

SADDUCEEISM

A

REFUTATION OF THE DOCTRINE

of the

FINAL ANNIHILATION OF THE WICKED.

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SADDUCEEISM.

IN the later periods of their history, the ancient Jews were divided in respect to their religious opinions and practices into three parties or sects, the Pharisees, the Sadducees, and the Essenes. The last of these is not mentioned by name in the Scriptures. One of the principal matters in dispute between the two former was the nature of the human soul, and the question of its continued existence after death. Josephus, who was himself a learned Jew, living at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, says in his book on the Jewish antiquities (18.1.3, 4), "The Pharisees believe that souls have an immortal vigor in them, and that under the earth" that is, in Hades, "there will be rewards or punishments, according as they have lived virtuously or viciously in this life. — But the doctrine of the Sadducees is this, that *souls die with the bodies*." "They take away the belief of the immortal duration of the soul, and the punishments and rewards in Hades." So likewise Luke, in explanation of the Apostle Paul's plea before the Sanhedrim, when he proclaimed himself a Pharisee, and declared that it was of the hope and resurrection of the dead that he was called in question, adds, "*For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit*; but the Pharisees confess both." (Acts 23:8).

The doctrine, then, which is popularly known as "annihilationism," — which denies the immortality of the soul, and teaches that it perishes at death with the body, is in its main features SADDUCEEISM. There have indeed of late been added to this certain other sentiments, apparently of wholly modern origin, such as the re-creation of the soul at the resurrection, and a subsequent utter annihilation of the wicked; but these are only appendages of the ancient faith, having no independent existence of their own. They must stand or fall only as the one cardinal assumption is proved true, that the soul is not a distinct substance, but a result merely of the physical organization, which at the moment of dissolution perishes with the body itself. It is proposed, then, to consider the history of this doctrine.

I. THE HISTORY OF THIS DOCTRINE.

At a very early date in the progress of civilization, there prevailed throughout the East, especially in Egypt, Babylonia, and Greece, a system of speculation concerning the origin of the world, the nature of the gods, and of man, which assumed the proud and specious names of "wisdom," and "philosophy." Its followers, like the disciples of Christianity in later times, were divided into several sects, all of them, however, holding many opinions in common. Nowhere was this philosophy more cultivated than in Greece, and nowhere were its sects more numerous or distinguished. Prominent among these were the Epicureans, so called from Epicurus, their founder. Dr. Mosheim, the very learned ecclesiastical historian, sums up their opinions thus: "The Epicureans maintained that the universe arose out of a fortuitous concurrence of atoms; that the gods (whose existence they dared not absolutely to deny) were indifferent as to human affairs, or rather entirely unacquainted with them; *that our souls are born and die*; that all things depend on and are determined by accident; that in everything, voluptuous gratification was to be sought after as the chief good; and even virtue itself only to be pursued inasmuch as it might promise to minister at the shrine of pleasure." Another sect, the Academics, held that the immortality of the soul was doubtful, and the Stoics denied it altogether (Mosh. Com., 1. p. 33). Here then was the original source and fountain of this belief, and from this it passed into the system of the Sadducees. "Although," says Dr. Kitto, "there existed in Judaism itself a sufficient source for Sadduceeism, yet, as a fact, we have no doubt that Grecian philosophy lent its aid to the development of Sadduceeism. Whence we are referred for the rise of the latter to the period when the conquests and the kingdoms which ensued from the expedition of Alexander had diffused a very large portion of Grecian civilization over the soil of the East, and especially over Western Asia." (Bib. Cyc., Art. "Sadducees").

The main tenet of this Epicurean atheistic philosophy was that sensual pleasure was the highest good of man, and their motto, accordingly, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." Such a tenet would, of course, be particularly attractive to the rich who had the means to command sensual gratification. Accordingly Josephus says expressly that the Sadducees were of the wealthy classes. (Ant.

13:11. 6). They desired to pass their lives in an uninterrupted course of ease and pleasure; they were wholly devoid of every sentiment of benevolence and charity towards the poor, and considered themselves as the favorites of Heaven, because they alone had the means of happiness. (Mosh. Com. 1, p. 65). Their character is exactly sketched in the narrative of the rich man and Lazarus, the former of whom, whether a person actually existing or not, was drawn undoubtedly from the example of a rich, voluptuous, and haughty Sadducee, who denied a future state, and all responsibility for his conduct, and must have been a familiar picture to the people of that day. "Since their tenets forbade men," says Mosheim, "to look forward to a future state of rewards and punishments, and placed the whole happiness of man in riches and sensual gratification, they naturally tended to generate and encourage an inordinate cupidity of wealth, a brutal insensibility to the calls of compassion, and a variety of other vices equally pernicious and degrading to the human mind." (Com. 1, p. 77).

The Sadducees, therefore, possessing such a character, and holding such views, were, as might be expected, the most bitter of all the opposers of our Lord and his Apostles. In repeated instances, as will be shown presently, he came into direct collision with them, and most explicitly and solemnly declared their sentiments false. So also with Paul. These declarations were so unequivocal that few, apparently, in the early churches dared to profess the Sadducean errors; nor for fifteen centuries can anything more than a few traces of them be found in connection with the orthodox faith. Atheists and deists, however, retained the old Greek philosophy, and have ever taught it under the names of Pantheism and Materialism. Socinianism espoused it in its principal features in the 16th century, and from this it has come down through Unitarianism and Universalism, within the limits of nominal Christianity, to this day. Abner Kneeland, the atheist, preached it in Boston; and Balfour, and a large portion of the modern Universalists, hold it, with some modification, at the present time.

II. THE DOCTRINE STATED.

The following are some of the statements of the doctrine under consideration, in the language of its advocates.

“No scripture or philosophy has ever yet been shown to prove the mind anything more than an attribute of the living, organized dust; and if so, it must cease with the life of the body.” (Age of Gospel Light, p. 16).

“Man has no soul or spirit that can exist as a living thing apart from his body; his whole nature is mortal.” (Bible vs. Tradition, p. 42).

“All the dead are unconscious in their graves; if there be no resurrection they have perished like brutes; they have been already blotted out of existence.” (Ib., 233).

“I shall attempt to show you that the death which is the wages of sin is not immortality in misery, but an actual extermination of being.” (Storrs’ Six Discourses, p. 16).

“The death threatened against disobedience was the opposite of living for ever, that is, ceasing for ever to exist; total extinction of being. Unquestionably the threatening of death was directed against the whole man, and not a part of him merely; as a being he was to die, to become extinct.” (Moncrieff, Dial., p. 19).

“There is a resurrection of the dead generally.”
“We are assured that all the dead, small and great, shall be raised.” (Dobney, Future Punishment, pp. 164, 185).

“We understand the resurrection to condemnation to be a retributive resurrection to a second

death,” that is, to a second annihilation. (Ib., p. 185).

“The second death we regard as not the object or purpose of the resurrection of the unjust, but its *result*” (Hudson, Debt and Grace, p. 400).

III. ARGUMENTS FOR THESE VIEWS EXAMINED.

1. One of the chief evidences adduced in support of this doctrine is derived from the alleged import of the word *death*, and kindred terms denoting the penalty of sin, and the punishment of the wicked. “The death,” says Dobney, “threatened to Adam was the death of the entire man, the cessation of all conscious existence; the extinction of being.” (Pp. 135, 152). “This is the only natural meaning that the words, ‘In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die,’ will bear.” (Monc. p. 19). “Life and death are put in opposition; not life and conscious *being* in misery, but simply life and death, without any qualifying terms.” (Storrs’ Six Discourses).

Now it is enough to show how baseless is this whole argument, to remark that *death* in its true and proper import *does not mean* extinction of being.

Such is not the meaning given to it in our dictionaries. Webster defines it thus, “That state of a being, animal or vegetable, but more particularly of an animal, in which there is a total and permanent cessation of all the vital functions; when the organs have not only ceased to act, but have lost the susceptibility of renewed action.” Observe, not the cessation of existence, not “extermination of being,” but a cessation of certain *functions*. No such word as annihilation, no term implying non-existence is found in the entire list of subordinate definitions which follows.

It is demonstrated by science, that as a matter of fact, nothing that dies, ceases to be. Not one particle of matter which ever entered into the composition of a human body has ceased existence. It may have been separated from the other particles, and may have entered into new combinations, and new states of existence, but it has never ceased to be. It is not possible to annihilate a single atom of anything which God has once made. The fuel we use is consumed; it passes

into a different form of existence, but none of it is lost. Every particle of it might be collected again, whether solid, or fluid, or gaseous, and weighed, and they would, together, weigh just as much as before. Water may be evaporated, gas may be burned, but it is still in being in another form. And so through all the range of substances known to man. Through every change, every disorganization, every decomposition, every reconstruction; under the action of every element, heat, light, electricity, no matter what, it preserves its identity, it is the same original particle which God himself first made, and which we have no reason to believe will ever cease to be.

Death in the ordinary use of the most unlearned persons, does not mean non-existence. Take the body itself. It dies. But is it not a body still? Can you not see it, and feel it? Does it not give to every sense the same evidence of its existence as before? Submit it to a certain chemical process which will arrest the tendency to decomposition, and will it not exist indefinitely? The mummies of Egypt, do they not exist? and yet are they not dead? Your neighbor slaughters an animal; it dies; he invites you to his table laden with the *meats* prepared from it. Does he invite you to feed on nonentity? He cuts down a tree and prepares it for the fire; does he burn what has been annihilated? But I need not multiply these questions. It is too plain for mistake, that when we ordinarily speak of any substance as dead, we do not mean that it has no more existence; we mean only that certain powers and functions have ceased in it, and that is all. It has gone into another form of existence; its essence, its substance, are just as truly in being, just as real as ever before.

Neither does death in the Scriptures, in other applications than to the subject before us, have any such meaning as is alleged. "Let the dead," said Christ, "bury their dead." Did he mean to say that non-existence should bury non-existence? "She which liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." "You hath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." Are persons who are living in pleasure and sin, already annihilated? "So then death hath passed upon all men," not *shall* pass hereafter, but hath passed already. Have all men suffered "extinction of being?" "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." "Thou fool! that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die." Must the seed be annihilated in order to germinate? Does the bountiful harvest spring from the bosom of

non-entity? These are but a few instances of the scripture use of the terms in question, which need to be barely stated to show the utter absurdity of the position taken.

It is then a mere begging of the question to argue that because God inflicts the punishment of death upon men, he therefore plunges them into non-existence. That men, all men, die, is conceded, of course. That such was the doom pronounced on the race in Eden, is true. But this does not touch the point. The true question is, "Is what is dead annihilated?" So with all the kindred words used in the Bible to denote the end of the wicked. Perdition is simply *loss*; destruction is the opposite of construction; as the construction of a house is the act of building it, its destruction is the act of pulling it down, or taking it in pieces. To burn, and to burn up, is only to change the form of being. Not a single word that is ever applied in the Scriptures to man, either body or soul, either the righteous or wicked, means annihilation, or the cessation of existence; and all that monstrous fabric of materialism which is built on the alleged import of these terms falls hopelessly to the ground.

Nay, more; these words, if they prove anything on the point, prove that man's existence does not cease at death; not even his body, as I have shown, nor any particle of matter that ever existed on earth. Each has another being in different forms and circumstances, yet a real existence. Even then, if the soul does die, the analogy should teach us that it still has a real existence, as before. The fact that nothing of which we have any knowledge ever ceased to be, is the strongest presumptive proof that no human soul ever ceased to be, or ever will. No created particle of matter has ever ceased to have its uses in the universe; to act and re-act on other particles; to be itself subject to laws appropriate to its nature; or to cease accomplishing important purposes in God's economy. Why should this be affirmed only of the soul? Why, if everything else is under such a law of continued use, activity, and subservience to God's glory, should we not irresistibly infer the same to be true of God's greatest created existence on earth, the human soul?

But take the other side of the argument. "Total extinction of being," it is said, "is the only natural meaning that the words 'in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die,' will bear." Be it so. Either, then, Adam and Eve suffered "total extinction of being" on that day, or else the curse was not inflicted. They either died, or

did not die. If they died, then they were annihilated; if they did not die, then Satan told the truth to Eve.

Besides, if the penalty was annihilation solely, then it was not spiritual death; their *characters* were not depraved; and we, their descendants, are not fallen beings in consequence of their sin. The only consequence resulting from it was their own non-existence.

And again, if this was the penalty they suffered, then mankind are not descended from them. For nonentity, I take it, cannot propagate the human race. The Adam and Eve from whom we descended must be some other than that Adam and Eve who sinned and “ceased to exist.” Must we adopt a view of death which compels us to such absurdities as these?

Yet further. The curse of the law was death; and death, say the advocates of this doctrine, was “total extinction of being.” Now, Christ himself died on the cross; and the conclusion, therefore, is irresistible that he suffered “total extinction of being.” The Apostle Paul expressly says that he took our nature, and “in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren.” If, then, he had a human soul, it must have died, as other human souls die, with the body. If other men pass into non-existence at death, then the man Christ Jesus passed into non-existence at death; if he did not, then other men do not. If he did, then during those three days prior to his resurrection, there was no Savior in being. The Logos, the divine Word, who was in the beginning with God, and who was God, the Son of God, and son of man, had ceased to be! Indeed, one of the modern advocates of annihilation does not hesitate to say, “Christ’s soul was not left in the grave; then it must have been *in* the grave and *dead*. It did not die a spiritual death, for that would be dead in sin. It follows, then, that it died a literal death.” (Age of Gospel Light, p. 20). If you revolt from this, as impiety and blasphemy, then do not take such a position in regard to the meaning of the word death as compels you to it by the most direct and stringent necessity of logic.

But still more. Grant that death, as the threatened punishment of sin, is “total extinction of being.” It is expressly promised to the righteous that they shall not suffer this punishment. “The soul that sinneth,” said God by Ezekiel, “it shall die.” What force has this, if the soul that sinneth *not* shall also die? For it is claimed that the soul in all cases dies with the body. “If the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that

which is lawful and right, he shall surely *live*, he *shall not die*; all his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him; in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live.— When the wicked man turneth away from his wickedness that he hath committed, and doeth that which is lawful and right, he shall save his *soul alive*: —he shall surely live, he *shall not die*” Again, “He that believeth on the Son *hath* everlasting life.” Not shall have, ages hence, at the resurrection, but hath now a life that is eternal, and shall not cease. “Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me *hath* everlasting life. — This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and *not die*. I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever. —Whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die.” Let it not be said in reply to this, that these passages refer only to the eternal life that will be conferred on believers at the resurrection. The very terms expressly forbid this. They say he has *now* eternal life, and that he shall not die at all, shall *never die*. Can the beloved disciple, John, and others of that age, have had this promise fulfilled, if, after all, they have been dead eighteen hundred years, and may, for aught we know, remain so as many, or ten times as many more, before the resurrection? “Verily, verily I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is *passed from death unto life*. We know that we *have passed* from death unto life, because we love the brethren.” Granting, then, that death does mean “total extinction of being,” these passages, and abundant more, most positively and explicitly assert that the believer never suffers it; that in the very act of believing he passes from death unto life; that living and believing, he shall never die. But the body, even of the believer, dies. If, then, Christ’s words are true, his soul, the only other imaginable part of his being, never dies; it is immortal, and eternal, as the promise and faithfulness of God himself.

2. The second chief argument in proof of modern Sadduceeism is derived from sundry passages in the Old Testament, which, it is claimed, plainly assert it. The following are some of the most striking of these passages: “Man lieth down, and riseth not; till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, or be raised out of their sleep. In death there is no remembrance of thee; in the grave who

shall give thee thanks? Wilt thou show wonders to the dead? Shall the dead arise and praise thee? Shall thy loving-kindness be declared in the grave, or thy faithfulness in destruction? Shall thy wonders be known in the dark, and thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness? That which befalleth the sons of men, befalleth beasts, even one thing befalleth them; as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no preeminence above a beast. All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to the dust again. The living know that they shall die, but the dead know not anything. There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest. For the grave cannot praise thee; death cannot celebrate thee; they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth. The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day," &c.

I do not propose at present to examine these and similar passages in detail. Considerations only will be adduced, which are applicable to them as a class.

First. Let it be remembered that everything is not *the word of God* which is found on the pages of the sacred volume. Vast numbers of persons are mentioned there, together with the words they uttered, or sentiments they held, which are not pretended to have come from God. The last quoted of the above passages may serve as an example. This, though it occurs in the book of Isaiah, is not what Isaiah said, nor what God said by Isaiah. It is simply part of a song of thankfulness written by king Hezekiah, after his recovery from sickness. But there is no evidence whatever that Hezekiah was an inspired man. He was, in the main, a good man, but all good men were not inspired. So with the passages quoted from the book of Job. Some of them are spoken by Job himself, some by his three friends, some by Elihu. Yet who will undertake to prove that any of these, though good men, were inspired? Even Job himself, when he cursed the day of his birth, when he complained that God multiplied his words without cause,—asked if he was a sea, or a whale, that God had set a watch over him, — did he speak by inspiration? If not, then what proof is there that he thus spoke when he wished himself dead — hid in the grave like an untimely birth, where he might sleep and be disturbed no more, &c.? No doubt we have here a description of Job's opinions, but it is the merest assumption to say that therefore they are God's declarations. It is important, if we would read

the Bible intelligibly, to discriminate carefully in this matter. The following may serve as a few hints to guide us in determining what is, and what is not, said in it by divine authority.

(a). It is such, if it was spoken by God himself; as when God addressed Moses, when he answered Job out of the whirlwind, and the like.

(b). If it was spoken by a prophet, at God's command; as when Moses was ordered to speak in God's name to the people; and Isaiah, and Ezekiel, and Daniel uttered predictions at his inspiration.

(c). When it is expressly said that men spoke by inspiration; as Balaam when he blessed, instead of cursing the Hebrews; David when he said "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue."

(d). When any person wrought miracles to prove what he had said to be from God; as Moses before Pharaoh, and Elijah and Elisha before the Hebrew kings.

(e). When their words are expressly quoted in the New Testament by Christ, or his Apostles, as the word of God.

(f). And finally, when there is in any way *proof*, sufficient for a fact so important, that the words in question are to be understood as spoken by divine authority. I repeat it, we must discriminate carefully. It has been far too common for men of all creeds to quote the Bible at random, as if anything here written out were of course God's word. Nor is this saying that the Bible is not all inspired. It is so in the sense that it purports to be, and no other. It says that Job said this, and Hezekiah that, and Balaam, and even Satan himself, something else. The *fact* that they said so, is divinely asserted, and is therefore inspired, but *what* they said, is another thing. This may be God's word, and it may not; it may be truth, and it may be, as what Satan said to Eve, absolute falsehood.

Secondly. The inspired writers, and God himself, often used language according to the *appearance* of things, and not in its most philosophical and absolute sense. Thus they speak of the sun's rising and setting; of its standing still at the command of Joshua; of the sky above as a firmament; they say that God hath founded the earth upon the seas, and established it on the floods; that he hath laid its foundations that it should not be removed for ever; and the like. Now all this is language describing the appearance of things; and to argue from this as the literal truth, is to do as the Romish priests did

when they imprisoned Galileo for affirming that the earth revolved about the sun. So, on this principle, the dead are often spoken of, as having ceased to be. "Thou turnest man," said the Psalmist, "to destruction;" i.e., he passes out of sight just as if he had wholly ceased to exist. "Return, O Lord," said David in a time of great distress; "deliver my soul. Oh! save me for thy mercy's sake, for in death there is no remembrance of thee, in the grave who shall give thee thanks?" that is, I shall otherwise pass from the stage of active life and usefulness; I shall leave the earth, and be able to serve thee no more. Solomon says that man "dies like the beast," "all have one breath," "the same event happeneth to all," etc. This is all true in *appearance*, and for the sake of his argument it is not necessary to understand by it anything more. So we often say of men, that they have met a bad end, or a good end; that they are no more; that an end has been put to their existence, and the like; all of which is the language of appearance, and is used just as readily, and with as little sense of impropriety or self-contradiction by the believer in their immortality as by the unbeliever. The Bible, let it be remembered, is a book of common life, and employs the language of common life. Every attempt to extort from it abstruse philosophy is a violence and perversion.

Thirdly. It is freely conceded that the doctrines of a future state, and especially of the future rewards of the righteous and the wicked, were *not as clearly known* to the Old Testament saints as they are to Christians. It is the glory of the gospel, that it has brought life and immortality to light. Just so it was with the doctrine of the atonement by Christ, of justification by faith, and many others. On all these topics the views of the ancients were obscure; their language is often obscure; often not easily reconciled with the evangelical language of the gospel. No doubt many of them had almost no idea of any future existence at all, and all spoke of the grave as a place of darkness, and silence, and gloom. Is it wise, then, is it in accordance with common sense, to go back to them, and in the very twilight of revelation, find authoritative declarations of the future non-existence of man? Suppose the legalist should go there to find evidence against the doctrine of justification by faith, and quote Job, and Solomon, and Hezekiah, to prove that he only would be saved who obeyed in person the whole law of God; should we admit such proofs? Should we not say that those statements of good men, true

indeed in their understanding of them, must yet be modified and corrected, and their defects supplied by the clearer light and testimony of Paul and John? And if we should do the same in respect to the class of doctrines before us, should we find any more difficulties in these, or anything that should be weighed against the full, and clear, and explicit testimony of the New Testament? Nor is this any impeachment of the inspired authority of the Old Testament. The Bible is to be taken collectively; in many cases the *whole* truth in relation to a doctrine is not given in one passage. The partial statements of one portion are to be supplemented by the fuller statements of another, and thus by the collation and comparison of the whole, the exact truth is reached. Such was Christ's own declaration respecting the design of his mission as a teacher: "I am not come to destroy the law or the prophets, but to *fulfill*," that is, to fill out, to complete.

Fourthly. Those passages which seem to deny man's continued existence at death *are not the whole* that bear on that point in the Old Testament. Hear what Professor Stuart, whose ability of judging was, perhaps, second to none in our day, says on this point: "When," says he, "we are told so often and so confidently that the ancient Hebrews had no idea of a future state, we must crave the liberty of hesitating before we receive this. What did the Hebrews think had become of Enoch and Elijah after their translation? What is meant when it is said that Abraham and others were gathered to their fathers? It cannot refer to their burial, for Abraham was buried in Canaan, but his fathers in Mesopotamia, in Charran. What means David's language, 'In thy *presence* is fullness of joy, at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore'? What shall we say of his declaration 'I shall be satisfied when I awake in thy likeness'? How can any man reasonably suppose that the Hebrews, with Moses, and Samuel, and David, and Solomon, and Isaiah, knew less than the Egyptian and other heathen nations around them, about a future state of existence? The idea is all but preposterous in my view. All this, and much more which might be adduced from the Old Testament, makes me hesitate to receive such a doctrine as this." Such is the testimony of one of the most eminent Biblical scholars of America, and a man whose candor and love of truth equaled his learning.

3. A few passages are found in the New Testament which, it is

claimed, teach, at least indirectly, the doctrine before us. Among them are the following: —

Acts 2:34, “For David is not yet ascended into the heavens.” It is inferred, of course, that he had ceased to exist; but the mere statement shows how unwarranted the inference. The Apostle Peter was laboring to convince the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah, and quoted for that purpose the words of David, Psalms 16:10, “Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell (Hades), nor suffer thy holy one to see corruption.” This had been fulfilled in respect to Christ, whom God raised from the dead before decomposition commenced, therein proving him to be his Son. Then, as if anticipating the objection that David did not mean Christ in this passage, but himself, the Apostle adds, “For David is not ascended into the heavens,” that is, he is still in the grave — he has seen corruption — he will not rise until the general resurrection at the last day. Obviously the reference is to the body only of the Psalmist. Nothing whatever is affirmed of the soul in this passage.

1 Cor. 15:18, “Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.” It is argued that the Apostle meant to say that if there be no resurrection, and Christ be not raised, these departed saints have ceased to exist. But this is to assume that such is the import of the word, perished, which, as before remarked, is simply begging the question. The true meaning of the passage is apparent from the preceding verse. “If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, *ye are yet in your sins*” If Christ be not raised, he is proved an impostor; your hope of salvation by him from sin and hell is fallacious; your sins still rest upon you; and all who have died trusting in him, are suffering the perdition of their souls, under the endless penalty of God’s law.

1 Tim. 6:16, “Who (God) only hath immortality.” It is inferred from this that man, by nature, has no immortality. But it is also said that God only is wise, (Rom. 16:27; 1 Tim. 1:17; Jude 25), from which it were equally reasonable to infer that man has no wisdom whatever. The obvious meaning is simply that God alone has undivided and eternal self-existence.

Rom. 2:7, “To them, who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honor and *immortality*...” Phil. 3:11, “If by any means, I might *attain* unto the resurrection of the dead.” It is argued from these, and one or two similar passages, that a future life is

something to be *sought* and *attained*, and therefore is not to be reached by all. But this is the same assumption which we find at every step of the argument, that life means simply existence, and death cessation of existence. The immortality here spoken of is that which our Savior promised, "Whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die." (John 11:26). The resurrection which Paul sought, was the opposite of that predicted by Daniel, "some to shame and everlasting contempt." (Daniel 12:2).

Such are the principal arguments relied on by its advocates in support of the doctrine of annihilation. Many others are advanced by them, but they are of secondary importance. If it be not established by the former, the latter alone will be of little avail. The reader will judge whether they are sufficient to demonstrate a doctrine so contrary to the common faith of Christendom, and so revolting to every human instinct; a doctrine which makes man only a brother of the brutes, with no soul, save his fleshly organization, which flickers here for a few days amid storm and darkness, and then plunges into total and blank extinction.

IV. REFUTATION OF THIS DOCTRINE.

It remains to show, in the fourth place, some of the positive reasons which refute this relic of ancient error.

1. The first that I will mention is the declared fact that God made man *in his own image*. This was asserted of him in the creation, and re-affirmed by the Apostle James of all men. "They are made," said he, "after the similitude of God." (James 3:10). Now this similitude to God cannot be personal holiness, for men are not now created holy,— that feature in the original image was lost in the fall; and yet, the similitude itself they still bear. I know not where to find this but in a spiritual and immortal nature. It is not in man's body, for God is not material. It is not in any instinct of the body, anything resulting from mere bodily organization, for the brutes themselves have this, and it might as well be said of them, on this supposition, that they too are made in God's image. It must be, then, in the soul itself. God is a Spirit, and man is made in his image, in his similitude. What is more conclusive than that man is created a spirit also? And therefore it is, because of the essentially spiritual and god-like dignity of man, that the crime of murder against him, — that is, the crime of sending a spirit unprepared, and uncalled for, from its probation into eternity, is made so heinous. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for in the image of God made he man." Whoever, then, comes to me with the assertion that I have no soul, and, save in the fineness of my organization, no preeminence over a beast, I need but reply to him, "God is not a beast, he is not a mere organized body of matter; God is a Spirit, and I am made in his image. My consciousness responds to the testimony of his word, that the *I* that thinks, the *I* that makes my manhood, is not my body. My spirit within me asserts its sonship to the divine Spirit. It came forth from God, it will return at death to God who gave it."

2. The Scriptures everywhere, and especially in the New Testament, employ language which necessarily and irresistibly implies that the spirit of man is a wholly distinct thing from his body, and that it has, or may have, an existence entirely separate from and

independent of it. Of these, the following are a specimen:— “Fear not them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul, but rather fear him, which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” But if the soul depends on bodily organization, and if to kill is to cause extinction of being, then every man who can kill the body, can kill the soul. Every wicked being, or magistrate, who may inflict capital punishment, can do both. Did our Savior, then, really tell the Apostles, for their comfort as they went forth to preach, to be courageous against every foe who could not touch life, but to fear every petty tyrant who could kill body and soul both? — Christ on the cross, immediately before his death, exclaimed, “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.” (Luke 23: 46). Now was this, as some pretend, only commending his *breath* into the hands of God? Was the breath a thing to be preserved, to be cared for, to be an object of solicitude after the body had died?— “Today,” said he to the dying thief, “thou shalt be with me in Paradise.” (Luke 23:43). But the body that day was on the cross, or in the grave. What was it, then, that went to Paradise with Christ? If it be said, in reply, that the expression should be so punctuated as to read, “I say today, thou shalt be with me in Paradise,” I answer this is to insult our common sense, and abuse beyond excuse the word of God. Is it so that the Savior would solemnly mock the dying penitent with such nonsense as, “I say to you today, — I do not now speak yesterday, or tomorrow, or next year, — thou shalt be with me, after the resurrection, in Paradise?” “The body is dead, because of sin, but the spirit is life because of righteousness.” (Rom. 8:18). “Glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s.” (1 Cor. 6: 20). “I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless, unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Thess. 5:23). “As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.” (James 2:26). These, and many similar passages, imply a distinction between the two. They are just as they would be, supposing each to have an existence of its own. They exactly accord with the common idea of the two-fold nature of man; they have been understood, in all ages, and by the most eminent interpreters, as teaching that man has such a nature. What can be proved, then, from the language of God’s word, if they do not mean it here?

3. The Apostle Paul, in repeated instances, expressed a readi-

ness, nay, even a desire to die, that he might be with Christ. “For to me,” said he, “to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” (Phil. 1:21). It is said that this means that death to Paul would be gain, not to him, but to the cause of the gospel. But I ask whether any man will have the effrontery to say that Paul actually meant it would be gain to the cause of Christ on earth, if he, its most laborious and successful advocate, were absolutely to be annihilated, — were to suffer “total extinction of being?” What more could be said of him, if he were the vilest wretch in existence? For such a one to cease to be, might be a gain to Christianity, but *for the Apostle Paul*, — never! Think of the desperateness of any cause which is compelled thus to abuse God’s word, and dishonor his most faithful and devoted servant, to get rid of the evidence against it. And if there were any doubt of his meaning, it would be solved in the very next verse but one, — “For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better; nevertheless to abide in the flesh, is more needful for you.” Here he expressly says that his *living*, not dying, was most needful for the church; the gain of his dying, therefore, must have accrued to him, and not to them. He desires, too, to depart and be *with Christ*. Now Christ had already ascended to his Father above; to be with him, then, would be to be in heaven, and that while his body was in a dishonored grave at Rome. This, he says, was far better than to live — for heaven is better than earth; —but how better, if death to him were annihilation? Did Paul mean that it were better to cease existence, than to serve Christ in the ministry of the gospel? Surely, to ask the question is to answer it. Again he says, “We are always confident, knowing that while we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.” (2 Cor. 5:6). No language can more explicitly and positively declare Paul’s belief that death is not non-existence — that to pass from the body would be to pass into a state of conscious and most joyous existence, in the presence and fellowship of Christ in heaven.

4. Repeated mention is made in the Scriptures of the actual existence of human souls in a disembodied state. Such was that of Samuel, who appeared to Saul, while consulting the necromancer and impostor at Endor. That this was not a dream or mere mental vision, is plain from the fact that Samuel was seen by the woman

herself, as well as by Saul. That it was not a phantom or spectral illusion, is demonstrated by the fact that Samuel addressed Saul in audible language, and denounced upon him the displeasure of God. Will the believer in annihilation tell us *what* this was that appeared to Saul, if it was not the departed spirit of the venerable prophet?—The appearance of Moses with Elias on the mount of transfiguration, is an instance to the same effect. It is said, however, that the body of Moses had now been raised, and that it was this which appeared talking with Jesus. It is enough to reply, this is pure assumption. Not a hint of any such thing is given in the narrative, and nobody would have ever dreamed of such an idea but in the desperation of an indefensible error. Again, “I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held. And they cried with a loud voice, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?” (Rev. 6:9). It is said in respect to these, that they only existed in the vision of the Apostle, that as yet the martyrs themselves had not lived nor died; and these, therefore, could not have been actual souls. But though they were not, does this annul the essential import of the scene? Does it not teach that there is, at least, such a thing as a soul? And who, I may ask in passing, were all those beings that John saw in Revelation as purporting to be the departed of earth? Who were the multitudes that surrounded the throne of the Lamb, and sung that new song of praise to him that was slain, and had redeemed them unto God by his blood? Who the hundred forty and four thousand that stood on Mount Zion? Were all these phantoms, nonentities, illusions? Is it the natural and legitimate inference from them that there is no such thing as a human soul, spiritual and immortal, that lives after death?

But even if all this is claimed, what shall be said of the cases of Samuel and Moses? Must it not be a desperate cause which can be maintained only by denying, in the face of the plainest testimony, and the universal interpretation of those passages, in all ages, that the departed spirits of these servants of God were permitted to appear in the manner and form recorded?

5. That the soul ceases to exist at death is refuted by the great Christian doctrine of the Resurrection. For the fundamental idea of a resurrection is the resuscitation of that which already, in some mode, exists. To call into being from non-existence is an act of

creation. The Sadducees were consistent with themselves in denying the doctrine of a resurrection altogether, as they denied the existence of an immaterial element in man. See how the sacred writer couples the two as necessarily involving each other. "The Sadducees say there is no *resurrection*, neither *angel nor spirit*." The declaration that there should be a resurrection of the dead was itself conclusive that death was not the end of man, that something of his being still survived, which should thereafter be recalled from the invisible world to appear in all the conditions of a conscious and active being.

It is scarcely possible to put into words a more glaring issue of absurdities and profanations of truth than attend the doctrine of a resurrection, if man has no immortal soul. For existence itself having terminated at death, whatever is "raised" will be caused to spring out of blank non-existence. Of course, then, that will be the beginning of its existence. If it has consciousness, volition, memory, and other qualities of a moral being, the same moment will be the commencement of their existence. And yet all these, according to the theory, are identically the same soul, with its qualities, which lived in probation; that is, each had an existence before it began existence! And this new being is to be judged and rewarded for the deeds done by that former being, of course, before its existence began! And the conferring upon it of immortality is a reward or gift bestowed on that which long before utterly "perished;" and the sentence of death inflicted on it is a punishment of what has already been annihilated! Thus every statement pertaining to it is a direct contradiction in terms. And this necessarily so, because the two ideas of annihilation at death, and of a resurrection, are themselves a contradiction. The Sadducees, if they held an error, did not also hold an absurdity; if there is neither "angel nor spirit," there can be no resurrection; if there be a resurrection, as our Lord most explicitly declares, then there is an element in man which survives death, a spirit, immaterial and immortal.

Besides, to what end should the wicked, once annihilated, be thus "raised?" Is it to suffer the penalty of God's law? But this they have already suffered; they are still suffering. Is it necessary to inflict a penalty twice? When a criminal has been hanged till he is dead, is it necessary afterwards to suspend the body again? Does any principle of justice or government demand this? Does not this

theory make both resurrection and judgment a farce required by no law, conducive to no useful end?

Nay, more, if needless, then cruel. Suppose a judge could galvanize the dead body of a criminal into life, who, by once dying, has fully satisfied all the ends of justice, for the sole purpose of executing him again, what would be thought of such a man? Would not the voice of universal humanity cry out against him as a monster? But the wicked — who at death suffered the full penalty of the law, total extinction of being — are recalled into life, to be judged, and — annihilated again! And this the sole significance of the day of judgment, the most august, the most momentous in all the history of this world, and of man! What shall we say of such profanations and caricatures of the most solemn truths of revelation? What of a system of faith of which these are among the corner stones?

6. But I hasten, without mention of many of the proofs that might be adduced on this subject, to speak of one more, the most important of all, viz.: the direct refutation and denial of Sadduceeism by Christ himself, and by the Apostles.

1. The first instance that will be noticed was on the occasion of Paul's trial before the Sanhedrim, recorded in Acts 23:1-10. Notice the circumstances. This body, the great Council of the nation, consists of men of both parties among the Jews. There are the Sadducees, who say that there is no future state, no resurrection, angel, or spirit. There are the Pharisees, who hold to all these. Paul is called in question for having preached that Christ was raised from the dead. Now, if he believed that there is neither angel nor spirit, that the soul of man is but his breath, and dies with the body, it was then the time to avow it. He could as well have made interest with the Sadducees as the Pharisees. The point in dispute was virtually this very one that divided the two. Why, then, did not Paul avow himself a Sadducee? Why did he not speak decidedly on this point, and proclaim the great fact which our modern Sadducees are so eager to maintain, that man has no preeminence over a beast? Perhaps he is about to do so. He opens his lips as if to speak; — let us listen: "Men and brethren, I am a *Pharisee*, the son of a Pharisee; of the hope and resurrection of the dead, I am called in question." Not of the hope in a general resurrection, for that was not the burden of his preaching, but of hope in, and reliance on, one who was dead but now alive

again, Jesus of Nazareth. Ah, does this sound like Sadduceeism? Do the Sadducees themselves understand him as holding their favorite doctrine? No, there is instantly a great dissension. The Pharisees at once take his side, "We find no evil in this man, but if a spirit or angel hath spoken by him," (as he says Jesus did on his way to Damascus) "let us not fight against God. We admit that the soul of the Crucified One did live after death, and possibly he did appear to Paul. You Sadducees do not believe it, for you say his soul perished with his body on the cross." I appeal to the reader, knowing the sentiments, respectively, of these two parties, and the circumstances in which Paul made this election between them, is it not absolutely certain that he abjured the doctrine that there is neither angel nor spirit? Was not his conduct a direct and pointed denial of Sadduceeism, and that, too, in reference to this very point? Would it have been possible for him more forcibly to refute and brand it with falsehood by any form of language whatever?

2. Take another instance very similar to this. Paul is at Athens, the very seat of the Greek philosophy, and in the most flourishing era. He has been preaching to the Jews there in their synagogues as usual, and in the market place, of Jesus and his resurrection. "Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans and Stoics encountered him." Why? Because they were the very sects who denied absolutely the spirituality and immortality of the soul. To say that a dead man, one that had been executed as a criminal, had come to life again, was, in their view, absurdity. At last they take and lead him to Areopagus, the vast open space fitted up on the brow of Mars' Hill, where the public assemblies of the Athenians were held, and say, "May we know what this new doctrine whereof thou speakest is? For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears; we would know, therefore, what these things mean." Here, then, the Apostle begins that beautiful and noble oration in behalf of the truth, in the midst of that crowd of learned and polished skeptics. He speaks to them of God, of his invisible nature, of his creation of men, and his relation as parent to them all, of the folly of idolatry, and of a day of judgment, "by that man whom he ordained, whereof he hath given assurance to all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead." Ah, the shout of derision that follows when he comes to this! "The resurrection of the dead! The coming to life of a dead man! How absurd! Why, does he

not know that the dead have no existence, they have suffered ‘total extinction of being;’ that the soul is only the product of organization, and perishes with the body? What is the man talking about, in telling us of a dead man’s coming to life again, and God’s appointing him to judge the world?”— Thus “when they heard of the resurrection of the dead,”—not the general resurrection, be it observed, for Paul had not said a word about this, but of the resurrection of Jesus only,— “some mocked” —viz.: the Epicureans and Stoics; “others said ‘we will hear thee again of this matter.’” Is it not unaccountable that if Paul believed this very doctrine of the Greek philosophers, he should not now have avowed it, that he should have preached instead the very opposite? Here again we have inspiration in contact with the doctrine before us, and most pointedly and expressly denying it.

3. The next instance was in Paul’s discussion on the resurrection, in the 15th chapter of 1st Corinthians. Observe now again. The Corinthians were Greeks, at a little distance from Athens, and among them luxury and vice prevailed, if possible, even more than at Athens itself. Here were Epicureanism and Stoicism, and among the Jews, doubtless, Sadduceeism; and some, probably, in the church, were tinctured with their peculiar views. Paul had preached here, as every where, that Jesus had been raised from the dead. “The Scriptures,” says he, “predicted his rising; he was seen after it by Cephas, then by the twelve, at one time by above five hundred brethren at once, then by James, then by all the Apostles. And last of all, he was seen by me also, as of one born out of due time.” Now, he says, after all this proof, “if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?” Observe, not the general resurrection, for nothing had been said of this, but the resurrection of Jesus, and the reality of a future state, as demonstrated by this. Dr. Dwight, in his sermon on the resurrection, says expressly that the meaning is,

“How say some among you that there is no future life, or existence, of the dead? To remove this great Sadducean error from that church, and to prevent its existence ever afterwards, was obviously the design of Paul in writing this chapter. Accordingly he shows its absurdity in the most triumphant manner, in the

first thirty-four verses, and with equal success elucidates and proves the contrary doctrine. In the remainder of the discourse he dwells extensively on the nature of the body with which those who are dead will be invested at the final day, declares the change which those who are living at that time will experience, and concludes with a song of triumph over Death and Hades, and a solemn exhortation to Christians to steadfastly abound in the service of God.”¹

Here, then, on the best authority, we are assured that Paul’s object in writing this chapter was to refute Sadduceeism and Epicureanism in the Corinthian church, and prove that there is an existence of man after death, that the first thirty-four verses are occupied in this, and then, introducing an objector who asks about the body, he discusses the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. More than one half of it, then, is an argument in direct refutation and re-proof of the doctrine we are considering.

4. The next instance was the interview between Christ and the Sadducees, when they asked him of the woman who had had seven husbands. Hear again Dr. Dwight upon this subject.

“The word,” says he, speaking of the Greek term *anastasis*, translated resurrection, “is commonly, but often, erroneously rendered, resurrection. So far as I have observed, it usually denotes our existence beyond the grave. The Sadducees ask whose wife shall she be in the *anastasis*, i.e., in the future state. They could not suppose that she would be any man’s wife, in the (literal) resurrection—a momentary event, and of such a nature as to forbid the supposition that the relations of the present life could be of the least possible importance, or be regarded with the least possible attention, during its transitory existence. Our Saviour answers them. In the *anastasis*,’ in the

¹ Theol., vol. iv., p. 481.

future state, ‘they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in Heaven. But as touching the *anastasis*,’ or, as it ought to be rendered, the future existence of the dead, ‘have you not read that which was spoken to you by God concerning the existence of those who are dead, saying, I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. God is not the God of the dead, but the living.’ This passage, were we at any loss concerning the meaning of the word *anastasis*, determines it beyond dispute. The proof that there is an *anastasis* of the dead is the declaration of God to Moses, ‘I am...’ and the irresistible truth, that God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. The consequence, as anyone who reads the Bible knows, is that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were living at the time when this declaration was made. Those who die, therefore, live after they are dead, and this future life is the *anastasis*, concerning which there was so much debate between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, which is proved by this passage, and which is universally denoted by this term throughout the New Testament. Nothing is more evident than that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had not risen from the dead, but it is certain that they are living beings, and therefore this passage is a complete proof that mankind live after death.”²

Such is President Dwight’s exposition of the conversation with the Savior. Of his competence to understand it and to speak of the meaning of the original word, we surely shall not doubt. Nothing can be more directly to the point before us — nothing more conclusive.

5. Finally, the narrative of the rich man and Lazarus, even if all the rest were of no account, would settle this matter for ever, with all who receive the truth in simplicity and sincerity. Here, too, I will

² Theol., Vol. iv., p. 480.

give the exposition of it, by that very learned and able man, Dr. Mosheim.

“Our blessed Saviour,” says he, “in that history of the rich man, (whether true or feigned matters not), which is recorded in St. Luke’s gospel, hath given us a just picture of the manners and way of living of the Sadducees. Dives³ was a Jew, for he calls Abraham his father, but he was neither a Pharisee, nor one of the Essenes; and we may therefore conclude him to have been a Sadducee. Indeed, our Saviour’s narrative leaves us no room to doubt on this point, for the request of Dives to Abraham is, that he would send Lazarus to his brethren, for the purpose of converting them to a belief in the soul’s immortality, and in the certainty of a future state of rewards and punishments. It is plain, therefore, that during his lifetime he had imagined that the soul would perish with the body; and had treated with derision the doctrine held by the Pharisees respecting the happiness or misery of a future state; and that the brethren whom he had left behind entertained similar sentiments, — sentiments which already mark them as the votaries of that impious system to which the Sadducees were devoted. The writings of Moses and the prophets were not, indeed, rejected by him. On the contrary, it should seem that he held them in respect: ‘They have Moses and the prophets,’ says Abraham. The Holy Scriptures, therefore, it appears, were in the hands of these men, but they would not allow that anything contained in them would warrant a conclusion that the souls of men would survive the dissolution of their bodies, and be either punished or rewarded in a future state, for the deeds done in the

³ The Latin word for “rich man” is Dives, and has been used as a proper name by many commentators.—Editor.

flesh.”⁴

Such is Dr. Mosheim’s account of the import of this narrative. Its correctness is apparent at a glance. “Send Abraham,” says Dives, “to my father’s house, for I have five brethren, that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.” Testify of what? Why of a future life, the existence and punishment of the soul after death, which he, and they, and all the Sadducees denied. Abraham saith unto him, “They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them” — for they reveal the truth in question. “And he said Nay, father Abraham, Moses and the prophets do not speak plainly enough on the subject, but if one *went* unto them from the dead, they will believe, and repent.” “And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.”

Here then, are three departed souls disclosed to us, two happy, one in torments. The latter prays for relief, but is denied. He then asks that Lazarus may go back to earth to assure the unbelieving that there is a soul, and a state of rewards and punishments. This, too, is denied, on the ground that the fact is already revealed in the Scriptures. And now, what shall we say of a doctrine which, directly in the face of all this, and all the multiplied proof of the gospel, still holds with Dives in his lifetime, and his Sadducean brethren, that there is no resurrection, no *anastasis*, neither angel nor spirit. What more desperate denial of the word of God can be found than this? What more destructive to souls? What more dangerous, if the rich man’s experience is worth anything, to those who advocate it? Must we not say of them, if they still deny the soul’s existence after death, “If they hear not Moses and the prophets,” yes, and the Apostles, and Jesus Christ himself, so directly affirming it, “neither would they be persuaded though one *rose* from the dead?”

⁴ Comment, i., p. 66.

V. MORAL ESTIMATE OF THIS DOCTRINE.

Having thus exhibited the unscriptural character of modern Sadduceeism, it is desirable, ere we close, to glance at the moral aspects of the doctrine, and its practical bearings on the Christian truth, and on man.

For it is not enough to say simply that it is an error. Many other errors are held which are of little account. They are aberrations of the judgment, or belief, of little importance and perhaps involving no moral obliquity. But this is not an error of that kind. Beginning with putting the utmost dishonor on man, in reducing him to the grade of a mere animal, it fatally corrupts all that system of truth and motives which gives to virtue its sanctions, and is essential to the soul's salvation.

It dishonors the government of God.

The professed aim of this doctrine is to relieve the divine character from the imputations which rest upon it from the eternal punishment of the wicked, and the endless continuance of sin and suffering in the universe — an evil, it is alleged, too tremendous to be consistent with God's goodness, or justice, in permitting it. But the relief thus sought — in the theory of annihilation — is not gained; besides, it attributes other things to God's government which are fatal to its wisdom and honor.

The relief sought is not obtained. For the real difficulty involved in this ancient problem respecting sin, this "conflict of ages," is not that of its endless duration, but its existence at all under the government of a holy God. "It is urged," says Professor Mansel, "that sin cannot forever be triumphant against God. As if the whole mystery of iniquity were contained in the words *forever!* The real riddle of existence, — the problem which confounds all philosophy, aye, and all religion too, so far as religion is a thing of man's reason, — is the fact that evil exists *at all*, not that it exists for a longer or shorter duration. Is not God infinitely wise, and holy, and powerful *now*? And does not sin exist along with that infinite holiness, and wisdom, and power? Is God to become more holy, more wise, more powerful hereafter; and must evil be annihilated to make room for

his perfections to expand?" Let the believer in annihilation explain, if he can, why sin and suffering are permitted at all, and he will, in so doing, have answered his own assumption that their eternal existence is a reproach to a holy and benevolent God.

Then see what other absurdities the annihilationist attributes to him. The penalty of God's law, he says, is death — extinction of being. But this is a penalty which admits of no degrees. Annihilation is and must be always the same thing. The least sin incurs it; the greatest can incur nothing more. The child's first moral act of wrong receives the same as the deepest dyed crime of a Nero or a Judas. So, too, a single sin is punished precisely the same as a life time of iniquity. The full penalty is visited upon the first sin, and no subsequent sins can be punished at all, because the sinner no longer exists to receive it. Can a government of which the fundamental principle is thus subversive of all discriminative equity be predicated of the all-wise and just God?

It equally dishonors, nay, subverts, the *gospel* of Christ.

It utterly excludes the idea of *grace* to the guilty. All men, the righteous and the wicked, alike suffer the full penalty of the law; they cease to exist. There is no remission of the penalty, no forgiveness, no salvation. Adam is how suffering that penalty, — Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Paul. Nor is it the blood of Christ by which men are saved. It is the resurrection alone. There is no spiritual regeneration, which makes one a child of God; that change is wrought only when the dead are raised from their graves. Regenerate and unregenerate, the prayerful and the prayerless, alike suffer the penalty of the inexorable law, and pass into non-existence. There are no "spirits of just men made perfect" in heaven, for nobody has got there yet. No songs of praise are sung there "to the Lamb that was slain, and has redeemed us unto God by his blood." Heaven is empty, the earth resting under the original curse, all its uncounted millions of inhabitants have sunk and are sinking into the hell of annihilation, and till the distant morn of the resurrection God's moral universe is a blank. And this is the gospel of Jesus Christ! This that wondrous plan which is to vindicate God's character in creating man, and at the annunciation of which the plains of Bethlehem were made vocal with angel's songs of praise!

Such a doctrine, it is manifest, destroys all the moral sanctions of truth.

Why should men fear to sin, if the worst that is to befall them is simply to cease all consciousness of suffering? Nay, this, however great an evil it be, is already incurred. Let them sin however much, they can incur nothing more. The worst that can happen will happen, at all events. Why not say, as the Epicurean fathers of this doctrine did, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.”

We are told, indeed, that man instinctively shrinks from annihilation, and that the dread of this must be sufficient to restrain from sin. Doubtless there is such an instinct in all living beings, yet how many are there, even in this life, who, if annihilation were offered them, would gladly leap into it to escape their present miseries? It is not this they fear, but

“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.”

Destroy this fear which “makes cowards of us all,” and suicide would be as common as the sorrows which tempt to it. Besides, of what avail to shrink from non-existence? The penalty is **ALREADY INCURRED**. Sin as much as you please, eat, drink, riot in every excess, revel in outrage and crime, and then your

“quietus make
With a bare bodkin,”

if this doctrine be true, and you will suffer just the same doom that you inevitably must suffer now — annihilation. Is this a doctrine to be proclaimed with safety in such a world as this, where, despite all the sanctions of God’s law, and of conscience, its vicegerent in the soul, sin is restrained with so much difficulty?

Dear reader, can you choose such a version of the gospel as the one we have now exhibited as the foundation of your hopes? Beware of its shallow sophistries, its gross assumptions, its utter perversions of the word of God. You have in the narrative of the rich

man an inspired delineation of what it could do for him. Will you too build upon it for eternity, or will you rather declare with Paul on this point of fundamental truth, "I am a Pharisee" — a believer in man's immortality, — a believer in Christ, and in that assurance which he has given for our comfort and hope, "Verily I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and he that liveth and believeth on me SHALL NEVER DIE"?