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I. THREE MALIGNED THEOLOGIANS.

Dr. John A. Broadus was fond of telling how his father proved, from the Bible, "there is no God." Calling his son to him and placing his finger over the first line of the 14th Psalm it read, "there is no God." The boy was satisfied, the Bible said it, and that ended it. When his father removed his finger it read, "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God." It has occurred to us that this is not an unfair illustration of the manner of proof offered in the discussion now pending regarding infant salvation. We wish to set this forth particularly in reference to John Calvin, Dr. William Twisse and Jonathan Edwards.

Calvin formulated and left to the world a system of theology; the sweep of this subject should have corrected what was believed by many, owing to the bearing of certain great doctrines of the Bible on infant salvation, independent of their relation to theology as a whole.

We propose to show from Calvin's writings that he states in language as unmistakable as "there is no God," that infants are condemned, and to prove from the context that the declaration is as foreign and untrue to his mind regarding those dying in infancy, as the above declaration is to the mind and context of the Bible.

These men wrote in times of controversy and much of their writing is controversial and the figure of hypothesis is frequently used. In proving the justice of God's decrees, hypothetical sentences are used too severe not to be rep-

VI. THE HARD DOCTRINES AND THE WORDS OF ETERNAL LIFE.

I.

Jesus preached a sermon one day on the Bread of Life. In it he very plainly taught the doctrine of the Atonement. Many of his disciples, when they heard it, said, "This is an hard saying; who can hear it?" From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then Jesus said to the twelve, "Will ye also go away?" Peter, always spokesman, answered for them, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."

The congregations to which Jesus preached are very much like the congregations to which the Word of God is preached to-day. There are to-day as then the hostile hearers, who are always looking for something in the Bible to justify their unbelief. Then there is another class like those who for a while heard him gladly, but afterward walked no more with him. There are some things in the Bible that they like very much. Things easy to understand, things pleasant to their feelings, things that do not shock their prejudices, for a while they hear gladly. They are eager for the words of eternal life. They like sermons on the love of God, the joy of the Christian life, and the hopes of heaven. But when they read or hear those things in the Bible which perplex the understanding, which are inconsistent with their prejudices, they say, "This is an hard saying, who can hear it?" Some of them, like those disciples, go back and walk no more with Jesus. They become skeptics. Others, who do not wish to lose the words of eternal life, which the Bible contains, simply reject or ignore its hard doctrines. They expurgate the Bible. They believe what they wish to believe. If they can they will explain away the plain meaning of the Bible, and deceive themselves into thinking that they have got rid

of its mysteries. If they cannot do this, they will simply ignore or forget them. They organize themselves into churches and frame creeds from which all the hard doctrines of the Bible are carefully expunged. We may concede that some of this feeling is due to unnecessarily harsh and disproportionate statements of Bible doctrines in human creeds and sermons, but the real objection of many is, not to the creed statements of the doctrines, but to the doctrines themselves. If it be true that our creeds do not correctly express the teachings of God's Word, then by all means, let them be changed. But let the reviewers or framers of new creeds be sure they are right; let them take heed lest, in expunging the hard things in the creeds they expunge the hard sayings of Christ.

But there is another class of readers and hearers like Peter and the disciples. Some of these sayings of Christ, some of these doctrines of the Bible are just as hard to them as they are to others; but they have settled this point once for all, that they believe and are sure that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, that he alone has the words of Eternal Life, and that the Bible is his Word. They believe that he speaks through that word with the voice of authority; they know that if they believe him in one thing they must believe him in all; that if they would hear his smooth sayings, they must hear his hard ones too; that they cannot reject his hard doctrines without rejecting his words of eternal life.

So they submit their minds and wills to his. They believe whatever he teaches, whether they like it or not.

Only in such submission to the mind and will of God can rest be found. But this state of mind is often not attained without severe conflict. Such conflict is not necessary, and some of God's people never know it. But the mysteries of the Bible sometimes perplex the most sincere and humble students of it. What the agony of this mental and spiritual struggle is, only those who have felt it know. The writer speaks from the sympathy of personal experience. While

a student of theology in the seminary, little trouble was felt on this score. The sinner was an abstract notion, and his eternal destiny could be reasoned out by a process as purely intellectual as that of finding the value of an unknown quantity in an algebraic equation. The Calvinistic system was logical, and that was enough. But when to that pastor the sinner became his own loved friend, or was bound to the best of his people by the closest ties, it was a very different matter. The eternal loss of a soul was a thing too awful to contemplate. The burden of the cross was too great for human strength to bear. Then came the doubts and the prolonged agony of conflict. First came the questioning of single doctrines, and the effort to find relief from them in the Bible. The appeal was made from the creed to the Bible. But in the main the higher court sustained the lower. Except by a process of special pleading and forced interpretation which intellectual honesty would not permit, the Bible could not be expurgated of its hard doctrines. Then came the appeal from other inspired writers to the Great Teacher himself. The appeal was made from Paul to Jesus. Again the appeal was not sustained. Christ taught the hard doctrines even more plainly than his disciples. Then the appeal was made from the Bible to Nature. But the case only grew worse. Through the dark mystery of sin in the Bible shone the light of the glorious mystery of Redemption, but in the night of Nature gleamed not one ray of light. Nature's sentence was, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Conscience would not permit the escape of denying the essential reality of sin by calling it an imperfect stage in man's evolution. From a theory which in effect ascribed all sin to God as its creator, the soul shrank in horror. Nature taught all the dark mysteries of sin, but nothing of redemption. The mysteries of providence were harder than the mysteries of revelation. No relief in Arminianism, none in Liberalism, none in Rationalism, none in Agnosticism. Then, as by a lightning flash which left the darkness deeper than before, the soul saw itself standing upon the brink

of the precipice of Atheism. Outwardly it was a beautiful scene. Far beneath lay a placid river, but God was not in the stream; in the distance were the blue mountains, but God was not in the hills; in the valleys between spread the waving fields of grain, but God was not in the harvest; a soft breeze stirred the foliage, but God was not in the wind; the sky above was blue, flecked with white clouds, but God was not in the firmament; over all shone the bright sun of June, but God was not in the light. For one brief awful moment the world was empty, without God. Then in an instant, into that great empty cavern of the soul, with its insatiable yearning for God, there came rushing as a mighty wind to fill its void, the lost sense of God's presence. O, how the whole earth and sky changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye! The gladness came back to the song of the birds, the sunlight danced with joy upon the ripples of the stream, the breeze was laden with the murmur of prayer, and the whole earth beamed with ineffable peace. Then was understood as never before, "In him we live and move and have our being." And with faith in God came back faith in his Word. The lesson had been taught, that between faith in God's Word and the abyss of atheism, a bottomless pit of despair, there was no logical stopping-place. There came the memory of the words of the Great Teacher, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." The hard doctrines were not explained. They were mysteries still, they are mysteries now, mysteries they will be until that time comes when we shall know as we are known, when we shall no longer see through a glass darkly, but face to face. But the soul learned to say with the Master, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." Whatever God says must be true, because God is truth; whatever God does must be right, because God is just; whatever God does or says must be wise, because God is wisdom; whatever God does must, in its consummation, be merciful, because God is love.

This essay is an attempt to set forth the process by which one soul became established in the orthodox interpretation

of God's Word. It is not written for the learned, but for those who may be perplexed by the same difficulties, especially for younger ministers. There is nothing new in the argument. But the theological unrest of today is not wholly, nor perhaps chiefly, due to new difficulties. There are new problems, arising from the advancement of modern science; these must be met by competent men in their place and time. But a large part of the discussion is centred on the old moral and philosophical objections. Since these are revived, and published in reviews and periodicals, no apology is needed for reviving old answers and publishing them where they have some chance of being read by the new generation.

It will save us a great deal of unnecessary trouble, if, at the very outset, we make up our minds that we can never expect to understand all the mysteries of Revelation. We might just as well settle this point now as later on, that some things must be received by simple faith in God's Word. It shall be my first object then to show the reasonableness of this.

There are three things to be taken into consideration; first, there is Man, who receives the revelation; second, there is God, who gives the revelation; third, there is the subject matter of revelation, Sin and Redemption.

Now from the very nature of any one of these three, any revelation must contain mysteries, hard to understand, hard to believe. I mean this, that a revelation without hard doctrines was impossible. The demands of the Bible upon faith are not arbitrary, nor are they peculiar to the Bible. Faith is necessary to all knowledge, not only in religion and theology, but in science.

First, then, let us consider the difficulties which arise from the nature of Man who receives the Revelation.

Man is of finite intelligence. That is only to say that there is an infinite range of truth beyond the grasp of his reason. Mysteries surround us, mysteries above us, mysteries beneath us, mysteries within us. There are mysteries of matter, mysteries of force, mysteries of life, mysteries of

spirit. There is not a force in nature which is understood even by the most learned scientist. He can only observe its effects, and learn some of its laws. Who can tell us why the earth is held in her place, through the centuries, by the sun? Do we understand any better than we did when we were children how the earth rests upon nothing? What is that force which makes every star in space dependent upon every other star? Gravity, answers the scientist. What is gravity? It is a force. And we are left where we began. The chemist puts two entirely different substances together; they combine and form a third substance unlike both. What is the cause of this? you ask him. Chemical affinity, he answers. What is chemical affinity? Force. A scientist has recently discovered a force whose rays will cast a shadow through opaque substances. He calls these rays "X" rays"; that is, unknown rays. But do the words light, heat, electricity tell us any more about those forces than the term X does of this new force?

Then there are the mysteries of life. What is that force which we call life? We know no more now than was known a thousand years ago. Before the mysteries of birth, decay and death we stand in awe, overwhelmed with wonder. The smallest animalcule that inhabits a globule of water is a world of mystery to us. What then must be the mysteries of the mental and spiritual world? What can the human intellect grasp of the mysteries of soul, of feeling, of knowledge, of will? Is not the saying of the old philosopher true to-day? "Then I beheld all the work of God, that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the sun; because though a man labor to seek it out, yet shall he not be able to find it; yea, further, though a wise man think to know it, yet shall he not be able to find it."

The mysteries of which we have spoken arise merely from the fact that man is a being of finite intelligence. Even if man had never sinned he must have found mysteries in Nature, mysteries in himself, mysteries in God. But these mysteries would not have been hard in the sense of being repugnant to his feelings. His knowledge would have been

limited, but it would have been correct. Upon the foundations of faith, reason might have erected a temple of knowledge which would have been, not indeed infinite, but perfect and complete.

But this is not the worst of it. As it is, man's intelligence is not merely finite, but every faculty of his soul has been corrupted and disabled by sin. For this reason man cannot even interpret nature correctly. Reason cannot correctly build even a finite temple of knowledge. She does not clear her foundations properly. She often mistakes prejudices for intuitions. She errs in the selection of the facts of experience which constitute the material of her edifice of knowledge. Crumbling stones are used as the keystone of many a grand arch, or the base of many a lofty column. Her architectural design is faulty. The result is often a building resting upon a rotten foundation, false in design, and composed of worthless materials. Thus it happens that much that is called philosophy proves to be mere speculation.

If then sin makes reason err in her interpretation of nature, is it any wonder that it also causes error in her interpretation of the Bible? Is it not perfectly reasonable that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned?"

But the intellectual difficulties in the Bible are not the only nor chief ones. Many of the doctrines of the Bible are hard, not because man cannot understand them, but because he does not like them.

It is not that he cannot believe, but that he will not believe. This is especially true of every doctrine in the Bible about the nature, extent and guilt of sin; and of every doctrine about God which has any relation to sin. This arises from the fact that sin has not merely weakened man's reason, but has corrupted his heart. As a result of sin, the natural mind is enmity against God. It is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. The whole corrupt nature of man rises in rebellion against the claim of sov-

ereignty on the part of his Creator. Self is enthroned in the heart instead of God. Therefore any revelation which demands an unconditional surrender of self must be repugnant to the natural feelings. But this must be taught in any revelation God might make. God is supreme, and can be limited by nothing save his own perfections.

Besides this, sin sears the conscience. It impairs man's sense of justice. It is one of the natural consequences of sin that the sinner loses his sense of the enormity of sin. He is therefore in no condition to judge of his own desert. For this reason the doctrine of the justice of God becomes hateful to him. As the criminal considers the law under which he suffers his natural enemy and hates it, as the fallen woman resents the shame which is the reward of her vice, and hates virtue, so the sinner hates justice. Every doctrine of the Bible which is based upon the justice of God must be hateful to him.

When we in our viciousness grow hard,
 O misery on't—the wise gods seal our eyes;
 In our own filth drop our clear judgments; make us
 Adore our errors; laugh at's while we strut
 To our confusion.

Thus it is that so many doctrines of the Bible are not only hard to a finite intelligence, but hard to a wayward heart, hard to a seared conscience, hard to a stubborn will.

Such are the difficulties which arise from the finite nature and fallen condition of man, who receives the revelation. The conclusion is strengthened when we come to consider the Giver of revelation. If man finds mysteries in the natural world, mysteries in himself, what must he find in God! If reason cannot comprehend matter, how shall it comprehend spirit? If man cannot understand his own finite spirit, how can he expect to understand the infinite essence of God? God is infinite, but man can think only within the sphere of the finite. God is absolute, but thought is possible to man only under conditions. God is eternal, but man's thought is conditioned by time. Man may believe in, but he cannot grasp the idea of his own immortality; how then shall he comprehend a Being who

exists through all eternity? God is immutable; his knowledge and purposes are the same throughout all eternity, incapable of change. But change is one of the conditions of human thought—thought itself involves change. These attributes of God cannot even be correctly expressed in human language. We say God is infinite, but the term is only negative. It denies limitations to God, but conveys no idea of the vast realm of his nature which lies beyond those limits. We speak of God's foreknowledge, but the term is inexact, because God's knowledge may be an eternal present. We speak of his foreordination, but this too is inexact, because all his purposes are eternal. There can be no order of time in his decrees.

But it is in the exercise of God's attributes toward man that we find the hardest doctrines. God is omnipotent, therefore the Creator and Governor of all things. But God is also holy, therefore he cannot be the author of sin. In vain does speculation try to solve this mystery. It tends on the one hand either to make God the author of sin, or to deny the reality of sin; or on the other hand to limit the power and sovereignty of God. God is infinitely just, therefore he cannot allow sin to go unpunished. But he is also infinitely merciful, and takes no pleasure in the death of the sinner. Here is another insoluble mystery. Some in attempting to solve it have represented God as hard, stern, unloving, unmerciful; others have made him out to be weak, indulgent, unjust and unholy. The Bible says that God subsists in one essence and three persons. Efforts to comprehend this mystery have resulted either in making three Gods of Father, Son and Holy Spirit; or else in denying the divinity of the Son and the personality of the Spirit.

Passing on now to the subject matter of revelation, we find the mystery growing, not more stupendous, but deeper. There are the mysteries of Sin and Redemption.

Sin is the mystery of all mysteries. It is mysterious in its nature, defying analysis or definition; mysterious in its existence, irreconcilable by human reason with the perfec-

tions of God; mysterious in its origin, a dark and strange river which has never been traced to its source; mysterious in its future, emptying at the precipice of death into a bottomless pit of despair. This is the sphinx who seizes upon the traveller in the ways of philosophy, propounds her dark enigma, and when he fails to answer, dashes him upon the rock. Said Dean Mansel, "Against this immovable barrier of evil, the waves of philosophy have dashed themselves since the birthday of human thought, and have retired broken and powerless, without displacing one fragment of that stubborn rock, or without softening one feature of that dark and rugged surface."

So when we come to the Bible we may expect to find hard doctrines about sin, and we do find them. Thousands of volumes have been written about them, grand intellects have been consumed in their study, controversies have been waged about them; but hard and strange they are still, hard and strange they will be until God chooses to explain them. Sometimes, no doubt, they have been disproportionately emphasized, sometimes harshly stated, but all attempts to make them easy or pleasant have failed.

Passing this dark phase of our subject, we reach a region of light, but of mystery still. Redemption is as great though not so dark a mystery as sin. The problem of the origin of sin is not more difficult than that of its removal. Man can no more find an answer to the question, How can God pardon sin? than to the question, How could God permit sin? The question, How can a sinful soul become sinless? is just as hard to answer as the question, How could a sinless soul become sinful? The fall, original sin, total depravity, are mysteries deep and dark; election, atonement, regeneration, sanctification, are mysteries sublime and dazzling.

We have seen now that we must expect to find mysteries in the Bible. They arise from the very nature of God, from the nature of man, from the nature of sin and redemption. No revelation could have been made from God to man on the subject of sin and redemption without such mysteries.

There must be hard doctrines—hard, not only to the mind, but hard to the natural heart. They are not mere speculative difficulties which baffle the reason, but great moral problems. The sayings of Jesus were hard, not only to those who went back, and walked no more with him, but hard to his disciples. Some of these doctrines are hard not only to the enemies of Christ, but to his friends; not only to scoffers, but to believers; not only to heretics, but to the orthodox. They were hard to Peter, hard to Paul, hard to Augustine, hard to Calvin.

Now the Bible does not attempt to explain these mysteries. That is not its purpose. It is not intended to “justify the ways of God to men.” You will not find anywhere in the Bible any apology for anything God does or says. It deals with facts, not with explanations. It teaches all that is necessary for man to know about God’s attributes and relations to man, but does not attempt to explain seeming contradictions. It affirms God’s sovereignty and man’s free agency, but does not try to reconcile them to human reason. It affirms the fact of sin, but does not explain how a holy God could permit sin, nor how a sinless creature could fall. It affirms man’s total inability to save himself from sin, and at the same time his moral responsibility for his sin, but does not explain their reconciliation. It teaches that Christ was perfect God and perfect man, but does not explain the union of the two natures. It teaches vicarious atonement, but does not seek to explain how one could suffer for the sins of all. It affirms the power of the Holy Spirit to renew man’s will, and to enable him to accept of Christ, yet affirms that man is free in his acceptance or rejection of the Gospel, giving no explanation.

Is it not plain that the Bible is designedly devoid of all effort to bring these things within the compass of human reason? Indeed, it is expressly affirmed. “The secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but the things that are revealed unto us and to our children forever.” Deut. xxxix : 29.

Is there not then a purpose in these very mysteries? May not the very hardness of some of the doctrines of the Bible serve a beneficent design? This is not far to seek. It is to teach us absolute submission to the mind and will of God. Without this submission, man could not be saved. The very essence of sin consists in self-assertion against God. The head and front of man's offending consisted in his asserting his mind and will against that of God. Sin began this way. The first temptation began with the question, "Yea, hath God said?" The first sin was the doubt of God's wisdom, love and justice in the command not to touch the forbidden fruit. To cure sin selfishness must be destroyed. Self must be conquered in every point—self-righteousness, self-love, self-wisdom, self-will. The whole scheme of salvation is adapted to this end. Man's guilt must be atoned for by a righteousness which is not his own; his will must be renewed by a power which is not his own; he must be saved by a plan of salvation which his own wisdom could not have devised, and which when revealed, he must accept on simple faith in God. The same design runs through his providential dealings with us. Many of his providences are mysteries, and must remain mysteries until the day of the revelation of all things. But if we required God to explain all his dealings with us, could we ever learn to say, "Thy will be done"? Would the Bible be in harmony with this design if it did not contain mysteries? Even if a revelation which contained nothing beyond the compass of human reason, and nothing but what is pleasant to man's natural heart, could have been given, it would have been powerless to save; because it would have left man in his self-assertion against the mind and will of God. As we must learn to submit to the providences of God whether we understand them or not, whether we like them or not; so we must learn to believe whatever God says whether we understand and like it or not. But this is just what the natural man will not do. The first and last impulse of the natural heart is rebellion against such absolute authority. Therefore the natural man receiveth not the things of God, for they are foolishness unto him.

What then? Shall we say to Jesus, "These are hard sayings; who can hear them?" Shall we go back and walk no more with him? This is the alternative which some have accepted. Finding the Bible full of things hard to understand, and harder still to like, they have turned away, to seek in some other religion, or in some system of human philosophy, a faith that is free from the mysteries of the Bible. Failing to seek aid and light where alone they can be found, in the guidance of the Spirit, they stumble along in the darkness until they are lost in the wilderness of unbelief. Sometimes they never return. Sometimes they do return, after a long and weary wandering. But even when this is the issue, such wandering is needless. It is a dangerous notion that a man must first doubt in order that his faith may be established. I think that every man who has passed through such an experience, and who, by the grace of God, has been brought back to faith, will testify that his wandering was the result of his own folly and self-conceit.

But those who turn away from the Bible because of its mysteries, will find no relief in human religions or philosophies. These mysteries or hard doctrines are not peculiar to the Bible. They belong to the very nature of the subject. Any religion or religious philosophy must deal with the subject of God and man and the relations between them, and with sin and redemption. The same reasons hold good. If God could not give a revelation free from mysteries, how much less can man frame a religion of his own which is free from them? It might be shown that for every mystery in the Bible you will find a corresponding mystery in human philosophy, but such a task would require a book.

For the sake of example and illustration, we may mention two or three of these difficult subjects, and see how they have been dealt with by human religions and philosophies.

Take first, the subject of God. What sort of gods have men made for themselves? The day of idolatry is not past.

Men no longer worship the images of their hands, but they do worship the idols of their imaginations. They do not fashion gods out of wood or stone, but they fashion gods out of dreams and speculations.

There is the pantheistic conception of God,—the All-god. The god who is not merely immanent in all things, in whom all things live and move and have their existence, but who is everything; the god who is the only substance, of whom all things are but forms of manifestation. According to this conception there is no distinction of substance or personality or identity between God and his creatures. Every person is but a fraction of the personality of God, and the sum of all creature persons is the only divine personality. It denies all distinction between right and wrong, and not only makes God the author of sin, but identifies him with sin, makes sin one of his manifestations. For, according to this view, the malice in the heart of the murderer, the lust in the heart of the adulterer, are as truly forms of God's manifestation of himself, as the sympathy in the heart of the philanthropist, or the love in the heart of the mother, or the longing for righteousness in the heart of the saint. This is a prevalent theory of God in the philosophies of to-day, which have grown out of the attempt to apply the theory of evolution to religion. Is this theory less difficult to the understanding, or less revolting to the feelings than the Bible conception of a personal God, who has created all things, who is immanent in all his works, in whom all live and move and have their being, yet who is distinct from all his creatures? And if such be the case with the more refined conception of the pantheist, what shall we say of the gross conception of the materialist, whose only God is a blind force inhering in eternal matter?

There is another fruitful source of mystery and objection to the Bible in the impossibility of reconciling to human reason the doctrine of the divine sovereignty and human responsibility. But this is not a difficulty that is peculiar to the Bible. Every religion and every philosophy has grappled with this great problem in vain. It is just as dif-

difficult to understand how the freedom of the will is consistent with the laws of thought, emotion and will, as to understand how it is consistent with the sovereignty. It is just as impossible to explain satisfactorily how a man, determined by the motives of self-interest or love of family, may yet freely sow the seed that brings him bread, as it is to explain how it is that he may freely make the choice which determines his eternal destiny. Precisely the same logic, which in theology, leads to a denial, either of divine sovereignty, or human responsibility, would, in philosophy lead to a corresponding denial either of the laws of motive and choice, or the fact of the freedom of the will. Yet the latter pair of truths are facts of consciousness, as the former are deliverances of revelation, and both must be accepted on authority from which there is no appeal. He who revolts from the authority of the Bible in this matter, must revolt from the authority of consciousness, and must surrender himself into the clutches of a remorseless fatalism.

No Christian attempts to explain it, because the Bible does not pretend to furnish any explanation of it. He believes it is a fact, because the Bible states it as a fact. Of all others, this perhaps is the most fruitful source of objection to the Bible on account of its hard doctrines. Nothing, perhaps, so staggers the faith of weak Christians as this. But have human religions or philosophies ever proposed any theory of the origin of sin less objectionable? Sin is a fact. Every religion or philosophy must deal with it. No theory can be ever entertained which denies its existence. That would indeed be a delightful solution of this terrible problem. If the human race could only awaken some bright day and find that the whole conception of sin was only a long and terrible nightmare! If we could think sin out of existence! There is a prevalent craze that disease of the human body is only the result of a condition of the mind, that to cure it it is only necessary to think that it does not exist. Of course it is absurd, yet men who would laugh at the idea of a mind-cure for disease, fondly imagine that they can cure sin by that process! But like the poor

fool who tries to think his aches away, and finds them racking him still, so the poor sinner who tries to deceive himself by imagining sin away, finds it there still, terrible, guilty, vile as ever.

There is the theory of the materialist, that sin is only one of the phenomena of matter. Now mark, this theory does not deny the fact of that which we call original sin. It admits, nay, teaches, that all men are born in sin, but attempts to rob this fact of its terrible meaning by denying that sin is sin. The distinction between right and wrong is no more than the distinction between the beautiful and the ugly, between cleanliness and filth. The flowers which delight the sense of the beautiful are the phenomena of matter; so is the virtue which wins the approbation of conscience. The filth which disgusts the sense of sight and smell is a mere condition of matter; so is the vice which shocks every moral sense. The murderer or the seducer are as much the victims of a physical organization as the blind or the cripple. The feeling with which we regard moral baseness is of the same nature as that with which we look upon physical deformity. These theories have only to be stated in their concrete form to arouse the indignation which they deserve.

Then there is that very prevalent and growing theory that sin is a mere stage in the process of evolution, from which man will one day be delivered by a process of natural law. Now notice again, this theory does not deny the fact of that which we call original sin. On the contrary it teaches it. But they call it heredity, and heredity does not sound as ugly as original sin. It, too, attempts to rob the fact of sin of its terrible significance by denying its nature. God created sin. He brought man into existence in a sinful condition and left him to work himself upward by natural laws. This theory, too, destroys all distinction between virtue and vice. The only difference between them is that virtue is a more advanced stage of evolution than vice. This theory, like the other, needs only to be stated to arouse such an indignant protest of the moral nature as its sufficient answer. The effect of the spread of

these theories would be to give free reign to vice of every description. I say, "would be," I should have said, "has been," for the prevalent materialistic and pantheistic philosophy of the intelligent and cultivated classes of today has already borne its legitimate fruit. It has percolated through society by means of popular philosophical and scientific treatises, the lecture, the religious novel, the current reviews and magazines, and all kinds of cheap literature, carrying its deadly poison to all classes of men. It has increased adultery and murder, not only among the ignorant and degraded, but among the wealthiest and educated classes; it has sown dissension in families, and increased divorce; it has accumulated vast fortunes acquired by the disregard of all the principles of honesty—in short it has corrupted society, the nation, the church, and the family, besides ruining thousands of individual souls. Are these theories of sin more satisfactory to the intellect, more pleasant to man's right feelings, than the Bible doctrines of sin?

Enough has been said to show that a man will find no relief from mysteries in human substitutes for the religion of the Bible. Forsake the God of the Bible, whom we must regard with awe, and find a god in a blind, un pitying force, which we must regard with horror; forsake the Bible because of its doctrine of predestination, and we are driven to fatalism; forsake it because of its teachings about sin, and we are driven to theories which shock every moral sense, and turn loose upon earth all the passions of hell.

If then the mysteries of the Bible are due to the very nature of Revelation; to the transcendental character of the subjects with which it deals; to the finite capacity of the human intellect; to the further corruption of man's moral judgments by sin; if further all human philosophies and ethical systems contain either the same hard doctrines or substitutes harder still; then it follows that the hard sayings can be no good reason for turning away from Christ, if we find that he has the words of eternal life. To show this is our next task.

II.

When the murmuring disciples had gone back, Jesus said to the twelve, Will ye also go away? Peter answered, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."

Is there not sense in this reasoning? May we not use it ourselves? Here is a teacher who tells us how we may be saved; here is a Book which professes to be God's message. If Christ be not the Redeemer, then there is no redeemer, if the Bible be not God's revelation, there is no revelation. If Jesus has not the words of eternal life, then no one else has them. Shall we forsake Christ then because of his hard sayings, when he alone has the words of eternal life?

"If a man die shall he live again?" This is the question of the ages. It was asked thousands of years ago. It is recorded in what may be the first of all books extant. It has been asked with increasing earnestness by every generation since. From Job to Socrates and from Socrates till the present time, the problem of the immortality of the soul has been the study of philosophers. It is a theme of surpassing interest to the unlearned as well as the wise. Savage peoples have asked this question, and have longed for an answer. This instinctive longing for immortality is co-extensive with our race.

" 'Tis Immortality, 'tis that alone,
Amid life's pains, abasement, emptiness,
The soul can comfort, elevate, and fill."

The religion which does not satisfy this longing is worthless as a religion. Men want a religion which will not only teach them how to live in this present time, but to look for that blessed hope of a life of eternal happiness beyond the grave.

Now where is the answer to this question to be found? Who has the words of eternal life? Who can assure us that there is a life beyond the grave? And if there be a life beyond, who can tell us whether, and upon what conditions, that life may be free from the ills of this life? Let us first

see if there is any answer to this question outside of the message of Christ, and whether the answer, if there is any, satisfies all the conditions.

I do not mean to say that nature is silent upon the subject of the immortality of the soul. On the contrary, it may be conceded that, apart from revelation, there is a presumption of the immortality of the soul. To see what that presumption is worth, upon what it is grounded, and wherein it is lacking, let us examine it somewhat in detail.

At first sight the testimony of the book of nature seems to be adverse to all our hopes. For the first thing that arrests our attention is the universal reign of death. There is no exception. From the lowest form of vegetable life up to man, nothing is exempt from the universal doom. Leaving the Bible aside for the present, there is not one single recorded exception. No intelligence, no virtue, no wealth, no power, no rank, makes any difference. Beside every city of the living lies a city of the dead, to which all alike must go at last. The brightest eye must be quenched, the sweetest voice be hushed in death. No voice comes back from beyond the grave to tell us whether the soul still lives. To the shallow thinker this universal reign of death, this utter, unbroken silence, would seem to be conclusive against the immortality of the soul.

But think again. This universal law of death proves absolutely nothing as to the immortality of the soul. For this testimony of physical nature is purely negative. It proves the death of the body, but proves nothing as to the soul. To make it proof of the death of the soul, it must be proved that the soul and body are identical, or that the soul is the product of the body. It does not even prove that the body may not live again, still less does it prove that the soul dies. Death, so far as we can observe its effects, merely destroys the channel of communication between soul and soul. In our present state of existence there is no means of communication between one soul and another, except through the body. If there be any other, it has not yet been clearly established. But that body, how-

ever highly and sensitively organized, is a merely material body. It is subject to all the laws of matter. Its dissolution is a purely physical process. The sight, the hearing, the voice, the touch, are the functions of material organs. The eye, the ear, the voice organs are instruments, composed of atoms of matter, just as truly as the telegraph, the telephone or any other of the wonderful inventions of modern science. The same physical laws which destroy the one may dissolve the other. When these are destroyed all communication between soul and soul must cease, unless other means of communication, of which we know nothing, be discovered. But is it valid to argue that because all communication is cut off, therefore the soul has ceased to exist? Suppose that all the cables between the eastern and western hemispheres were to be cut, would the inhabitants of one be justified in reasoning that the inhabitants of the other had ceased to exist? Before the discovery of America here were two continents full of human beings, neither of which had any idea of the other's existence, because there was no means of communication between them.

Is it unreasonable to suppose there may be a vast world of spiritual beings of which we do not know, simply because we have no means of communicating with them? Suppose that when Columbus had landed on the shores of the western continent his ships had been burned and his means of return and communication thereby cut off. Would not his friends in Spain have supposed that he and all his company had perished? Yet they would have been still living, though supposed dead. Are we justified in reasoning that those who have passed beyond the horizon of this life are not in existence still in some spiritual realm? More than that, we know that all the functions of the body may be completely suspended, all means of communication cut off for a time as completely as by death. There are well attested instances of men who have lain in a trance for days which was mistaken for death, and yet have returned to consciousness. Are we justified in reasoning that their souls had ceased to exist during that interval? And if the soul may

still exist when the body is, so to speak, temporarily dead, may it not exist when the body has been dissolved? In the one case, as in the other, the testimony as to the existence of the soul is merely negative. It is only a question of a means of communication. You have of course heard of the cases of Laura Bridgman and of Helen Keller who were deaf, dumb and blind. Who suspected the intelligence that dwelt behind those sightless eyes until a means of communication had been established? But when that means was established, it was seen that there were minds and hearts as perfect as our own, and capable of high degree of cultivation. Did not they exist before, though unsuspected even by their own parents? Suppose that they had been paralyzed in the sense of touch, thus cutting off all communication, would we have the right to presume that those souls with all their gifts did not exist?

The death of the body then, creates absolutely no presumption as to the death of the soul. It simply means that so long as we are restricted to the senses of the body we can have no communication with disembodied spirits. It may well be that they know us far better than we knew them when in the body. It may well be that it is our limitations to the faculties of sense that cuts them off from communication with us.

If it could be proved that the soul was identical with the body, that intelligence and feeling and conscience and will were mere functions of the brain; in other words if it could be proved that there is no such thing as a soul, then the death of the body would at least create a strong presumption against immortality. But from the very nature of the case, this can never be proved by physical demonstration. But it is the testimony of consciousness that the soul is a distinct entity from the body. That, then, which seemed at first sight so discouraging to our hopes of immortality, proves to be no presumption at all against it. Having settled this we are at liberty to inquire further whether nature gives us any positive testimony as to the existence of the soul after death.

There are some beautiful analogies in the physical world, which do not indeed prove the immortality of the soul, but serve to illustrate it. Take the case of the caterpillar and the butterfly. We know that the poor grub, which crawls upon its belly all its life, at a certain time crawls into the earth, and seems to die. But from that chrysalis, a new and beautiful winged creature, as unlike the worm as can be, emerges, leaving the dead shell of its old form behind. Now suppose the worm to be endowed with reason, and a longing for a life beyond. The same facts would confront him, as confront us—the apparent universal reign of death. He sees his companions crawl into the earth and die. How can he suspect that beautiful creature, flitting from flower to flower, is a creature like himself, translated into a new existence? Would he not have the same reason to argue that there is no life for the poor worm beyond the chrysalis, that we have to argue that there may be a life beyond as new and strange to us as that of the butterfly is to the caterpillar? May not God have put these things into the book of nature, to suggest to man that there may be a new and higher state of existence for him? But it is not in the physical world that man finds the strongest intimations of a future existence. It is within himself, in the structure of the mind and soul, that he finds his strongest presumption of immortality. However unlike to the superficial observer the caterpillar and the butterfly may be, the scientist finds in the anatomy of the worm the rudiments of the organs of the butterfly. So to the philosopher the soul of man contains intimations of a higher existence.

There is the instinct of immortality itself. Does the longing for immortality itself prove nothing? This argument from instinctive longing must be cautiously used, but when so used it is valid. There is a correspondence between man's constitution and his environment. For every appetite of the body, there is something external in the world of nature to gratify it; for every sense there is an object; for every taste there is a beauty or harmony; for every affection there is a relation of life which calls it into exer-

cise ; for every power of the intellect there is an object of study. Does it not seem to point to a law by which we may reason from every universal and necessary instinct of the human soul to some reality somewhere which is objective to it? If we may reason from the instinct of worship to God, the object of it, may we not reason from the instinct of immortality to immortality itself? It is a universal instinct. It is not confined to civilized races, nor to people who have been brought under the influence of the Bible. It is recorded in tablets and inscriptions long before the greater part of the Bible was written. It is found in the mummies of Egypt, in the tablets of Babylon. The masterly reasoning of Plato, which contains the germ of the whole argument, was written before Christ was born. It was found among the Indians and Aztecs of America, the missionaries found it among the Chinese, it is found to-day even among the degraded tribes of Africa. What does it mean, if there be no reality to satisfy it?

"It must be so, Plato—thou reasonest well—
Else whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire,
This longing after immortality?
Or whence this secret dread, and inward horror
Of falling into nought? Why shrinks the soul
Back on herself, and startles at destruction?
'Tis the divinity that stirs within us ;
'Tis heaven itself that points out an hereafter,
And intimates eternity to man."

But paradoxical as it may seem, there is a dread of immortality, co-existing with the longing for it, which constitutes equally as strong an argument. The great poet of human nature has expressed this in the oft quoted soliloquy of Hamlet :

"To die, to sleep ;
To sleep ; perchance to dream ; Aye there's the rub ;
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause : * * *
* * * the dread of something after death,
The undiscovered country from whose bourne
No traveler returns, puzzles the will,
And makes us rather bear those ills we have,
Than fly to others that we know not of."

And in the great Christian epic fallen man is represented as saying :

“ How gladly would I meet
Mortality my sentence, and be earth
Insensible ! How glad would lay me down
As in my mother's lap ! There I should rest
And sleep secure ; His dreadful voice no more
Would thunder in my ears ; no fears of worse
To me or to my offspring would torment me
With cruel expectation. Yet one doubt
Pursues me still, lest all I cannot die ;
Lest that pure breath of life, the spirit of man
Which God inspired, cannot together perish
With this corporeal clod : then in the grave
Or in some other dismal place, who knows
But I shall die a living death ? ”

Thus “conscience doth make cowards of us all ” and while man longs for immortality as a sinner he dreads it. It is for this reason that some are anxious to prove that there is no hereafter, as others are to prove that the soul is immortal. They would surrender their hopes of immortality and accept annihilation for the sake of immunity from the just punishment of their sins. I say this dread of immortality is as strong, if not stronger proof, than the longing for it, because it springs from that faculty of the soul which is nearest to infallibility in its utterances, the conscience. Conscience demands a future life for the punishment of those sins which go unwhipt of justice in this life. It is one of the infallible dicta of conscience that all sin deserves punishment. Even in this life there is enough evidence of connection between sin and its punishment to prove that there is a moral government in the world and a just God in heaven. But it is equally evident that this moral government is not complete in this life. Nothing is more patent to observation than that some of the worst of crimes go unwhipt of justice. The fallen woman becomes an outcast from society, and drinks to its bitter dregs the cup of the punishment of her sins, but her seducer, the vile scoundrel who has taken advantage of her ignorance or her love for him, lives often in the enjoyment of wealth and the adu'a-

tion of society, and dies peacefully in his bed. The rich man who has amassed a vast fortune by robbing the poor under the sanction of human law, lives in luxury and dies in the enjoyment of his wealth, while his victims starve, or are driven to crime and shame. The murderer escapes the penalty of human law. Is there no hereafter for such as these?

Is there no tribunal to which the wronged may come and demand justice upon their oppressors? Is there no judgment day when all that is left unequal in this life may be made even? Was the exile of Napoleon at St. Helena a sufficient atonement for the lives which he sacrificed to his selfish ambition, for the wives whom he made widows, for the children whom he made orphans? Does not the blood of ten thousand martyrs cry out for vengeance upon their persecutors? Is there no hereafter where such foul wrongs may be redressed? Ah, yes, unless justice be a mockery, and conscience a delusion, there is a life beyond the grave, and well may the sinner dread it!

We find then in the book of nature at least a strong presumption of a future state of existence. It may be that there are still stronger proofs there which we have not yet been able to decipher. With judgment warped by sin we cannot read all that God has written there. But at best the argument from nature does not satisfy us. It fails in that it does not give the assurance which the soul craves. It creates a hope, but not a settled conviction. That was a pathetic confession of one of Cicero's pupils when Cicero said to him, "Study Plato's book that treats of the soul and you will find there all you can want." He replied, "I have indeed done that, and often; but somehow, though I am convinced by it while reading it, yet when I lay down the book and begin to reflect for myself upon the immortality of the soul, my conviction is shaken, and my doubts return." It is not a conviction that will stand the test of affliction and bereavement. It will not support a man in his dying hour. Nature does not speak with the voice of comfort and assurance because it does not speak with the voice of author-

ity. When in bitter grief we stand at the graves of our beloved, looking into the shadows of the future, wondering if we shall ever look again upon the dear faces in life, no promises of eternal life which rests only upon our reason or our wishes, can give rest from agonizing doubt. The priest of natural religion cannot say to his people, "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not even as others, which have no hope. Wherefore comfort one another with these words." When we ourselves are called upon to pass through the valley of the shadow of death, and the cold waves of its dark river are lapping at our feet, no voice from reason can cheer the soul, and enable it to shout, "Oh grave, where is thy victory; O death, where is thy sting?" Only the voice of God himself, speaking from the other side of that veil which hangs between us and the spirit world can give the assurance, It shall be well with thy soul.

The book of Nature fails again in that it cannot answer the question, "How shall man be just with God?" It is not merely the fact of a future life of which the soul craves assurance, but that it will be a life of happiness. The sinner's instinctive dread of immortality must be overcome before his instinctive longing for it can be satisfied. The question, "What must I do to be saved?" is prompted not merely by dread of annihilation and longing for immortality, but by the fear of a just and holy God. The longing for immortality cannot be satisfied except by the satisfaction of the longing for peace with God. The answer of nature here is not a merely negative answer. For upon the pages of Nature's book as well as upon those of Revelation, it is written, "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Upon the tables of conscience it is written with the finger of God, "The wages of sin is death." This law of nature is inexorable, and without exception. For the violation of her laws, whether within the physical or spiritual sphere, Nature shows no mercy. In the body, in the soul, in the social order, sin works out its own woe in its inevitable, necessary, natural consequences. If there be an im-

mortal life, then, by the law of continuity, sin must continue to work out its consequences and its just desert throughout eternity. If reason could find in nature absolute proof of an eternal life beyond the grave, that life to the sinner could only be a prolongation of this, with all its sins and with all its miseries. Eternal life would be a living death.

I am aware that the natural religion of to-day has assumed a broader scope than in the old controversies, as the term "Nature" has acquired a wider meaning. Revelation is purely a natural process of development. Christianity, denuded of its miraculous element and supernatural sanctions, is the highest development of Natural Religion. The life and teachings of Jesus Christ constitute an extraordinary, but not a supernatural epoch in a process of purely Natural Revelation—if we may thus unite words usually contrasted. Nature thus broadly interpreted is the source, and the only source of the science of theology. There is no authoritative source. From Nature may be drawn an adequate sanction of morals, and sufficient rule of conduct; from Nature may be derived an answer to man's longings for immortality; from Nature alone may be deduced a Gospel of Redemption. Nature herself is man's redeemer. There never has been any Fall of Man, but there is a continual Ascent of Man. There is no need of reconciliation between God and man, because there has never been any estrangement. Man has been evolved from the brute, not only in the body, but in the mind and soul. Sin is only the mark of an imperfect stage in this evolution. That evolution is incomplete, therefore sin still exists, But in some far off day it will be complete, and sin will thus have been eliminated by a purely natural process. The theory of evolution is the Gospel of Redemption.

But this new Natural Religion, supported as it is by the wide spread and growing influence of the evolutionary philosophy, can, no more than the old, satisfy our longings for immortality and redemption from sin.

For its answer to the first is still inconclusive. The presumptive evidence may be stronger and more clearly stated

than in Plato's day, but it still lacks authority. It cannot plead the historical fact of the reappearance of Christ after death, as some of its advocates have illogically done; for the admission of Christ's resurrection logically involves not only the admission of the scheme of the supernaturalists, but also the peculiar mission and distinct authority of Jesus.

The immortality of the modern evolutionary school, the Gospel of the "survival of the fittest" is merely a race immortality.

Somewhere the story is told of a general, who in storming a fortress filled the trenches with the bodies of his foremost soldiers, that the rear ranks might pass over them to victory. So the elect generations who are to attain this immortality must pass over the bodies of countless millions of luckless ancestors. We are told that in some of the convents of Europe the pillars and arches of their vaults are formed of human skulls and bones. So this future race will build the temple of their immortality upon the bones of their forefathers. But the immortality for which the soul of man longs, is personal, conscious, individual existence.

Still less can the new Natural Religion satisfy us with its new Plan of Salvation from Sin. For its fundamental postulate is a denial of the fact of Sin in any real sense. There is, in this theory, no eternal and necessary distinction between Right and Wrong. Sin is a part of Nature as God created it. No just conception of ill-desert can be attached to sin if this be true. Sin is not man's fault, it is his misfortune,—nay, it is more, it is a wrong which God has done to man, and no future redemption of an elect generation could ever atone for the woes of the countless millions who have writhed under it. The sufferings and death of Jesus Christ, so far from atoning to God for man's sin, would only add to the sum of misery for which man would call his creator to account. It is a blasphemous theory of sin. If suffered to govern the conduct of men it would make virtue impossible. One might imagine that the old prophet was referring to the preachers of this gospel when he said, "Woe unto them that put light for darkness, and darkness for light; that call evil good, and good evil?"

But such a gospel can never meet with any general acceptance, because it violates the most profound intuitions of man's moral nature. It does not, cannot "commend itself to every man's Conscience in the sight of God." However seductive it may be to the sinful heart, conscience will reject it, and plunge man into deep despair of hearing any Good News of redemption from Nature's book. Natural religion knows no miracle, but if there be no miracle there is no salvation.

But we can make the words of Peter our own, "Thou hast the words of eternal life." What all the sages of ancient and modern times have failed to do, Jesus, the lowly Nazarene has done, he has "brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel." In the first place, the Gospel strengthens and clarifies every argument which may be drawn from nature as to the future existence of the soul. It affirms what consciousness had already taught us to believe, that the soul has a separate existence from the body. The body is but the temporary abode of the soul, and if it perish, never to be brought to life again, the soul would still live, in a personal conscious state of existence. It affirms the moral argument. It corroborates what reason taught us, that the moral government of God is not complete in this life; that there is a day of judgment when wrongs shall be righted, when those who have escaped the judgment of the wicked deeds of this life shall be sentenced; that there is a future state of existence, when those crimes which have gone unwhipt of justice here shall be expiated to the utmost. It reaffirms the argument from the purpose of man's existence. It shows that the end cannot be fulfilled here; that there is an eternal life in which all the faculties of the soul may attain their highest development and accomplish their purpose in the glory of God and the enjoyment of him. But the Gospel does more than this, it gives us a demonstration of a future state of existence which reason could not give. It speaks to us from the other side of the river of death. It brings us back a message from the grave. Jesus Christ is the only one of our mortal race who has

passed that river of death, and has returned to speak to our mortal ears and to be seen with our mortal eyes.

The resurrection of Christ is the great proof of the immortality of the soul. That resurrection is the great event of the world's history. And there is no event in the history of the world more clearly proved. Even unbelievers confess that the testimony which we have of the resurrection of Christ would be sufficient to prove beyond the possibility of doubt any event less extraordinary. All efforts to overthrow this testimony have only resulted in strengthening it. Romanes, writing while in a stage of transition from unbelief to faith says, "The outcome of the great textual battle is impartially considered a signal victory for Christianity." "There is so much to be said in objective evidence for Christianity that were the central doctrines thus testified to anything short of miraculous, no one would doubt. But we are not competent judges *a priori* of what a revelation should be." The honesty and sincerity of the witnesses have been established beyond cavil. The theory of imposture and fraud is no longer urged. The genuineness of the principal documents have been established by hostile criticism. Paul's testimony alone would stand in any court of law. It would be a greater problem how to account for the evidence now if false than to account for the fact. For the validity of the proof of existence after death it is not necessary to contend for any particular theory of the resurrection. It matters not whether Christ appeared after his crucifixion in the same body which was crucified, or in a sublimated body, or in the appearance of the body, or in the spirit. It is enough that he appeared after his death, and that to a number of witnesses. No clearer evidence of the immortality of the soul could be furnished unless Christ were to repeat the miracle of his resurrection to each generation and to each individual of the race. But even then, the same spirit of unbelief which rejects the evidence of the Gospel would reject the evidence of the senses.

But in a still higher sense Christ alone has the words of eternal life. He alone has answered that question, "How

shall man be just with God?" He alone teaches upon what condition that life beyond the grave may be a happy life free from the sins and woes of this life. "O death, where is thy sting? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law." But Christ has satisfied the law. Christ has paid the penalty of sin. Through death he hath destroyed him that hath the power of death that he might deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. He has taken away from the sinner who believes in him the dread of immortality, and has satisfied the longing for it. He hath begotten us again to an immortal hope by his resurrection from the dead. The very death which he died has conquered death; the same resurrection which proves the fact of a life beyond the grave gives us a right to its blessedness. When we were dead in trespass and sins we were quickened together with Christ, we were raised up with him, we are made to sit together with him in heavenly places. Our life is now hid with Christ in God. Our citizenship is now in heaven. There we may lay up our treasures, knowing that moth and rust will not corrupt them. There we have an inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us, while we are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation. There we have a mansion in the Father's house, prepared by Christ himself. There we shall meet again and know the loved ones who have gone before. There we shall be satisfied when we awake in his likeness.

Now mark the way in which this question is answered—by the suffering of the Son of God. Here is the lighthouse on the reef of mystery, which shines through the fog and darkness, backward through the ages past, onward through the ages yet to come. The tempests of centuries have beaten against it in vain. It stands upon the very reef where lies the danger of faith, upon which beat the breakers of doubt—on this reef of the mystery of sin. Sin and the suffering which ensue from it, are the great mystery; but here we see God himself suffering for sin. Here we see

that whatever the origin of sin, it was not God's work. Here we see that whatever be the future of the sinner, he does not meet his doom because God takes any pleasure in his death. Here we see that, terrible as are the consequences of sin, God has involved himself in them. "For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him might not perish, but have eternal life."

The question now arises, May we not accept the words of eternal life, while we reject the hard sayings?

But these hard sayings are inseparably joined with the words of eternal life, so that the acceptance or the rejection of one logically involves the same treatment of the other. This may be shown in two ways: First, the hard sayings and the words of eternal life rest upon the same authority; if this authority be valid in one, it is valid in the other; if false in one, it is false in the other; faith in one will lead to faith in the other. Secondly, the hard sayings and words of eternal life are parts of one complete logical system, and the acceptance or the rejection of any part of it logically involves the acceptance or the rejection of the whole system.

First then, both rest upon the same authority. This was the reasoning of Peter. "We believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the Living God." We have settled that point once for all. From that confession we will never recede. We are prepared to follow wherever that admission leads. If then, thou art the Christ, we must accept whatever thou teachest—thy hard sayings, as well as thy words of eternal life; things we do not like, as well as things that are pleasant to us; things we do not understand as well as those we do understand.

This reasoning is sound. We must be prepared to follow our admissions to their logical results. Now we have settled it that the words of eternal life, to satisfy the soul, must rest upon infallible authority. They must speak with the voice of authority when they tell us that there is a life beyond the grave. They must speak with the voice of authority when they tell us upon what conditions that life

may be a happy life, not a mere prolongation of this life, with its sins and its consequent miseries. God alone can forgive sins, God alone can publish conditions of pardon. The essential doctrines of redemption could not have been conceived by human reason, much less proved and proclaimed as a sure ground of hope. The Gospel of salvation must from its very nature be a Gospel of authority. If then, Christ speaks the words of eternal life at all, he speaks with divine authority. We have admitted that his resurrection is at once our surest ground of hope of immortality and of the pardon of sin. But that resurrection is also incontestable proof of his Divine mission and infallible authority. But if Christ speaks with authority in one thing, he must speak with authority in all things. If he is either God or God's inspired messenger, then he cannot err. If we believe him in one thing, we must believe him in all. If we believe his words of eternal life, we must believe his hard sayings; if we reject his hard sayings, we must forfeit his words of eternal life. If his authority be successfully impeached in his hard sayings, then his words of eternal life become worthless.

But the authority of Christ implies the authority of the Bible. The two things are not the same, but they are logically inseparable. Christ, not the Bible, is the object of saving faith, but faith in Christ will lead to faith in the Bible. It is possible that a man may have a saving faith in Christ, who has not a perfect intellectual faith in the Bible. But if he will follow his admission of Christ's claims to its logical consequence, it will compel him to acknowledge the inspiration and authority of the Bible. This is because Christ himself has borne such clear and unequivocal testimony to the divinity and authority of the Scriptures as to stake his own claim upon that of the Scriptures. The effort of critics to distinguish between the authority of Christ and the authority of the Scriptures, to impeach the one and yet conserve the other, has failed. Christ himself has made the issue. If then we accept Christ's words of eternal life we must acknowledge his divine mission and authority, but if

we acknowledge the authority of Christ, we must acknowledge the authority of his Word.

When once reason has accepted the credentials of a divine revelation, it must abandon its seat as the judge of its contents and bow with absolute submission to its authority. The law rests upon the same authority as the Gospel; there is the same authority for the doctrine of original sin as for the doctrine of regeneration; the same Gospel which promises eternal life to the penitent and believing threatens eternal death to the impenitent and unbelieving; the same authority upon which rests the free and universal proclamation of the Gospel, attests also God's sovereignty in the dispensation of his grace. Almost every doctrine of the Word of God has two faces, the one dark with the mystery of sin, the other dazzling with the mystery of grace; both alike transcend reason, both alike rest upon God's authority. Therefore we cannot reject one without logically rejecting the other.

Not only do both the hard sayings and the words of eternal life rest upon the same authority, but the attitude of our faith toward the one is affected by our attitude toward the other. An implicit belief in the words of eternal life will subdue murmurings against the hard sayings; distrust of the hard sayings will impair confidence in the words of eternal life. If we heed not the warnings of the Bible in the time of prosperity, we shall find its promises fail us in the time of adversity. This is the reason why so many Christians seem to get no comfort from the Bible in the hour of their affliction. They permit themselves to fall into the habit of questioning this or that doctrine of the Bible, and of trying to explain away its plain meaning. Thus insensibly to themselves they have impaired their own confidence in its authority. But the time of affliction or temptation, or the approach of death reveals the disease of his faith. A man may insensibly undermine his constitution by bad habits, and when disease attacks him he is unable to resist it. So many Christians come to the Bible in the time of need only to find that it has lost to them that which gives

it power for strength and consolation—the pledge of God's authority. But authority implies submission. If then we would have the comfort of Christ's words of life we must listen without murmur to his hard sayings.

In the second place, the hard sayings and the words of eternal life not only rest upon the same authority, but they are also parts of a complete logical system, and the acceptance or the rejection of any part of the system logically leads to the acceptance or the rejection of the whole system.

When we first begin the study of the Bible, we may see no connection between its facts and doctrines, except that they are contents of the same book, and rest upon the same authority. But when we compare them with one another, we find that there is another connection. We find that they are related to each other upon eternal and necessary principles, so that they form a complete system of truth. Our system of doctrine then becomes, in a certain sense, a self-supporting structure. True, its materials could never have been obtained in any other way than by revelation, and human reason could never have combined them into a system without the illumination of the same Spirit who inspired them. Yet when thus complete it will stand by its own stability and proportion. Its symmetry and unity of design become in turn a reflex evidence of the divine origin of the Book which reveals it. Now we find that these so-called hard doctrines are necessary parts of this system. If you begin to take away from this system any of its parts, you will mar its symmetry, and may cause the whole structure to fall a crumbling ruin. If you take away some of these hard doctrines, it would be like removing a cornerstone or the keystone of an arch. To show this in detail has been the work of centuries, and has filled libraries, but it is beyond the scope of this essay.

But this argument applies only to those doctrines which are taught by the Word of God. It does not apply to those doctrines which an orthodox rationalism has put into the Word of God. For there is an orthodox as well as a het-

erodox rationalism. It must be remembered that after all our creeds and treatises on systematic theology are the work of uninspired men. We have seen the liability to error when reasoning on transcendental problems. When we leave the express teachings of God's Word, our "good and necessary inferences" are in danger of being far-fetched. In order to a good and necessary inference both premises must be taken from the Word itself. When one of the premises is the product of our own wisdom, all the sources of error are open. And when we take these inferences and make them premises in their turn we are getting dangerously far away from the original source of authority. We must be as careful not to burden faith with the hard sayings of men as we must be not to reject the hard sayings of Christ.

Again, I have said that rejection of parts of the system *logically* lead to the rejection of the system. But we must guard against a very common mistake. We must not impute to others beliefs which we regard as logical consequence of their avowed opinions. This is a mistake too common in all controversy, but especially religious controversy. We have the right, if we can, to prove that these are the logical consequences of our opponents' views, but not to charge them with holding and teaching what they expressly repudiate. Men do not always follow their opinions to their logical conclusions. It is essential to charity and liberality to remember that men may sincerely inconsistent. All truth indeed is one, and absolutely speaking, any error will ultimately lead to a denial of all truth. An error in mathematics, if followed out rigidly to its conclusions, would lead to a denial of the existence of God. But there is a happy inconsistency by which men may be wrong in minor matters, but right in the essentials. Because a man may deny something which I believe to be a plain teaching of God's Word, I dare not charge him with unbelief in the Bible. Even though he may hold what I regard as a loose and dangerous view of inspiration, I dare not call him an unbeliever in the essentials of the Gospel. Though a man denies the

doctrines of election I do not charge him with rejecting the atonement, though I may believe that one logically involves the other.

Then too we must not always judge men's hearts by their heads. These are more often inconsistent with each other than the head with itself. A better man than oneself may hold less correct opinions. Even so severely logical a thinker as John Owen said, "I am very slow to judge of men's acceptance with God by the comprehension of their understandings."

While all truth is strictly speaking essential, and all error vital in its consequences; yet the limitations of human understanding compel us to distinguish between essential and non-essential doctrines. Men may sometimes question important truths without wholly departing from the faith.

But who knows where the line may be crossed? Who knows how near the knife may come to the heart without destroying the life? Who knows but the arrow of heresy may be tipped with the poison of unbelief, which will corrupt the life blood of faith? Look at your watch. All of its parts are not of the same importance, but all are essential to its completeness. You may take away the second hand without injuring it for ordinary purposes. You may even take away the minute hand, and you can still tell the time within twelve minutes. Now open it and look at the works. You may remove a screw here or there without breaking it; but in your ignorance of mechanism you may touch some seemingly unimportant part, and you have ruined your watch. So with the doctrines of the Bible. In your concessions to rationalism you may remove this or that without seeming to destroy the Gospel. But before you are aware of it, in seeking to remove the offence of the cross you may destroy its power to save. Attempt to make the Gospel the wisdom of men, and you may make it foolishness with God,

Furthermore, there is a historical development of error. Though an individual may recoil, by a happy inconsistency, from the logical consequences of his errors, his school will

certainly develop his views after him. All pure thought is according to fixed laws. Though their operation in the case of one man may be arrested by conditions of prejudice, feeling or education, the minds of many men will show their ultimate effect.

Any important doctrine, be it true or false, will sooner or later group about itself other related doctrines and will crystalize them into a system. All the great schools which have controlled the thinking of the world, have been to a greater or less extent, logical systems. All great leaders of thought have been men of logical minds. Eccentric thinkers and inconsistent systems can have no lasting influence. Error or truth, to gain a permanent influence, must shape itself into some kind of a logical system. There is a passage in Ephesians which, when properly translated, forcibly brings out this fact: "That ye be no more children, tossed like waves, and driven about by every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, by craftiness, tending to a deliberate system of error." The history of the church is full of examples of this truth. Seemingly slight mistakes in the interpretation of Scripture have developed into vital heresies. Seemingly trivial innovations in the worship of the church have destroyed its purity. Seemingly unimportant encroachments upon the Church's liberties have led to the enthronement of Anti-Christ. Pious men have sowed the seeds of doctrines from which they would have recoiled in indignation. Therefore, while according charity to others, as well as asking it for ourselves, let us beware of the first approaches of error.

Beside this historical development of error there is also the development of principle into practice. Here again we must not impute to men all the consequences of their beliefs. A man may hold views which are subversive of all distinction between right and wrong, and yet be, so far as his own conduct is concerned, a moral man. But every man must give account for the influence which he exerts. It is as certain that error in principle will produce error in morals as that seed will bring forth fruit after its kind. In the long

run heresy begets infidelity, infidelity begets atheism, atheism begets sin and crime.

Now to resume, these hard doctrines must be expected in the Word of God. They arise from the limitations of the human mind, from its corruption by sin, from the stupendous nature of the subjects involved. They are not peculiar to the Bible, and there is no relief from them in human systems, while in the Bible alone are the words of eternal life. These sayings of Christ cannot be separated from his words of eternal life; they rest upon the same authority, and are integral parts of a system of truth which logically must be accepted or rejected as a whole. It is the tendency of error to perpetuate and systematize itself. System can be met and overthrown only by system; the final conflict must be between armies that are organized and disciplined. The careful student of the history of thought will see that, just as, with advancing civilization, petty tribes and kingdoms have tended to unite and form great nations, and wars have increased in extent and magnitude, so there has been an ever-growing tendency of the many schools and sects to group themselves into large systems, while controversies have increased in magnitude and importance of the principles involved. The time is coming, and perhaps may not be very far off, when there will be but two great logical systems opposed to each other to fight the battle involving every fundamental principle, which will determine forever the issue. These two systems will be materialism and orthodoxy. I say these two systems are logical. Materialism is logical when you have admitted a single premise, viz., that the five senses are the source of all knowledge. Admit this monstrous assumption, which involves a flat contradiction of the first principles of all knowledge, and which is self-destructive, and the materialist builds upon it an edifice of deceit, whose faultless proportions and logical symmetry must command even our admiration. The worst enemy of Calvinism never denied that it is logical. Froude is quoted as saying, "when the foundations of religious belief are upturned, in the agitations

of the ages, the Calvinistic doctrine is the only thing that will stand." Spurgeon said something like this: "As when two giant icebergs meet, all smaller floes are crushed to pieces, so between the shock of Atheism and Calvinism all intermediate systems of thought will be destroyed." They are like two great armies between whose lines there can be no neutrality. Sooner or later all must betake themselves for refuge to one or the other, and abide the issue of the battle. Calvinism may be compared to the citadel within the walls. When all other systems have surrendered to the batteries of Atheism, to these impregnable walls the defenders of the faith may betake themselves and defy the assaults of unbelief.

"The Inevitable Surrender of Orthodoxy" is the boastful prophecy of the liberalists. When orthodoxy surrenders, the cause of Christianity is lost; and when Christianity surrenders, the cause of religion is lost; and when religion is conquered, the cause of righteousness and truth is lost, and evil is forever triumphant. But built as it is upon the foundation which God hath laid, under the direction of his Spirit of truth, it has withstood the assaults of error through ages past, and will withstand through all the conflicts of the future. For the truth of God we fear not, but we do fear all who venture outside its safe walls in the perilous times of unbelief, lest they they may be taken captive by the prince of error.

Therefore, when perplexed and troubled by the mysteries of God's providence and the hard sayings of his Word, let us not go away saying, "This is a hard saying, who can hear it?" Neither let us make a timid and impossible compromise with error, but, holding fast the truth in its integrity, let us answer as Peter: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." Let us answer as Paul:

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been his counselor? Or

who hath given to him and it shall be recompensed to him again? For of him and through him and to him are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen."

JAMES R. HOWERTON.

NOTE—This article consists of three sermons. The writer did not see the proof, except of the last few pages. Attention is called to one important omission, p. 110, l. 19: Before the words, "No Christian attempts to explain it," prefix the sentence, "Another source of difficulty is the Bible doctrine of the nature and origin of sin."