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THE Presbyterian Quarterly.

NO. 55=JANUARY, 1901.

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-

V. TURN OR BURN!

The master move in that devilish strategy which accomplished the Fall, was when Satan succeeded in casting a doubt on the certainty of future punishment. And since that woeful hour, "Ye shall not surely die," has been the favorite tenet of all who are under the dominion of the god of this world. It is not to be expected, therefore, that the doctrine of eternal punishment will ever be popular among men. On the contrary, every preacher who faithfully confronts his hearers with that stern alternative which forms the heading of this article, may count on receiving his full share of this world's reproach and scorn.

"Your preachers are all too old and plain,
Says the gay world, with a sneer ;
They frighten my children with dreadful tales
Which I do not like them to hear ;
They talk of damnation, fire and pain,
And the horrors of endless night ;
They speak of a place that should not be
Mentioned to ears polite.
You must give us some of a different stamp,
Brilliant, and gay and fast,
Who will teach us how men may live as they list
And yet go to heaven at last."

We may well suppose that the devil, working hand in hand with the bitter revolt of the carnal mind against this doctrine, would long ago have banished it from the faith of mankind, were it not for one thing ; and that is, that there is no way to silence the unequivocal testimony of the Scriptures upon this subject. No man, for example, can read with unbiased mind the latter part of Luke 16, the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus, without drawing two necessary inferences : first, that the souls of the ungodly do at their death, pass into a state of penal suffering ; second, that this state is without mitigation or end. And the authority of Jesus Christ, as a divine teacher, stands committed to these two points of doctrine. And this is only one of many sim-

ilar passages, in which the dreadful character and endless duration of future punishment are explicitly stated.

And not only is there this immovable foundation for this doctrine in the express language of God's Word, but it may be said further, that the doctrine of the eternal punishment of the finally impenitent is so related to the whole fabric of Christianity, that the entire Christian system stands or falls with it. The doom of him who dies in his sins is not simply the background of the gospel, it is the very canvas on which the gospel is set forth. Take away this truth, and the gospel itself is gone. Examine in this light another familiar passage of Scripture: Luke 19: 10: "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." Come to save what? "That which was lost." How? To these questions there is no adequate answer but such as is seen in the lurid gleam of penal fires. There is no *modus deo vindice dignus*, apart from the wrath which is to come. A sufficient illustration of this line of thought is found in the notorious fact that those who make Christianity a mere scheme of social amelioration, are the same that empty it of every supernatural element—its divine Christ, its regenerating Spirit, as well as its threat of endless retribution.

Our purpose, however, in this article is not the proof of this doctrine. If what has just been said is true, then to those who accept Inspiration, and embrace in its integrity the system of doctrine contained in the Holy Scriptures, further proof of this particular doctrine is needless. But this does not preclude every effort to meet popular objections, and to clear away as far as possible difficulties which beset this dread truth even in the minds of those who reverently accept it. It becomes us to recognize the horror of great darkness which hangs over this subject, and the obligation to handle it with all tenderness towards our fellow sinners, while we show all fidelity to the truth of God. And this will we do if God permit.

At the very outset, we would frankly admit that we find here difficulties which cannot be fully cleared up. Some of the mystery inherent to this subject is what always con-

fronts us, whenever the purposes and dealings of the infinite God are made the subject of investigation by a finite mind. Especially do we find ourselves immediately confronted with that *crux philosophorum et theologorum*, the origin of evil. Many of the questions concerning the eternal punishment of sin, run back into the larger question of the origin of sin. And in the face of this larger question we are helpless. When it is asked, how did evil enter the universe, how is rebellion against his authority compatible with the government of the Almighty, or how can the existence of suffering be harmonized with the benevolence of one who was wise enough to foresee it and powerful enough to prevent it? In the face of such questions, we are in the position of all who have gone before us—we can return no adequate answer. It is true that there is something in the relations of God to moral agents, very different from relations to the material universe. Such a thing as an infraction of the laws of physics or chemistry, for example—except the miraculous suspension of these laws by God himself, is unknown and ever inconceivable. But the Government of God over free agents is in a totally different sphere. Now while we are far from endorsing such a *theodicy*, as seeks to relieve the divine perfections by asserting the existence of evil as a necessary complement to the existence of good; while we would by no means say that the creation of free and mutable beings rendered it inevitable that they would eventually fall into sin; yet, as said, we feel that the mystery of the origin of sin is in some way bound up in the mystery of free agency. This much is plain, that on the day that any being was created a free agent, at that time the door opened by which sin and misery entered. But this, as is evident, only pushes the question further back. Why did a God of infinite prescience and benevolence ever thus open the door by which evil could enter? And to this we find but one answer, that given by our Lord in regard to a similar mystery, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight."

But this confession of ignorance is a different thing from

consenting to any arraignment of the justice or goodness of God, because of the existence of sin and suffering. Our position is simply this: We know that evil is in the world; we know that God rules the world, and that his rule is holy, just and good; but how to make this knowledge harmonize we do not now see. And yet, while we thus confess our ignorance, our position is an impregnable one; it can only be assailed by denying its existence on the one hand; or, on the other, by denying the existence or limiting the perfections of God. To take the first alternative is to become a follower of Mrs. Eddy, to take the second is atheism. It is also evident that our attitude towards the punishment of sin is the same as towards the origin of sin; they are only different branches of the same insoluble problem. With regard to all these "secret things of the Lord our God," we await the clearer light of that promised day, when "we shall know, even as also we are known."

Contenting ourselves with thus postponing until the light of a clearer day, the solution of the most serious difficulty which besets our subject, when we turn to meet the popular attacks upon the doctrine of eternal punishment our task becomes much simpler.

We notice, first, what is perhaps the most common form of objection, that based upon the popular tenet of the New Theology, the Fatherhood of God. This is taken as forbidding the very idea of eternal punishment. It is argued, and the argument is pressed with the assurance of one enunciating an axiom, "Would you send *your* child to the flames of torment; and do you think our Father in Heaven is less merciful and loving than you are?"

"The Father is merciful, great and good,
Loving and tender and kind,
Do you think he would take one child to heaven,
And leave the rest behind?"

You will notice the ingenious approximation here to our Saviour's tender words, "If ye then being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children." It is doubtful if in all his career as a deceiver of souls, the father of lies ever devised anything better calculated to blind the minds of them

that believe not than this. And yet the loose thread in this web of half-truth, sentiment and sophistry, is not hard to get hold of. It is true that mankind, by virtue of creation, sustains to God the relation of children to a father; for every one of us may trace his lineage—back to that illustrious point where we can say—"which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God." But waiving the question as to how far this filial relation was forfeited when our progenitor ate the forbidden fruit—is the relation of children to a father the only one which men sustain to God? If so, what mean the Scriptures, "the Judge of all the earth," "God, the righteous judge," "who will render to every man according to his deeds?" The moment you introduce this judicial element into the relations between the creature and his Creator, the whole aspect of the subject is changed. You have no longer to deal with a blind sentiment, the instinct which binds a lioness to her cubs, as well as a mother to her child, but you enter the domain of moral government with laws and penalties, rewards and punishments. And in this domain, once admitting the sinfulness of sin, you must proceed by an inexorable logic to the punishment of sin, as revealed in God's Word.

We may pause right here to say that many orthodox writers, and more frequently popular preachers from orthodox pulpits, abandon the high ground which they ought to take in handling this question. Let the reader study carefully the following quotation from a popular writer in the *Sunday School Times*, and see upon what ground the author of it undertakes to "justify the ways of God to men."

"So shall also my heavenly Father do unto you (v 35). The shoe will be on the other foot some time. Jesus did not say this in vindictiveness. He simply stated a fact. There is no law more certain in its operations than the one he announced in these words. Every hard-hearted man will, sooner or later, find himself in as tight a place as the man he squeezed. You smile sardonically, and say, "I can take care of myself." You will see. The traits of character you are forming will force you as resistlessly as a movement of a

glacier into some situation where you will have to throw up your hands and beg for mercy. It will come when you stand before the great bar on the last day, if never before. Do you think that Justice will permit you to evade your just retribution? It is as necessary to restrain the cruelty of some of these monsters as for people to shoot lions and tigers. Human hearts at last become ice and adamant. It is only by flinging them square against a calm and terrible justice that they perceive the devilish coldness of their own hearts. God does not enjoy doing it, *but the protection of society demands it.*"

Note particularly the last words, which we have italicized and see to what a lame and impotent conclusion our author conducts us. He ought to have said, "God does not enjoy doing it, *but his own inflexible justice demands it.*" Instead of taking this high ground, which the preceding sentences might lead you to expect, he comes down to the low plane of governmental expediency, and says, "the protection of society demands it."

In like manner, we have heard preachers seek to evade the universalist argument from the Fatherhood of God, by supposing the case of an earthly parent with an incorrigible son; who, for the sake of his other children, disowns his incurably vicious child, and even turns him over to the strong arm of the law. We may have used this analogical argument ourselves in our past sermonizing; if so, we promise never to do it again. It is a distinct surrender to the objector of the great principle at issue. The ground of a sinner's condemnation is naked justice; that foundation is adamantine and all sufficient, and needs no supplement from expediency.

But coming back to our main line of argument, the Scriptural representatin of the great Jehovah in his relations to his sinful creatures, is that of one with the *feelings* of a father, and the *principles* of a just judge. His feelings are expressed in such pathetic utterances as these: "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked." "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim, how shall I deliver

thee, O Israel? how shall I make thee as Admah? how shall I set thee as Zeboim?" [two of the doomed cities of the plain.] "Who is longsuffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." The principles of the divine government, however, are thus expressed: "Our God is a consuming fire;" "who will render to every man according to his deeds * * * indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil." "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

We have known from our earliest recollections an earthly parent, who is to us a far more fitting exemplification of the "All-Father" than any fancy sketches our liberal theologians have devised. He is one whom the Church has honored with the highest offices in her gift; at the same time the State has for years retained him upon the judicial bench.

If by any fault of our own, it were possible for us to be brought before his court for trial upon a capital charge, we know very well what would take place. If the charge was sustained by the evidence, and the verdict of guilty brought in, we know that the extreme sentence of the law would be pronounced, with unfaltering lips and with a broken heart! This is to our mind a far-away picture of Him whom His word describes as "the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgressions and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty."

Those, then, who represent the Fatherhood of God as incompatible with the idea of an eternal hell, have to go somewhere else than to the Scriptures for their picture of the divine character. In fact, the only thing in the Bible which corresponds with the notion of the divine fatherhood, is the character of "good old Eli," "whose sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not." We commend this case in all of its bearings, to our liberal friends, as well worthy of their serious study.

But often the objector shifts his ground, and says that

not in the name of mercy only, but in the name of justice, he protests against the doctrine of eternal punishment. Here the objection is not so much to punishment itself, as to its endless duration. It is said that it is unjust to inflict on finite beings, a practically infinite punishment. Eternal torment is disproportioned to offences, brief in duration, and often trivial in character. And so rhetoric has been exhausted to bring out this alleged injustice. No stronger statement of this objection could be given than that framed by the high-priest of American infidelity, the late R. G. Ingersoll. Mr. Ingersoll imagines a bird winging its way through illimitable space from this earth to the remotest fixed star, and bearing in its mouth one grain of sand. The bird comes back, after an almost immeasurable lapse of time, for another grain, and repeats his journey back and forth, until he has removed this solid earth, grain by grain—"And then," says Mr. Ingersoll, with startling climax, "it will not yet be day-break in Hell!"

We grant that the mind staggers under this tremendous conception, but that does not abate one particle of our confidence in its truth. We would solemnly match this awful thought with that which is its counterpart, the enormity, the immeasurable ill-desert of sin. If we could compass in one view all the sin which has ever been committed on this earth, the vile idolatries, the sorceries, the blasphemies, the disobedience to parents, the lies, the thefts, the adulteries, rapes, and incests, if we could hear the shrieks of the tortured, and see the blood of the slain; and then remember that every single sin, however small, contains in itself that germ of rebellion against God, from which this world-wide and age-long mass of iniquity has sprung; and that every single sinner, if divine and human restraints had been removed, could have committed all the sins of every other sinner; with such a view of sin before us, there would rise in our minds a sense of righteous indignation, which only the Scripture conception of punishment could satisfy.

We would commend to the present generation of New England theologians who sit in Edwards' seat, Edwards'

argument right here. In his sermon on the justice of God in the damnation of sinners, Edwards argues substantially as follows: It is not unjust in God to inflict on sin that punishment which it deserves. The ill-desert of any action is measured by the contrary obligation of which it is the transgression: see such terms as *dishonesty*, *disobedience*, *untruthfulness*, *unchastity*, etc. Now our obligation to love, adore, and serve God is an infinite obligation. This can only be disproved by saying that God is not infinitely adorable and lovely. Then sin, which violates our obligation to love and serve God, is the transgression of an infinite obligation. The ill desert of sin, therefore, is infinite, and to award the sinner with a punishment, which is, as to duration, infinite, is no more than his iniquities deserve. So when the objector seeks to gather into one appalling picture the ages upon ages of illimitable torment stretching out forever before the damned soul, we simply turn the stream of his objection against the rock wall of Edwards' inexorable logic. Any protest against the endless punishment of sin is met and matched by any fair statement of the enormous evil of sin.

But the objection is met with equal conclusiveness from another point of view. It is not to be forgotten that infinite duration of punishment, in the case of finite creatures, is made up of an endless series of finite periods. If it is granted that God is just in inflicting upon the sinner the first period, however brief, of this series, then every succeeding period follows like the revolving links of an endless chain. For there is nothing remedial in punishment. On the contrary, suffering, when not sanctified by grace, only hardens and embitters. The sinner will not cease to sin when he enters hell; on the contrary, every analogy of this present life, and all the light of Scripture, lead us to believe that the wickedness of this world will be continued and intensified as the ages of that other world roll on. The last time that the curtain is lifted by the hand of revelation disclosing that place of torment shows us the lost "blaspheming the God of Heaven because of their pains and their sores, and repenting not of their deeds." For if men continue to sin, they

must continue to reap the due reward of their sin. And so "hell is thick darkness, waxing blacker and blacker forever." The only escape from this argument is to assert some sort of operation of divine grace in the abode of despair, and of this the Word of God affords not the slightest evidence. There is, on the other hand, the most express assertion of the fixed moral state of those who go out of this world unsaved. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still."

In that lone land of dark despair,
No Sabbath's heavenly light shall rise ;
No God regard your bitter prayer,
Nor Saviour call you to the skies.

Therefore, instead of justice militating against the endlessness of the sinner's doom, it is justice which not only sends him to hell, but must forever keep him there.

But we must bring this discussion to a close.

As was said in the beginning, we deeply feel the gloom and sadness inexpressible, which overhangs our subject ; and we frankly admit lines of difficulty running through it, which carry us back into that deeper darkness which shrouds the origin of evil. At the same time, in most of the popular attacks upon this truth, we see nothing but unfounded assaults upon the goodness or justice of God, which fail to recognize him as the judge of all the earth, which belittles the infinite evil of sin, and leaves out of sight the persistent impenitency of the ungodly in the world to come.

If space permitted, we might notice the discussion of some of the words which present the Bible doctrine of future retribution, especially some things which have recently come under our eye as to the meaning of *חַיָּיִם* in the Hebrew, *αἰδης* and *αιώνιος* in the Greek. We will only say that the Scriptural doctrine does not depend upon the meaning of any one term, but is set forth in passages so numerous and expressive, so varied and explicit, as to leave no room for doubt in the mind of any fair interpreter, that the Word of God discloses a state of penal suffering awaiting the ungodly

in the other world which is terrible and never-ending. And all discussions to the contrary, which involve the language of Scripture, impress us as "strifes about words," "perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds," which are "unprofitable and vain."

We would far rather take time to dwell upon that blessed theodicy which brings this dark subject into bright relief, viz: The sacrifice of the Son of God upon the accursed tree to provide a way of escape from the wrath which is to come. Gladly do we echo the invitation:

Come let us gather 'round the cross
That knowledge to obtain,
Not by the soul's eternal loss,
But everlasting gain.

One thing, however, we must notice in closing. Our conviction, is, that the bitterness and persistency of the popular opposition to this truth, is a matter of the heart far more than of the head, and is due at last to the revolt of the stubborn will of the flesh against the divine *ultimatum* suggested by our title—turn or burn! We feel sure that it is not so much the nature or duration of final retribution to which mankind object; it is rather the necessity which is upon them, either to give up sin or face eternal damnation. "Let the wicked forsake his way;" "Turn ye, for why will ye die;" "Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish"—of all the contents of God's Word, there is nothing so galling to the unregenerate heart as these. If there could be some compromise effected, by which sin could be retained and yet the sinner escape the damnation of hell, mankind would regard the doctrine of eternal punishment with amiable complacency. It is a notable fact, that all man-made religions display this convenient feature. They all offer some scheme by which a substitute for repentance is proposed. The sinner may continue in his sins, provided he goes through with certain costly ceremonies, offers a libation to the gods, does penance, gives money to the priest, or makes provision in his will for masses which shall liberate his soul from purgatory. Only revealed religion confronts the guilty conscience with the uncompromising

demand: "Repent or perish, turn or burn!" But inasmuch as few, even the most hardened, have the face to question the propriety of the call to repentance, they turn their hostility against the second member of the obnoxious alternative, and deny the reality of the threatened doom of the impenitent. It is evident, therefore that when a disbelief in doom eternal gains ground, the call to repentance loses force proportionately. It is only the certain prospect of irretrievable perdition which imparts urgency to the call, "Repent ye, and believe the gospel." Hence is manifest the conscience—hardening, soul-destroying, God defying influence of universalism, annihilationism, restorationism, and all so-called liberal views.

In the Rev. W. Haslam's book, *From Death into Life*, there is an account of a very striking dream, of a man who was subsequently converted under his ministry. The man said: "I dreamt that I was walking along a broad smooth road, where everything was lovely. The road was crowded, and the people all seemed as if they were out for a holiday. Seeing a working man in a field close by, I called to him, and asked, 'Where does this road lead?' He answered, 'To hell, straight on; you cannot miss!' 'Hell!' I was surprised; 'Hell,' I said to myself. 'This is very different from what I thought. Is the way to hell as pleasant as this? and are people so unconcerned about it?' I was amazed, yet I did not stop nor turn back, but went on and on, seemingly as pleased as the others were. However it did not continue like this long, for soon I came to a rough post, where the atmosphere was thick and sulphury and it was almost dark. Seeing some people in the distance I went near to ask them the way out. They were busy with long rakes raking cinders about on the dry ground and would not answer my urgent inquiries. As I approached them, I saw that every now and then fire appeared from under the ground, over which they raked cinders to keep it out of sight. Just then the ground became so hot that I began to run, in my despair I knew not whither. As I passed along in haste, I came to cracks in the ground full of fire;

I stepped over them one after another, and ran, ran on till I came to such a large chasm that I could not jump over it. I turned and went in another direction, leaping and running in a state of terror, till at last I came upon a glowing sheet of fire, into which I fell. Then I awoke." The application of this is obvious. Many in our day and time are at this cruel business of raking cinders over the fire; few there are like faithful Richard Baxter, who was wont to compress the warnings of God's Word into one solemn, urgent appeal, saying, "Sinner, turn or burn! turn or burn!"

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