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"NOT SLOTHFUL IN BUSINESS: FERVENT IN SPIRIT."

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Poetry.

Hers was a Mother's heart.

Hers was a mother's heart,
That poor Egyptian's, when she drew apart
Because she would not see
Her child beloved in its last agony;

When her sad load she laid,
In her despair, beneath the scanty shade
In the wild waste, and stepped
Aside, and long and passionately wept.

Yet higher, more sublime,
How many a mother since that ancient time
Has shown the mighty power
Of love divine, in such another hour!

Oh! higher love to wait
Fast by the sufferer in his worst estate,
Nor from the eyes to hide.
One pang, but aye in courage to abide.

And though no angel bring
In that dark hour unto a living spring
Of gladness—as was sent,
Still her voice of turbulent lament—

Oh! higher faith to show
Out of what depths of anguish and of woe
The heart is strong to raise
To an all-loving Father hymns of praise.

Religious.

The State of the Impenitent Dead.*

(Continued.)

RATIONAL OBJECTIONS ANSWERED.

Many persons choose to begin their study of this great theme at the very point where we are inclined to finish. Having little reverence for the word of God, they sometimes call in question its infallibility, and often treat its language with less deference than is paid to their own speculative reason. Whatever may be their theory of inspiration, they do not hesitate to interpret the sacred oracles into harmony with their limited and interested judgment, to adjust, by a never-ending process, revealed theology to their floating ideas of natural theology. Hence, as might well be expected in such a case, after insisting upon the *unreasonableness* of the doctrine of eternal misery as the wages of sin, they make haste to repudiate this doctrine, and to extract from the living word some justification of their course. We propose, therefore, to review some of the arguments which are said to prove the doctrine of this essay to be *unreasonable*.

Still, we rest the truth of our doctrine, be it observed, upon the testimony of divine revelation, and cannot therefore be required to show that it is a doctrine of natural theology, taught by unaided human reason. If it is to be found in the sacred record, all the reasons—and they are unanswerable—which prove that record to be an expression of God's will, combine to make a belief in this doctrine reasonable.

There are some, it appears, who exclude the very notion of punishment from the divine administration, declaring that all suffering is preventive or reformatory. There are others who admit the reality of penal retribution, but restrict it to the loss of possible good, whether this good be defined as happiness or as conscious being itself; and there are others—hitherto the vast majority of mankind—who believe in punishment for sin, both positive and negative, in time and in eternity. Now, whatever may be the merit of either, or of all these opinions, the simple naming of them brings up at once the query, whether human reason can be trusted in the premises, and whether an argument founded upon it must not be, at least, exceedingly precarious.

But, leaving this thought, let us take up the argument which are said to prove our belief *unreasonable*. And,—

I. The doctrine of eternal misery as the penalty of sin is irreconcilable with the doctrine of God's omnipotence; for it affirms the endless existence of what is hostile to God and abhorred by him. The same ob-

jection, it has often been replied, may be urged against the existence of moral evil at all; for it is diametrically opposed to the moral nature of God, whether it exist for a day or forever. Yet moral evil is permitted; and once actual in the universe, it is ever actual to him who is without succession, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever, with whom "a thousand years are as one day, and one day as a thousand years."

II. The doctrine of eternal misery, as the penalty of sin, is irreconcilable with the righteousness of God; for the penalty is altogether too great for the offence. This is true, it is alleged, whether we consider the sinner's probation as very brief, his knowledge as very limited, or his condition as very unfavorable. Let us examine, one by one, the grounds of this objection.

The sinner's probation, we are reminded, is *very brief*, as if God were in haste to fix his doom. There is no conceivable proportion between the longest life on earth and endless existence hereafter; but justice requires that the duration of punishment be proportioned in every case to that of the offence. Hence eternal woe cannot be the wages of sin committed in the present life. The righteousness of God forbids it.

In reply to the objection thus stated, we remark, that it mistakes the length a sinner's probation for the degree of his guilt; in other words, it assumes that a great moral wrong cannot be perpetrated in a short time; but this is a palpable error. In judging men here, we do not measure the guilt of an act by the time consumed in its performance, nor do we adjust the penalty to that time. Crimes of the greatest malignity, and meriting the severest retribution, may be committed in a moment.

Those who believe in the final salvation of all men admit that there are different degrees of happiness in the life to come, and maintain that wickedness here diminishes happiness there. This diminution is *eternal loss for temporal sin*, eternal detriment for evil-doing in time. The same may also be said of those who believe in the personal extinction of the wicked hereafter. For the sin of a day, they are punished with the loss of all good forever and ever. And, if this may be consistent with perfect righteousness, who shall say that what is even more to be dreaded, eternal misery, must be inconsistent with righteousness? Is not the principle and the difficulty the same in both cases?

Again, the sinner's knowledge is said to be very limited. He is unable to form any adequate conception of eternal blessedness or misery, and knows but imperfectly the will of God. And, therefore, it would be unjust to inflict so heavy a punishment upon him.

To this form of the objection we reply: (1) That the righteousness of a law, including its penalty, does *not depend upon the penalty's being known and appreciated beforehand*. For if it does, then obviously a man is *guilty*, not because he does wrong, but because he braves suffering. A previous knowledge of penalties may obviously tend to prevent crime; but it neither makes nor enhances the criminality of an act, except, perhaps, in so far as it enlightens the moral judgment of the perpetrator. It is no excuse for undue severity on the part of a ruler, to say, that his subjects were distinctly forewarned of it; for many a tyrant has pre-announced the unjust and inhuman tortures which would follow the slightest disregard of his will. Nor, on the other hand, is an ignorance of the penalties to be inflicted for any given crime the least excuse to the criminal for his act of sin. Theft is no less wrong in a country where it is punished with imprisonment than in one where it is punished with death. Were it necessary to the justice of a punishment that it should be really comprehended beforehand, there could be no just punishments in any administration, human or divine.

As to a knowledge of the *divine law*, or the rule of duty, we maintain that it is within the reach of every man, not perhaps in all its breadth and spirituality, but so far forth as he is held responsible for its violation. Men everywhere do what they

know to be wrong. If any portion of the divine will is disclosed to them, that portion they disregard and trample in the dust. If, then, we bear in mind that the intensity of woe hereafter is to be adjusted to the guilt of the sinner as measured by his disposition, and by his means of knowledge, and that every man does know something of God's will which he deliberately contemns, the force of this objection seems to be completely destroyed. But we are also, in this connection, to bear in mind the omniscience of God. He knows the hearts of all, and the exact amount of light offered to such as have not the gospel.

[Conclusion next week.]

MISSIONS.

In our last we gave one of the principal speeches delivered at the recent anniversary of the English Baptist Missionary Society. The following extracts from the Report read on that occasion will interest many of our readers.

France.

MORLAIX.

"Although one person only has been baptized during the year, others are exhibiting the power of Divine grace, and, in two cases, under circumstances of special interest. One, a lady, offers a Catholic chapel on her estate to preach the gospel in. It is two leagues and a half from Morlaix. Mr. Jenkins has sent one of the itinerant teachers to the neighbourhood, where she has commenced giving lessons in reading and in the Scriptures to a few persons who have welcomed her. For a considerable time it has been known that the question of adult baptism was exciting much attention in the evangelical section of the Reformed Church and in the Free Church. For years past several pastors have refused to baptize infants, or have questioned the scriptural authority of the rite, but have deemed it unnecessary to express their new convictions by any open act. At length the proceedings of M. Robineau, of Angers, attracted the attention of the Consistory of which he is a member. An inquiry was instituted, which resulted in his excommunication from that body. Dissatisfied with its decision, his congregation have declared their intention of adhering to their pastor, and a free Baptist Church has been constituted in this city of more than 50,000 inhabitants. An encouraging part of the year's labours has been the increased sale of the Bible. Four hundred and seventy copies of the Scriptures, in Breton and French, have been disposed of within six months, and the inquiry for the Word of God seems daily increasing. The effect of some recent changes in the law, relative to the authorization of new chapels, and the receipt of foreign moneys for religious purposes, remains to be seen. Generally, the Protestants of France are inclined to view the alteration with favour, and think that their proselyting movements will meet with less opposition from the Council of State than from the local authorities, too often under the sway of prejudice and Romish priests. The measure cannot, however, be regarded as in any sense a step in the direction of religious liberty."

Australia.

"The Society is aware that the supply of several churches in Australia with ministers has been sought at the hands of the Committee by various brethren in that important colony. The Rev. James Taylor, of Birmingham, was the first to go thither, and he was quickly followed by the Rev. Isaac New. These brethren have been followed during the year by four others, the Rev. Messrs. Slade, Sutton, Wilson, and D. Rees. It is with great satisfaction that the Committee learn that this movement has been eminently successful. It is true that the funds have been furnished by the Australian churches themselves, and it may be that the denomination at home has not taken the deep interest it should have done in the spiritual well-being of the rising kingdoms of the southern hemisphere; it cannot, however, be a matter of thankfulness that our share in the movement

should have so far been successful. It may serve to stimulate the churches of this country to be always "abounding in the work of the Lord," seeing that he so graciously suffers not our work to be in vain."

The Report gives other information of the Society's operations in the West Indies—The Bahamas, Haiti, Jamaica, Africa, Ceylon and India. In reference to the latter country the report remarks:

"Now, the last flashes of that tempest of human passion are glimmering on the horizon, peace and order are again dropping their fruitful blessings on the land, and the Word of the Lord may once more go forth in freedom and saving power. All reference cannot be omitted from a report of the Committee of the Baptist missionary Society, to the great and most important change that has been effected in the government of the country. The Company of Merchants by which that mighty empire was won for the British crown has ceased to exist. Its powers and its privileges have been surrendered at the command of Parliament, and henceforth India constitutes the noblest part of the wide dominions owning the direct sway of Queen Victoria. For long the Government of India was adverse to the enlightenment and evangelisation of its myriads of subjects. The early years of this Society were years of struggle with the opponents of education and the Gospel. Dangers of the greatest magnitude were apprehended, should the light of truth shine into the dark cells and chambers of obscene imagery of the gods of Hindustan. But, in the issue, those dangers sprang from that portion of the population where rigorous exclusion was most stringently and effectually carried out; and events have shown the impolicy, nay the folly, of opposing the spread of the faith of Christ, which, of all faiths, is pre-eminent for its promulgation of the purest morality, the duty of obedience to rulers, and for the social elevation of the people who accept its teachings and its truths. The great mutiny of 1857 has at least taught the English nation and its rulers this lesson—that to despise and reject Christianity is not conducive to the highest interests, or to the good and peaceful government, of the vast populations over whom Divine Providence has called them to rule."

Eloquence of Henry Clay.

Whoever heard Mr. Clay for the first time, was almost certain to be delighted with him, without exactly knowing why. There was a charm about his oratory that defied analysis, and rendered sober criticism well-nigh impossible. You went away too well pleased, and too full of admiration for the man, to think of asking how he had managed for the last hour, to put you in a rage at one moment, and make you laugh or cry the next, at will. There was something about him different from any other speaker I ever heard. Webster was like a steam engine for concentrated power, and the rush and roar of his assault upon an enemy, a sort of human volcano, when the fires were kindled in those cavernous eyes, and he poured forth a torrent of burning words scorching and scathing all before it. Calhoun was the very genius of abstract reasoning, calmly and deliberately adding link after link to the iron chain of his logic, till the hearer fell down at the end, bound hand and foot in the unyielding meshes of an irresistible necessity. But Clay—when he mounted the rostrum a universal smile illuminated men's faces, and they looked at one another with an expression which said plainer than words, "Glad to see you up, Mr. Clay. Begone dull care! We're going to have a good time. This heavy work is over at last. Business done—now comes pleasure." "Clay," said General Jackson, in the writer's hearing, "is the most plausible speaker that ever opened his mouth in a public assembly. If you listen to him, he will make you believe anything he pleases." This, from an enemy, was not meant for praise, but to the fact old Hickory was perfectly competent to testify. "Hush, Mr. Clay is going to address the jury." I looked at those twelve gen-

*Abridged from Dr. Hovey's recent work having this title.