mark ix. 43, 45); "The heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men' (2 Peter iii. 7.) Solemn as the fact is, it would be hard to find language which would convey more conclusively to the mind the thought of eternal punishment.

#### DESTRUCTION.

Annihilationists have expended much effort in endeavouring to prove that "destruction" is synonymous with "annihilation" or ceasing to exist, and most of their quotations on the subject are from the Old Testament. We will now make some quotations, substituting the word "annihilation" for "destruction," in order that the reader may see how untenable such an argument is. Pharaoh's servants say, "Knowest thou not yet that the land of Egypt is annihilated" (Exodus x. 7): "My people are annihilated for lack (Exodus x. 7): "My people are annihilated for lack of knowledge" (Hosea iv. 6): "The land of thy annihilation, shall even be two narrow by reason of the inhabitants" (Isaiah xlix. 19): "O Israel, thou hast annihilated thyself; but in me is thine help" (Hosea xiii. 9.) It is quite clear that cessation of existence is not the thought intended: indeed "destruction" or "destroy," in the Old Testament, is largely used for temporal judgment upon earth, or a cutting off from the land of Israel, where the question of the oternal destiny of the soul is not reject. question of the eternal destiny of the soul is not raised at all. This is most important to bear in mind. God's displeasure and judgment in this world is indeed a very solemn thing; and this is habitually the force of death and destruction in the Old Testament. It is present jndgment in this world, implying, no doubt, eternal misery, but without raising the question of what comes after death. It is on a misuse of such passages that much error has been built.

In the New Testament several words are translated "destruction" or "destroy." Of these the one most frequently employed (apollumi) is often translated "perished" or "lost"—for example, "the lost sheep of the house of Israel: "the Son of man is come to save that which was lost." These, and many other passages might be adduced to show that a cessation of existence is not involved—it is translated "marred" in the passage "the bottles are marred" (Mark ii. 22.)

A very sound writer says on this subject, "'Destruction' does not signify ceasing to exist, but ruin, as to the state in which one subsisted." Again, "Not only do the two systems of destructionism and universalism denounce each other as utterly unscriptural, but there are two parties among Destructionists. One holds death to be death, and the end of man as of a beast. They are consistent, at any rate; for if we cease to exist, we cease to exist. But then, if scripture be owned at all, we read 'after this the judgment:' and so the other party bring them up again, though saying death is ceasing to exist, and then destroy them gradually in the fire; though, as I have said, what for it is hard to tell, if they have only animal life; or who is raised is hard to tell, if they have ceased to exist. But there is the judgment after death; that is they have not ceased to exist at all. The soul is a distinct thing; it survives the body: 'All live unto Him.'"

#### RESURRECTION AND JUDGMENT.

There are two resurrections spoken of by our Lord in John v.—the resurrection of life, and the resurrection of judgment. These are wholly distinct in character: and as we learn also from Rev. xx., they are distinct in time. All must participate in either one or other of these two resurrections. Now it is perfectly clear that if people participate in a resurrection of judgment, wholly distinct from, and even contrasted with, the resurrection of life, and separated from it by a period of at least a thousand years, there can be no possibility of such having any chance of being saved after death.

Chapter xx. of the Revelation lays down that those who share in the "first resurrection" (elsewhere called "the resurrection of life," and "the resurrection of the just,") live and reign with Christ a thousand years. What about the "rest of the dead" who

"lived not until the thousand years should be finished?" (verse 5, R.V.) The answer is given in verse 12, "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God." They certainly continued to exist, seeing that they are raised and judged. They are responsible, and as such are judged out of those things which are written in the books, "according to their works." Finally, the issue of this judgment is the "lake of fire." It is well to note that the "second death" here spoken of does not imply a cessation of existence in any way. The first seven verses of chapter xxi. give us the eternal state of blessing for the saved; verse 8 gives us the eternal state of punishment for the lost; "but the fearful, and unbelieving.... shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death." Remark, it does not say "which causes the second death," but which is the second death: or as we read in chap. xx. 14, "This is the second death (even) the lake of fire" (R.V.) It is not annihilation or ceasing to exist, but eternal punishment.

#### ETERNITY AND ETERNAL.

With reference to the words translated "eternity" and "eternal" in the New Testament, aion and aionios; much has been said to show that these words do not really mean "eternal" in the ordinary sense of that word, but "age-long," or "for the age."

Now it has been shown by authorities well worthy to be heard, that they were used by Greek writers contemporary with the apostles, in the most unlimited sense: and that no other words in that language would suit equally well to convey this meaning.

It is not our purpose here to do more than state the matter as it has been dealt with by competent authorities, and then to draw the reader's attention to some passages of Scripture in which these words are

some passages of Scripture in which these words are employed.

Eternity, unchangeable, carrying with it no "was" nor "will be," is the proper force of the word aion. That it can be applied to the whole existence of a thing, so that nothing of its nature could be known or seen before or after, is true: but its regular meaning is eternity, and eternal. To say that it does not mean this in Greek, as Jukes, and Farrar and S. Cox, and those they quote affirm, is a denial of the statements of the very best authorities we can have on the subject. If Plato and Aristotle and Philo knew Greek, what these others say is false. That "eternal" is the proper sense of aionios in Scripture, is as certain as it is evident. No one who has examined the use of aion in Greek, questions that it is used for life, or the whole period of a man's existence till he breathes his last; nor that it may be used for ages or periods, looked at as a whole. The question is, does it not properly mean eternal or for ever, and that where age and age-long would have no sense? Would it make sense to translate this word "for the age" in the following passage referring to the fig-tree; "Let no fruit grow on thee for the age;" or, as to blasphemy against the Holy Ghost: "Hath not forgiveness to the age;" or again, of the one who drinks the living water given by Christ: "shall not thirst for the age;" and in John x. 28: "shall not perish to the age;" or in 1 Peter i. 23, 25: "The word of God, which liveth and abideth to the age."? In these, as in many

other instances, "to the age," would give no sense.

The following remarks are made on this point in a series of papers, written by eminent scholars, and published in America:—"The orators and historians in their still more popular style and on political themes use τὸν αίῶνα and είς τὸν αίῶνα, just as we do for ever, to express duration without any assignable or conceivable end." "I find aiōn and its adjective form aiōnios, used one hundred and seventy-nine times in the New Testament. A word so often used must become familiar, and its meaning must be clearly established.

What then does it really mean? Let anyone take the English word 'eternal' or 'everlasting,' or the phrase 'for ever' or 'for ever and ever,' and he will find in every instance that the idea of these English expressions is conveyed in Greek with little variation by aion or aionios. I find no word in the New Testament which denotes strictly and specifically the idea 'eternal' or 'eternity,' except aion and its cognate forms. The strongest form of expression in the New Testament, and in fact in the Greek language, ever used to denote unending existence, is that combination of aion, translated 'for ever and ever.' I cannot conceive of any word, or any combination of words, in the Greek language, or in any other language, which will convey the idea of eternal duration in the future, with more freedom from ambiguity and misconception, or with more emphasis than this one."

force of these words were true.

We find this word (aionios) applied to God in several passages. In the Septuagint or Greek translation of the Old Testament, we read in Gen. xxi. 38, Abraham called on the name of the Lord, "the Eternal God:" again Isaiah xl. 28, "the Eternal God, the God that formed the ends of the earth, shall not hunger nor be weary, and there is no searching of

His understanding." In the New Testament we have, "according to the commandment of the Eternal God." (Rom. xvi. 26); and in Hebrews ix. 14, "the Eternal Spirit." As applied to the divine Persons of the Godhead, clearly no limitation can be brought in: the word must mean "eternal" in the fullest sense. In Psalm xc., we read, "From everlasting to everlasting, thou art God," with which we may compare the ascription of praise to God at the end of Jude, "glory, majesty, dominion and power, before all time, and now, and for evermore" (R.V.); and in Rev. xv., God lives "unto the ages of ages," or for eternity.

In order to show that the same word "eternal" is applied both to the blessings of the saved and to the punishment of the unsaved, some instances of passages where it is used are placed in parallel columns, as

follows:--

Eternal life.
Eternal habitations.
Eternal weight of glory.
Eternal salvation.
Eternal glory.
Eternal redemption.
Eternal inheritance.

Eternal fire.
Eternal punishment.
Eternal judgment.
Eternal destruction.

Eternal kingdom.

Is it possible, consistently with fair and just exposition, to assign a limited force to the word in the one class of passages and not in the other? "The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. iv. 18)—this passage is in itself sufficient, by reason of the force of the contrast between "temporal" and "eternal," to show that the latter is incontestably used in the most unrestricted sense. The only possible conclusion is that if there is no eternal punishment there is also no eternal life; and, in fact, nothing eternal at all, in which case the whole fabric of Christianity would come to the ground.

#### IMMORTALITY AND ETERNAL LIFE.

The doctrine of "conditional immortality," as it is called, is to a great extent founded on the confusion which arises from not seeing the distinction between these two things. Eternal life is not merely eternal existence, nor is it a perpetuation of the life with which man is born into this world. As a fact, the believer, who receives eternal life, is just as mortal after he receives it as before; if Christ does not come he may die at any time. On the other hand, when he does die he cannot lose the eternal life he has, and which does not die, much less cease to exist; it would not be eternal if it did.

Eternal life, as Scripture presents it, so far from being a mere perpetuation of our natural life, is a wholly new and distinct thing, given us in Christ, and it is the present possession of all who believe in Him; according to His own word, "Verily, Verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath eternal life." (John vi. 47); "He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath eternal life, and shall not come into judgment; but is passed from death unto life." (John v. 24). Eternal life is not a prize held out to be attained; it is the "gift of God," and a gift is never a matter of attainment. It is, indeed, the life which dwelt ever in the Eternal Word, and which was "promised before the world began." (Titus i. 2): it must therefore be quite distinct from immortality.

It is here necessary to draw attention to the fact that two words are translated "immortality" in our Authorised Version, (Aphtharsia and Athanasia): the former of these has been correctly rendered "incorruption" or "uncorruptness" in the Revised Version. Now when it is said, in Rom. ii. 7, that God will "Render to them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honour and incorruption, eternal life," it is not at all the same as saying that,

we are to seek for immortality, as heathen philosophers and others were accustomed to do, according to their meaning of it, but we are to look forward for that change of which the apostle speaks, when this corruptible body shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality. Again, in 2 Tim. i. 10, it is said that Christ "brought life and incorruption (not immortality) to light through the gospel" (R.V.)

The distinction between immortality and eternal life

has been very well drawn by a competent writer, and may be summarised as follows:—Save as to the immortality of God, where the word declares of course that death has no part, mortality and immortality, as to men, are applied solely to the body, and have nothing to do with eternal life. Eternal life is what we have in the Second man (Christ): the question is, our condition as descended from the first man, Adam. Thus, we read of this "mortal" putting on "immortality"; and, again, "mortal" as applied to our existence here in flesh, "the life of Jesus . . . in our mortal flesh." Other places where the word is found are, Rom. vi. 12, "mortal body"; viii. 11, "mortal bodies"; 1 Cor. xv. 53, "this mortal," (also verse 54) where it is in connection with the resurrection or changed body; 2 Cor. iv. 11, "our mortal flesh;" chap. v. 4, where we have "that what is mortal may be swallowed up of life." The apostle is here speaking of the tabernacle we are groaning in the body. Mortality is always applied to the body; immortality is put in contrast with mortality, or the present mortal condition. There is no such thing as mortality of the soul. 1 Cor xv. 53, 54, is the change from a mortal to an immortal state—"this mortal must put on immortality." Otherwise, the word is used only of God, in 1 Tim. vi. 16; He is undying in nature. Mortal is applied to our present state, but is not applied to the soul at all. That God only has immortality does not affect an undying existence. conferred; for angels are not mortal, as all admit, and as Luke xx. 36, shows.

The words just referred to in 1 Tim. vi. 16, "Who only hath immortality," have been much misused to prove that no one but God has it. Now this is not at all what is meant. The apostle in speaking of God in His own nature and Being—He only has immortality in Himself, inherently and as a source for others: but He can and does confer it upon the creatures He creates. If it meant what those who misapply the words wish to teach, then the apostle himself, or any of the saved, or angels, or other beings, would not be immortal: which, of course, we know is not true.

Another misapplied passage in this connection is 2 Tim. i. 10. What is there stated is that life and incorruption (not immortality) have been brought to light by the gospel. In Old Testament times, man being still on his trial, so to speak, the time had not come for the whole truth as to his utter ruin and the fulness of God's remedy, to be brought out. But when Christ died and rose, then, in the gospel, all was fully declared. The truth of life, as to the soul, existed previously; but "incorruption" was shown in Christ's death and resurrection, in that He, though dead, did not see corruption; and in His Person it became, as the result of His death (John xii. 24), available for all who through Him enter into life, the path of life which was then opened up to Him (Psalm xvi. 11). In the gospel this is fully proclaimed. The passage says nothing in any shape or way to give colour to the false notion that the soul is not immortal.

#### THE RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS.

A certain class of passages are relied on by Universalists as proof that all men will yet be saved. In these, as in other cases, it is important to examine the context, and see what the subject in hand is.

In the chapter from which the words quoted above are taken the apostle Peter is calling on the Jews to repent and be converted, that their sins may be blotted out, so that the times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord; and that He may send Jesus Christ, whom the heavens must receive, till the times of the restitution of all things whereof God had spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. Moses had said, "A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me," &c. Any intelligent student of scripture can see that these Old Testament prophets referred, like Moses, to the future blessing of Israel under the Messiah. It was not the office or object of prophesy to enter upon the final condition of things: to this we find only the barest allusions in the case of the prophet Isaiah.

Another text frequently misapplied in a similar way is 1 Tim. ii. 6—" Who gave Himself a ransom for all,

to be testified in due time."

Now Scripture teaches that there are two aspects of the work of Christ: these we have typified in the two goats which Aaron was commanded to take on the great day of atonement (Lev. xvi.). Aaron was to cast lots on these two goats; one for the Lord and the other for the scapegoat. The one on which the Lord's lot fell was to be slain, and its blood carried within the veil and sprinkled once on the mercy seat and seven times before the mercy seat. This was the goat for atonement, or, to use a New Testament word, propitiation. After this Aaron was to take the live goat, and to lay both his hands on its head, and confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, which was to be sent away into the wilderness, bearing upon him all their iniquities into a land not inhabited.

In this ordinance we have, in the goat which was the Lord's lot, a remarkable type of the atoning work of the Lord Jesus. His blood has been presented before God, and in virtue of it, God's throne, His

majesty, has been satisfied and vindicated with regard to the whole question of sin. As a consequence, God now is righteously free to bless according to the love of His heart, and the evangelist is justified in going out with the gospel message to every living soul,

without any distinction whatever.

In the scapegoat we have quite another thing-it is, we may say, the goat of substitution, bearing away the sins that have been laid upon it, into a land not inhabited. So Christ has borne the sins-not of "all"-but of those who receive Him by faith. As Peter says, writing to believers among the Jews, "who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree:" and in Heb. ix. 27, we read "So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." It is not

here said "of all," but "of many."

In 1st Tim ii. 6, we have the world-wide aspect of the work: it is a ransom for all-available for all: but, alas, not availed of by all. In Matt. xx. 28, Christ says, He "came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many." Now here, where it is a question of substitution, we read "many," not "all:" and the preposition translated "for" differs from that employed in 1st Tim. vi. The reader's attention is drawn to the following quotation on this subject. "In Matthew xx. 28, it is written, 'Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for '-all? nay, for 'many.' There is indeed a true sense in which our Lord is a ransom for all; and the apostle speaks of it in 1st Tim. ii. 6, 'the testimony to be borne in its own seasons.' But a nice difference distinguishes the two texts. in Matthew, it is a ransom for many, we have it clearly defined. The 'for' is 'instead of'  $(\dot{\alpha}\nu\tau\dot{\iota})$ many. It is strict substitution. When, as in 1st Tim., all are in view, it is simply 'on behalf of ' $(\dot{v}\pi\dot{\epsilon}\rho)$  all. 'For' has not always the same sense in Scripture. It is the more needful to make the remark, because so

many are apt to reason, that if 'for' means one thing in one place, it must have the same force in another." We have the same preposition in 2nd Cor. v. 14, 15, as in 1st Tim. ii. 6:—" If one died for all then were all dead:" it is not at all a question of substitution, but of the state in which man was, all without exception, being dead in trespasses and sins: and this is

proved by the fact that Christ died for them.

In Rom. v. we have an instance of the use of the words "all" and "many." The bearing and scope of the "one offence" of Adam, was in judgment unto, or towards all: so with the one act of righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ accomplished in His death; it was unto,\* or towards, all for justification of life (ver. 18). In verse 19, however, where the apostle is speaking, not of the scope of the work, that is the tendency towards, or "unto" each; but of its effect or application he says "many." Adam's transgression constituted the "many" who are connected with him, sinners; so Christ's obedience in death constituted the "many" who are linked with Him, righteous. So, too, in Romans iii. 22, the righteousness of God is "unto," or "towards" all, but it takes effect "upon" all those who believe.

One might refer to many instances of this world-wide aspect of the death of Christ: for example, Heb. ii. 9, "That He by the grace of God should taste death for every man." Again, 1st John ii., "He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the whole world." Observe here that "the sins of," in italic print in the Authorised Version, should be left out. It is the same truth as is set forth in the goat for atonement or propitiation: the value and efficacy of the blood of Christ is not confined to one nation or class of people; it is presented in the gospel as going out world-wide. On the other hand, when it is a question of Christ as our

<sup>\*</sup> The same expression as in Rom. iii. 22, "unto all."

Substitute, in such a chapter as Isaiah liii., the resultof His work is limited to those who believe. Justification is on the principle of faith; and thus we read

that "He bare the sins of many."

Turning to 1st Tim. iv. 10, the apostle is there dealing with the circumstances of this present life, practical godliness and suffering for Christ's sake. So when we read that God is the "Saviour of all men. specially of those that believe," we must not suppose that the apostle is referring to the salvation of the soul. If he were, there would be no force in the latter clause of the sentence. He is speaking of the fact that he laboured and suffered reproach, because he trusted in the living God, who is the preserver of all men, but especially so of those who believe.

It is quite true that God, in the fulness of His grace, goes out to all: He "will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1st Tim. ii. 4), this is His desire for them: but, alas, how few respond to His desire! When our Lord was on earth, He wept over Jerusalem, and said, "How often would I have gathered thy children together," &c. but He is obliged to add, "and ye would not!"

#### GOD IS LOVE.

How can a God of love punish men eternally? is a question constantly urged by those who deny eternal punishment. The answer is as simple as it is farreaching; namely, we must not bring forward one part of God's character to the exclusion of another. It is most true that He is a God of perfect love; but He is also a God of infinite holiness and righteousness.

At the cross of Calvary was demonstrated, before the whole universe, God's perfect love to the sinner, and His absolute hatred of sin. Never was there. never will there be, in the history of eternity, an event so momentous as that. It stands absolutely alone.

Psalm xxii, gives us the inward feelings of the heart of Jesus as He hung there. What most pressed upon His spirit in that solemn hour was, the bearing of sin, and not the treatment He received at the hands of man, of His own people Israel, painful as that was. Infinitely outweighing all that was external, was what is expressed in the opening words, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" The true christian must look on at such scenes as this with a reverent and chastened spirit. See the Saviour in the garden; sweating, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground, as He anticipated the cross. Can we gauge the depths of those sufferings, when He was alone, forsaken of God during those three hours of darkness, bearing the accumulated guilt of sinners? Certainly we cannot. And why was He, the sinless One, forsaken upon the cross? The answer is given in verse 3 of our Psalm: Thou art holy, O Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel." The extent and depth of God's infinite holiness and righteousness can only be measured by the extent and depth of the sufferings endured by the holy Sinbearer in that awful hour, the like of which never was nor will be. Who could drain the cup of judgment which must be measured out by a God of infinite righteousness, majesty and truth, against sin? Who could meet all the exigencies of God's holy nature? None, surely, but He who, being an infinite Being Himself, both God and man, could satisfy all the requirements of God's holiness, and meet all the deep need of the sinner. The cross was the proof, the measure, of the hatefulness of sin in God's sight: while, at the same time, it was the proof and the measure of God's perfect love to the sinner. Man has, indeed, his shallow, petty thoughts about sin: but will God allow sin to go unpunished? Did He forsake His own Son for nothing? Truly it was not so.

Weighing all these solemn facts, we would say,

without fear of refutation, that the issues and results of the cross are eternal on both sides—eternal in blessing to the saved, and in punishment to the lost. So we read of "eternal judgment," "eternal damnation," "eternal punishment;" as well as "eternal life" "eternal glory," "eternal redemption," &c.

It is a false sentimentality which reasons otherwise, and invents for itself a God who looks lightly on sin. None ever spoke with greater plainness as to the eternal punishment of the wicked, than the Lord Jesus Himself, and He was the perfect expression of the love of God in this world. He spoke of "the Gehenna of fire," "the fire that never shall be quenched, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched,"-" everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels," "eternal punishment," "the damnation of hell (Gehenna)." It was He, too, who said to the Jews of His day (and the same is true of unbelievers of to-day): "If ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins," and "where I am ye cannot come." He who spoke "with authority," and ever spoke absolute truth, not only taught, in the most specific and emphatic words, the eternal punishment of the wicked, as well as the eternal blessing of the saved, but this doctrine underlies the whole of His teaching, in the spirit as well as in the letter, and there is nowhere a hint given either of salvation after death, or of a cessation of existence in the future.

As the acceptance of doctrines which deny eternal punishment often leads to unsound views as to the truth of the Person of Christ, the following pages have been added on that subject.

## THE DEITY OF CHRIST.

THE truth of the Person of Christ—God and man—is the foundation on which christianity rests. The efficacy and value of His work of atonement, His priesthood, His present and future service, all is bound up with His eternal Deity and His true humanity.

#### "THE WORD WAS GOD."

It is to be feared that, in the present day, many are not at all clear as to the truth that the Lord Jesus, who became man in divine love and grace, and was born in this world, pre-existed eternally as God before the world was. This great truth is set forth at the beginning of John's Gospel, in a few brief sentences, fencing round on every side the glory of His Person, and in such a way as only the Spirit of God, who

inspired the words, could do.

"In the beginning was the Word." This must not be confounded with the opening words of John's Epistle—"That which was from the beginning"—where the word "beginning," as the context plainly shows, refers to the moment when He was "manifested" in flesh. The subject of the Epistle is that which was to be seen in Him from the beginning of His manifestation in this world. The words in John's Gospel carry us back to a point anterior to the narration given in Genesis i., "In the beginning God created," &c., where we have the beginning of creation. Look back as far as we may before creation, the "Word" existed. It is not said in John i. 1, that He "came to be," but He "was." His pre-existence

was eternal. The fact that He was a distinct Person of the Trinity is then presented; the Word was "with God:" His nature was divine, for the Word was God." Absolute Deity is therefore predicated of the Son, the Word. Was there any point in eternity when this was not true? No; for our text answers, "He was in the beginning with God:" His personality was distinct and eternal, as His nature was divine. Creation is then brought in, but dismissed in a few brief sentences, which show that it is attributed, in the most positive way, to His handiwork. Mark how strong and exclusive the statement is not only did all things receive being through Him, but without Him not one thing was made which was made.

The same truth is taught in Colossians i.—"By Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are on earth . . . . all things were created by Him and for Him; and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist." Here then He is seen as Creator—not, of course, to the exclusion of the Father and the Holy Spirit, who are equally God but the work of creation is again attributed to the Son. To create is a divine prerogative; we have therefore an additional evidence of His Godhead. The statement is very complete, because all was created not only "by" Him, but "for" Him. These two truths, "by Him" and for "Fim," are blessedly compressed into one word of double meaning in Proverbs viii. 30, where the text which gives "one brought up with Him," may be equally correctly translated "His workman," as the previous verses, and indeed the whole chapter prove. As has been pointed out as to Col. i. 16, it was "by" Him, in the first place, as the One whose power characterised the act of creation; secondly, He is looked at as the active instrument "through" whom it was done; and, finally, as the ultimate object "for" whom all was created. The Epistle to the Hebrews bears witness to the same truth. God who spoke formerly,

by the prophets, has spoken to us by His Son, "by whom also He made the worlds." The act of creating necessarily involves the pre-existence and divine competence of the Creator: and not only does He create, but He upholds that creation in its divine order—"He upholds all things by the word of His

power."

We find another testimony to the truth of His pre-existence as God in Philippians ii., and all the more striking, because that Epistle is not occupied with the exposition of doctrines. "Christ Jesus; who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God": the being on an equality with God was not, for Him, anything to be grasped at, as not being already possessed—and why? for the very simple reason that He "was God." Pre-existing ever in the "form of God," He was pleased to take upon Him, voluntarily and in divine love, the "form of a bondservant," but the very act of His voluntary humiliation proves and necessarily involves the fact that He was God. So, He could say to the Jews, "before Abraham was [or was born] I am," Here He takes the place and title of Jehovah, the Supreme Being; and the Jews fully understood the import of His words; for, in their unbelief and anger, they took up stones to cast at Him. Again, in the prophet Micah, chap. v., in connection with the birth in time at Bethlehem of Him who was to execute the judgment which should eventually fall upon the Jews consequent on their rejection of Him, we get the title, "Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting"-a statement which could only be predicated of a divine Being.

#### "THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH."

The language of John i. 14, conveys the truth with that accuracy which marks all Scripture. We have already referred to verse 1, "the Word was God";

now we come to verse 14, "the Word was made [or became] flesh." He took into union with Himself another nature, which He had not before, namely, manhood: He "took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." Neither the Father nor the Holy Spirit have thus "manifested": it is the Son who thus humbled Himself and took this lowly place. Alas that men, for whom He came, should take advantage of His voluntary humiliation to give free rein to heartless speculations as to His Person! But how vain are, and have been in all ages, the petty efforts of man's mind to penetrate the mystery or comprehend the Being of the Eternal Son revealed in human form! Jesus Himself says, even at the moment when rejected and set at naught by men, "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father." Truly man He was, born of the virgin, "made of a woman, made under the law," so born in order to accomplish the work of redemption, "to redeem them that were under the law," to "destroy him that had the power of death," delivering those who were in bondage and making propitiation for the sins of the people as a merciful and faithful High Priest. But even were it possible for the wisest or the greatest or the holiest of men, the Father has foreclosed the door of research by those simple yet blessed words "No man knoweth.". We may believe many things about Him, so far as we are taught of God and led of the Holy Spirit; but the Person of Him who "was God" and who "became flesh" is inscrutable; none could know Him, but the Father only,

But there is more; we are dependent on Him for a knowledge of the Father. The Lord adds "neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son is pleased to reveal Him." It is at His good pleasure alone that the Father is revealed. Could such things be said of anyone less than God? His Deity is none the less assured to faith now that

He has become man. Nay, further, the power and joy of faith as well as the communion to which we are called, depends upon, and flows from, the

inscrutability of His blessed Person.

The inspired writer in Hebrews x. quoting from Psalm xl. carries us back into those bygone ages, before the world was, and reveals what then formed the subject of the counsels of the Godhead. Wonderful indeed is our privilege to be admitted to hear such converse relating to the blessing of men. Here, then, the Son, the second Person of the Holy Trinity, undertook to do the will of God, in the body prepared for Him; taking thus the place of the obedient one, "mine ears has thou opened"; or, as we read in Isaiah l. "He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learner. The Lord God hath opened my ear, and I was not rebellious," &c. God's will, which was that we should be sanctified and saved, could not find its expression towards us, unless a work were accomplished adequate to meet His holy and just demands. Who could accomplish such a work, or absolutely carry out that will? No mere creature was competent for it. It pertained alone to the blessed Son of God who, taking the place of perfect obedience, took the body prepared for Him. Who else could offer a sacrifice sufficient to meet, not only the sins of one person, but the accumulated guilt of a lost world; a sacrifice the efficacy of which would extend back to Adam, and forward till every trace of sin shall be taken away from the whole universe? We may truly say that the great truth of His Person—His eternal Deity and His spotless humanity—is the basis on which rests the work of redemption; and without it there could be no redemption, no true offering for sin.

According to the Gospel of Matthew, at His birth, His name was to be called Jesus, "for He shall save His people from their sins." Here, in connection with the title "Jesus," the people, Israel, are called "His"

people, for He is indeed Jehovah the Saviour. In fulfilment of Isaiah vii. he is named "Emmanuel," a name addressed to Him by those who learn that God

is with His people.

The Gospel of Mark, which specially presents Him as the Servant, opens with the title "Jesus Christ, the Son of God," and before chapter i. closes, we find Him touching the leper and saying "I will; be thou clean." Instead of defilement being communicated to Him, that touch imparted immediate cleansing, a further proof that it was Jehovah who was there. Luke gives us in chapter i. the titles "Jesus," "Son of the Highest," "Son of God"; and in chapter ii. "a Saviour," which is "Christ," "the Lord" (or Jehovah). Peter's confession of Him (Matt. vii) the morals of the reconstant of the Text. (Matt. xvi.) the result of the revelation of the Father to him, is very full and complete. The Lord had spoken of Himself under the title of "Son of man" when He asked the question, "whom do men say that I the Son of man am"? Then pressing it on the disciples He drew forth the answer, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." To be the Son of man, He must be truly man; but He is also the Christ, the anointed Messiah, and the Son of the living God: His Deity is as strongly affirmed, even in the synoptic Gospels as they are called, as His humanity.

The main object in view in the Gospel of John, is to show how the Father was revealed in the Son, who was refused and rejected by His own people. Here, then, while Jesus always takes, and never leaves, the place of dependence and obedience—the place which truly and properly belongs to man in perfection according to God's thoughts—His Deity and absolute equality with the Father shine out all through. He says in chap. v. "My Father worketh hitherto and I work." The Jews clearly understood the import of His words, for in their blind unbelief, they sought to kill Him because He "said also that God was His

own Father, making Himself equal with God."

It has been falsely asserted that the expression "Son of God" is to be understood in a subordinate sense, as indicating that Jesus by word and act sought to inculcate the moral qualities of God—love, righteousness, holiness, &c.: but a soul "taught of God" (John vi. 45) and subject to what is written, must admit that the great point set forth with unmistakable simplicity and certainty is identity of nature and Being with the Father, with God. While He never acted independently of the Father, He could say, "What things soever He [the Father] doeth, these also doeth the Son in like manner." Could anyone but One who was a divine co-equal say that He did whatever the Father did and in like manner? Certainly not, even though unbelief on the part of the Jews then, or of Christendom now, may say many things to the contrary. And further, how could the Father's co-operation with Him be admitted unless He were truly and eternally the Son in the Father's bosom? "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him," He says (John vi. 44, 65). The sense of what God Himself is as a divine Being must vanish from the soul who calls in question or extenuates the Lord's statement. Either it was true or it was not. If not, there is no gospel, no salvation for anyone. If it is true, every testimony of God to the glory of the Person of the Son remains in its full and blessed force for the believing soul; and the knowledge of God is eternal reality which, in the believer, is the perennial fountain of his joy. The true christian can say in simple faith "we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life." Scripture declares, in the most solemn manner, that he who does not accept the Son as such, in the fullest and most absolute way; he who "goeth forward" beyond the true doctrine of

Scripture, "and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ," "hath not God" (2nd John 9); and he who "denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father." (1st John ii. 28).

Again, in chapter v. of John's Gospel, the Son is associated with the Father in quickening: but Jesus says also, "the Son quickeneth whom He will." He does it in His own sovereign right as the divine Son, but He gives eternal life to those whom the Father gives to Him. (John xvii. 2). Here again is the same divine co-operation in will and life-giving power. In jndging, however, He is alone, for the Father has committed all judgment to the Son, and all men must honour the Son even as they honour the Father.

In chapter x. we read "I and my Father are one." Who else but the only-begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, and who knew the secrets of that bosom concerning His sheep, as well as all else, could so speak? At the close of His public ministry, as given us in chapter xii., the inspired writer quotes the prophet Isaiah, who speaks of the glory of Jehovah, and applies it directly to Jesus: "These things said Esaias, when he saw His glory, and spake of Him." This is an unquestionable proof that Jesus was Jehovah.

It is ever the object of the Holy Spirit to glorify Christ; while, at the same time, so to present Him as to meet the peculiar need of the Christian, in whatever state he may be. We have an instance of this in the Epistle to the Colossians. At Colosse the special danger into which the saints were likely to fall, was that of losing hold, in the soul's experience, of Christ the Head, and getting occupied with philosophy on the one hand, or tradition on the other. Hence the Spirit of God dwells specially on the personal glories of Christ, "For in Him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." Here the word "Godhead" means, not simply what is divine in character (compare Acts xvii. 29 and Romans i. 20) but Godhead in the fullest and most absolute sense

The Hebrew christians, in another way, were in danger of losing sight of the personal glory of Jesus, their Messiah, through being pre-occupied with earthly desires and hopes, and thus turning back to Judaism. The Epistle therefore opens by presenting in the completest manner, the glory of the Son, the Creator, superior to angels, and the object of their worship. God "makes" His angels spirits, but to the Son He says, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever," &c. In this quotation from Ps. xv., even in the days of His flesh in this world, where He had loved righteousness and hated iniquity, He is owned by God, as God. ness and hated iniquity, He is owned by God, as God. The next quotation is even more remarkable. The title "God" had sometimes been applied to angelic powers, magistrates and rulers as representing God's authority—"I said, ye are gods"—but the title "Jehovah" never was applied to anyone but the one only living and true God (Deut. vi. 4; Jer. x. 10, and compare 1st Thess. i. 9). Now not only is this title distinctly applied by the Holy Spirit to Jesus in the quotation from Ps. cii., but we find in this same quotation another divine title, elsewhere used in the first person as of God speaking here addressed first person as of God speaking, here addressed directly to Christ in the second person, "Thou art the Same."\* In this most remarkable Psalm, the afflicted One pours out His plaint before Jehovah. He is seen as utterly cast down and abased, because of Jehovah's indignation and wrath: and He contrasts His own position with the unchangeableness of Jehovah (ver. 12). He speaks of the future blessing of Israel, when the affections of the godly remnant for the dust of Zion would be renewed; and when Zion should be re-established under the Messiah, when He "will appear in His glory." But how could He bring in the future blessing of Zion if His days were shortened and Himself cut off? The divine

<sup>\*</sup> See Deut xxxii. 39; Isaiah xli. 4; xliii. 10; xlvi. 4; xlviii. 12—often rendered "I am HE."

answer of Jehovah above, to the lowly sufferer on earth, brings out blessedly the glory of His Person—"And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands: they shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the Same, and thy years shall not fail." In this Psalm, the terms He applies to Jehovah God in verse 12, when speaking in His position as the humbled One, are, in turn, applied to Him by Jehovah in verses 24 to 27. Whatever might have been the depths of His humiliation, He was none the less the "Lord," or "Jehovah;" and when all creation shall have passed away, then He, the Eternal, the Creator, shall abide for ever. We have the same truth in Zechariah xiii.; where we find that the One who is smitten by Jehovah's sword, is none less than "Jehovah's fellow"—His co-equal.

In connection with the fact of His having come of the seed of David according to the flesh (Rom. i. 3), He is declared to be "Son of God with power." He who came of Israel as concerning the flesh, is "over all, God blessed for ever. Amen," (Rom. ix. 5). It is worthy of note that these simple yet forcible affirmations of His Deity, are found in passages which speak of His human relationships with Israel. Compare with this Micah v. 2, already referred to. In Scripture there is no effort to prove the Deity of Christ. It carries from first to last, to every soul taught of God, the conviction that He was God. The blessed truth revealed and insisted on is that He

"became flesh," in order to be the Saviour.

John, in his Epistle, identifies together God and Christ in such a manner as to pass continually from the one to the other, as it were imperceptibly, in the same sentence; the natural antecedent of "Him" being now God, now Christ. For example in chapter ii. 28, &c.—" And now, little children, abide in Him,

(Christ).... If ye know that He is righteous, (Christ), ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him, (God). Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us that we should be called the children of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not. (Christ). Beloved, now are we the children of God. . . . . . but we know that, when He (Christ) shall appear, we shall be like Him," &c. To know "Him that is from the beginning" is to know God revealed in the Son. Could the apostle thus speak unless the Son were God equally with the Father and the Holy Spirit? Although in grace He took a place inferior to the Father, as touching His manhood, so that He could say "My Father is greater than I"; yet, He also took the place of absolute equality, for He says "all things that the Father hath are mine." The Epistle of John closes with the statement, "He [that is his Son Jesus Christ] is the true God and eternal life": in the gospel the Lord uses these same words "the true God," as applied to the Father, in addressing Him.

Turning, lastly, to the book of Revelation, we find in chapter i. the term "which is, and which was, and which is to come," applied to the Supreme God in verse 4; where in verse 8 it is applied also to Christ, whom every eye shall see. And the title "Almighty," in chapter i. 8, is applied to Christ, who in chapter xxii. 13, says "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end; the first, and the last." This latter we may connect with Isaiah xli. 4, "I the Lord (Jehovah) the first, and with the last; I am He": where this connection furnishes an additional proof that He is indeed Jehovah Himself. The same interchange is true of the title "Ancient of days," which, in Daniel vii. is applied to God in verse 9, and to Christ in verse 22; where it is said that He "came"

(see verse 13).

Many volumes might be written on this all-important subject, but it is not our purpose here to follow

out further these great foundation truths of the Christian faith. The truth of Christ's Person is interwoven with the whole structure of both the Old and New Testaments. We may trace the path of Jesus walking through this world in all the lowly grace that made Him always accessible to all who were in need or sorrow, having come near to us in divine and perfect love; manifesting God in His goodness, taking the form of a bondservant; yet, to faith, the glory of His Person as the only begotten Son, co-equal with the Father—a fact indeed of which He was always fully conscious-pierces through the veil of His humiliation and lets us see Who it was who was there. It was none less than God manifested in flesh, the Eternal, Jehovah, before whom the Seraphim cover their faces and cry, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory."

F. G. B.

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