

250
Hervey Roberts
his A Book
SERMON,

DELIVERED AT

LISLE, COUNTY OF BROOME, STATE OF
NEW-YORK. 1819.

—:—
BY THE REV. THOMAS GROSS.

PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF THE HEARERS.

Amor vincit omnia : et nos cecidamus amori.

Love conquers all : and we must yield to it.

—:—
“And these shall go away into everlasting punishment.”—St. Matt.
XXV. 46.

THIS passage has been considered as an unanswerable objection against the doctrine of universal holiness and happiness to the human family. The opposers of the above doctrine, have brought this, with other similar passages, to prove, that a part of mankind will, eventually, be doomed to a state of *endless misery*.

From the above considerations, and from the particular request of several of my friends, I have taken up this subject: hoping that it may throw some light: that it may be a mean of guiding our feet in the way of peace, and of enlarging our views and desires, as to the nature and extent of our Saviours kingdom. I shall premise three things before I proceed particularly to the text.

I. That punishment, natural evil or misery is an effect of *sin its cause*.



was, that, being subject to these evils, and experiencing their disadvantages; we may more highly prize the good of deliverance, which is designed for us in the final issue.

III. That an endless continuance of punishment or misery cannot consist with design for good in the final issue; and that, therefore, the doctrine of endless misery cannot be true.

I. Punishment, or misery, must be an *effect of sin, its cause; The wages of sin is death.* Sin, I consider to be a transgression of the law. The law transgressed, is the law of God, communicated to the understanding of man; and as this understanding is very limited and circumscribed; so this law, as to our knowledge of it, is limited: and therefore the transgression is limited or finite. So far as we understand this law, it will appear to be good, and the transgression will, consequently, appear to be wrong: and so far as we have a conviction of having done wrong; so far we shall feel *remorse, fear, shame, &c.* This *remorse, fear, shame, &c.* will grow out of the sense we have of the wrong done: and thus punishment or misery is the consequence of sin. The first transgression is a proof of this position. Adam and Eve were punished for their transgression by the guilt, fear, &c. which immediately took place in their minds. They heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they were afraid and hid themselves. In this fear, which arose from the sense of having transgressed, consisted their punishment at that time. It was misery flowing in consequence of transgression.

The objecter may say, the idea of misery flowing only as a consequence of sin, is not true; because the penalty, in case of transgression, is expressly mentioned: "*In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*"

Answer—This is nothing more than a declaration to them, of the connexion of misery with sin, which God had determined: and as this could not have been known to them, at that time, from their want of knowledge and experience, therefore, God saw fit to warn them of this connection before transgression, and to assure them that *misery* should follow as an effect *from sin its cause.* I cannot consider this declaration, "*In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*" to be of the nature of a threatening. It is an assertion or declaration to Adam, and was well calculated to leave him without excuse whenever he should transgress. It was a declaration to Adam, that God had ordered things in such a manner, that transgression should produce guilt, fear, and shame, with a train of evils with them.

But, did man, become mortal by transgression?

I answer in the negative.—Man's mortality did not come in consequence of sin; but the knowledge of his mortality. Adam did not know that he was mortal till after transgression. If man were made immortal, his becoming mortal would not only be a contradiction, but an impossibility: because his being found mortal

was formed. Now to this point St. Paul informs us, that the creature was made subject to vanity : i. e. was made mortal, subject to dissolution, subject to error, to go astray, to sin, and consequently to *mi-ery*. The creature *was made subject* to all this *vanity*. Hence his mortality did not come as a consequence of sin; but by sin he came to the knowledge of these things.

But what, then, could be the death of which he was apprised, in case of trasgression ?

It was that train of evil consequences, which have been mentioned : viz. shame, fear, self-condemnation, and all those evils of body and mind, which, by our wrong conduct, we expose our bodies & minds to : for though we were made subject to the vanity of natural death, and are mortal ; yet that death, which consists in guilt and shame, &c. we never experience, but as a consequence of sin. Some have supposed that the death intended was endless *miser-y* ; but this, t'is plain, cannot be true—for if that had been the case, it must have been inflicted, or truth must have been violated. Others have supposed that it meant the mortality and death of the body, but this we have already refuted. The things which have been mentioned, are the death intended : and there was no other punishment inflicted on Adam, than what arose as a consequence of his his transgression. In sinning, he became guilty, fearful, self-condemned and miserable. And this is the case with his posterity. We sin and that leads us to pain and woe. It darkens our minds, we become estranged from God. Knowing ourselves to be guilty, we think that God has become our enemy, and we endeavor to hide ourselves from him. But on examination, it appears that sin begets guilt, and guilt fills the mind with all these fearful apprehensions. They arise as a consequence of sin.

From whence, then, do all the miseries of man proceed ?

They proceed from *sin their cause* by an inseparable connexion which God fixed and determined, *'Thus, when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin ; and sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death.* Thus punishment, natural evil or misery is an effect of sin its cause.

II. That the design of the connexion between sin and misery, was, that being subject to those evils and experiencing their disadvantages ; we may the more highly prize the good of deliverance, which is designed for us in the final issue.

In punishment or misery, there must be an object ; there must be some design : because, to have misery flow from transgression without any design would argue a defect in the wisdom and goodness of God ; it would argue a defect in his justice, love and mercy, and would militate against all the ideas we can form of a regular, wise and glorious plan, for a display of his perfections, in connexion with the best good of his creatures. Thus there must be a design.

1-1

The next thing, is, to enquire what the design could be. It is evident, that if God has a design herein, that that design must be good and good to the suffering, afflicted creature. It cannot be

argued that the good, to be derived from suffering is adding to the happiness or essential glory of God : to that nothing can be added : from that, nothing can be taken. Nor are we to understand the good in this view, viz. as a benefit to some, to the exclusion of others ; or, that the misery of some was never designed for their own good, but for the good of others. This would argue partiality in the SUPREME. Yet it is granted, that the punishment of one person, is often designed as a warning to the good of others ; as a manifestation of the evil there is in sin, and the need there is of being on our guard against it : yet this good end to others, cannot be to the exclusion of the good of the sufferer, unless the sufferings of some are to be endless, which I trust that I shall be able to show in my third particular, is not true. This connexion of misery with sin, will tend to embitter sin to the sufferer ; will make him put a higher estimate and value upon the good ; will make him long for deliverance both from misery and its cause : and will lay a foundation of humility and poverty of spirit in himself, to that degree that he will be hopeless in himself, and all his expectation will be from God. Realizing his great mercy, the sense of God's mercy will, on that account, appear to be greater, and the song of redeeming love will, by him, be sung in the most exalted strains. Thus will the good be the greater and more precious from the acquaintance we have had with evil.

III. That an endless continuance of punishment or misery cannot consist with a design for good in the final issue—and that therefore, endless punishment, or misery, is not true.

An endless continuance of misery would render it impossible for the sufferer to be reclaimed, or that any good should come to him from such punishment. It is easy to see, that punishment for a time, may be of great benefit, to the punished . but the moment it is determined to be endless, there can be no longer a design for the creature's good, nor can good any more come to him, nor can he be reclaimed. It is impossible that the doom of endless misery should be with a design to reclaim the sufferer, or to do him good ; because an endless duration of misery would never admit of a time for good to come ; if it did, it would not be endless.

It has been supposed, that although mercy might plead for the sinner ; yet that justice required his endless misery. For ages, almost the whole world have argued in this manner. But did Justice, the justice of God, ever require this ? Does our reason dictate, or do the Scriptures any where declare ? It is all important that we should understand this aright. From scripture and reason, it is plain to me, that justice forbids the idea of endless misery, equally with mercy : and that the great reason why it should not be inflicted, is, because it would be unjust.

Good, it is manifest, must be the object of punishment, and good to the sufferer.—Justice, we say, truly, requires punishment for transgression ; but nothing short of good to them, can make even their punishment just. Strike out good as the design of punish-

ment to the transgressor, and his punishment will be unjust. Thus justice, in requiring punishment for the offender; and mercy, in designing and willing his greatest and best good; act from the same design, and towards the same object which is the good of the offender. An earthly parent, so far as he acts undesigningly & from just motives; never inflicts punishment, unless with the view and expectation of good to the offending child. If this be not the object, the punishment must proceed from hatred and revenge, which will make it unjust. The consequence of this reasoning is, that as endless misery can never be inflicted with a view to the good of the sufferer, or of his being reclaimed: it, therefore, is not just. The idea, that any person, however wicked he has been, ought to be cast off and punished endlessly, is not just. Justice demands no such thing, because the good of the offender could not in such a case, be the object.

But if the good of the sufferer be not the object of justice, in endless misery; may it not be argued, as just, on the principle, that it will be a great good to the intelligent system?

Ans.—That endless injustice should be done to some, as good to others, cannot be reconciled with justice. That the damned should be treated with endless injustice, with a view that those who are saved, might be the more happy, is an idea too dreadful to be admitted. On the supposition, that any creature could be more happy by the endless misery of a fellow creature; yet that happiness would not, in the least degree, destroy the injustice done to the sufferer, so as to make his punishment just. It would be a great injustice to the sufferer, as though other beings were not benefitted by it; consequently, the idea of the saints being happier in glory, by realizing the endless misery of their fellow creatures, in hell, is without any foundation of justice, and shows that such happiness is built on supposition only. We go farther, and say, that if any creatures in heaven or on earth, can be more happy on account of the endless misery of a part of mankind, such happiness must flow from something, in them aside from love to God, or love to justice, or love to a fellow-creature.

But, says the objector, If God has threatened endless misery to the wicked, his truth requires it, if justice does not.

If God has threatened endless misery to the wicked; it will be granted, in that case, that truth would require it. But can we suppose that God; has threatened endless misery to the wicked, contrary to the nature of his justice? I think not. Man often promises and threatens inconsiderately, and then is obliged, either to be true to such a threatening, or promise, though it be unjust; to be just, to the violation of truth. Thus Herod, in beheading John the Baptist, was true to his promise; but was unjust in the performance.—There was a clashing between truth and justice. If he had been just in sparing the life of that holy man, he would have violated the truth of his promise. This made him exceedingly sorry. But there is no such clashing between the truth and justice of

God. I think God has no where, in the Scriptures, threatened endless misery to the wicked. Sin and misery are inseparable: sin is the cause of misery, and misery the effect of sin. Now if God has threatened that misery shall be endless, he must have determined sin to be so likewise; for endless misery, as an effect of sin, cannot be, unless sin its cause, be endless. But we are assured, that Christ will make an end of sin. What will be the consequence of this? He will make an end of sorrow; because sin, which is the cause, being removed, sorrow, which is the effect, must cease. Thus we have endeavored to show, that the idea of endless misery is inconsistent, on the principle of justice. Justice and truth combined with love and mercy, must be jointly interested in the salvation of the world, else would its salvation be unjust.

We now will attend to the Scripture account of this subject. Will Christ reconcile all things to himself? *He will.*—Is God in Christ, reconciling the world to himself?—*He is.* What then will be the issue of sin and misery, when that reconciliation shall take place?—They must cease and come to an end. In reconciliation to God and Christ, the creature is brought to a state of freedom from sin & its consequences; and is assured that God is his portion and exceeding great reward. Thus, if we have assurance, that Christ will reconcile all things, all men to himself, endless misery cannot be true.

Again—If all the nations, kindreds and families of the earth, shall be blessed in Christ, the Seed; then there can be no endless misery; but all the nations, families and kindreds of the earth will be blessed in Christ, the seed, according to God's repeated promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob: Therefore there can be no endless misery, but sin and sorrow will both cease.

Again—If the devil and his works will be destroyed, and those delivered, who, through fear of death, were all their life time subject to bondage, endless misery cannot be true: but Christ was manifested to destroy the works of the devil; he came to destroy him, that had the power of death, that is the devil: Heb. ii. 14. 1 John. iii. 7. Therefore endless misery cannot be true. The idea of God as Father, who loves his children, whose offspring all men are, and equally so: and the idea of God as our Judge, Lawgiver, King and Saviour, are inconsistent with endless misery. As a Father, he loves his children: as a King and Ruler, he loves his subjects, and his government is a sufficient reason why the world should rejoice. "The Lord reigns, let the earth rejoice."

Again—If moral evil was designed for good, and for accomplishing the greatest good; through bringing us to the knowledge of good by experiencing the evil: then it is plain that the evil must cease, when end for which it was introduced is accomplished. The experience derived from a knowledge of the evil, is designed, in the great scheme of wisdom, as necessary for the greatest good: but if sin and misery are always to continue, the end, which is the greatest good, can never be obtained.

Again God has promised true Christians, that he will grant them all the desires of their heart: and all true Christians do desire and pray for the salvation of all men. Paul was anxious for the salvation of the Jews; and as he said, so says the Christian; Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the world is, that it may be saved: and as Paul, agreeable to his desire, had the assurance, that when the fulness of the Gentiles were come in, *all Israel should be saved*; so the Christian may have assurances of the salvation of the world, when he reflects, that God has promised to grant him all the desires of his heart. A man with these desires, which sprang from the Spirit of God, can never be happy, if but one soul should be doomed to endless misery. The reason is plain; for, in that case, their desire would never be granted: there would forever be a tender and anxious solicitude for an *object*: an *object*, which could never cease to be amazingly desirable, and yet the desire *never granted: never, never*, through the boundless ages of eternity. Therefore I say, unless the gracious exercises of the saints in glory are essentially different, in their nature, from what they are in this world; it is impossible that they should ever be happy, while any of their fellow creatures are in torment.

But, it is asked, may not the saints, in glory, be happy, while others are endlessly miserable, for this reason, that then they will be perfectly conformed to the will of God, and so their happiness arise from that consideration?

Ans.—If this were the will of God, even our damnation, then some thing might be argued in favor of that idea; but this is not the case, for this is the will of God, viz. our salvation, not our damnation. God will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. This is his will, his pleasure; and he tells us, he will do all his pleasure. Hence it follows, that the more the saints are conformed to this will of God, the greater will be their desires for the salvation of all men, and the more incomplete would their happiness be, could we suppose that those desires would never be granted.

Hence, it follows likewise, that the gracious desires of every true Christian, in connexion with the promise of God, are an assurance that the world will be saved.

We now attend to the design of Christ's coming. He came to condemn or to save the world. Which?—Not to condemn, but to save the world. We have seen, says John, and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. He is the light of the world, and he lighteth every man, that cometh into the world. He came, that all men, through him, might believe. He tasted death for every man, and is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world. He gave himself a ransom for all. God the Father sent him into the world, and authorised him to be the great Redeemer and Saviour of his people: and he, according to his Father's pleasure, did come to seek and to save that which was lost, and has left us his promise that the Holy Spirit, shall convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; shall reclaim us from our wanderings, shall reconcile us to himself, and diffuse his light and glory, till all flesh shall see the salvation of the Lord. This was the design of Christ's coming. Now, if but one human creature shall go away into endless misery, Christ never will have accomplished the compleet design of his coming.

But, althouh Christ has undertaken this great work, does not man's salvation depend on certain conditions, which he is to perform, viz. repentance and faith?

Ans.—Can a person believe that which has no existence? Must that which is believed, be a truth before it is believed? The thing believed, must, in all cases, exist before it can be believed. No one will deny this. Then faith cannot be a condition of the thing believed, because it was as great a reality before we believed as since we believed it. Now as to our salvation; if it ever will appear to us a reality, and be a reality, then it always was a reality, though we did not always know it; and its being an eternal reality, is the only reason why we can be called upon to believe it. Thus, God has given us a record of his Son. He that believeth not this Record makes God a liar. But how? The record is that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. Now to disbelieve this, makes God a liar, inasmuch as it is the same as to say, that it is not true; and if our believing it is not a truth makes God a liar; our belief is a belief of that, which was true before we believed it; and that destroys the conditionality of faith.

Thus faith cannot be a condition of our salvation, because it was as really a truth before we believed it as since. Faith brings us to a knowledge of that truth, and repentance is a suitable temper by which to enjoy it. But the thing discovered by faith, and enjoyed by a temper of repentance, viz. our salvation, was as true before faith and repentance as it is since; therefore, neither faith nor repentance can be conditions of our salvation.

Salvation, or eternal life, is the gift of God, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, an inheritance, which our heavenly Father gave to us. Faith and repentance are necessary that we should see and enjoy it; not that they should make that true, which was not true before. Hence, there is great propriety and necessity of preaching and urging these important doctrines.

Thus, from justice and truth, as well as mercy and love: from the nature, certainty and extent of reconciliation; from the certainty that all the families of the earth will be blessed in Christ, the Seed: that the devil and his works will be destroyed; from the idea of God, as a Father and a Ruler: from the desires of true Christians, and the promises made to those desires; and from the design of Christ's coming into the world as a Redeemer and Saviour, to do his Father's will in saving all men; I say from the above considerations, it is plain, that an endless continuance of punishment or misery is not true.

I come now to speak particularly to the Text, "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment."

These words are a declaration of a decision, which took place respecting the goats, when our Saviour came in his glory. The sheep are mentioned as well as the goats; in the preceding verses. The goats in the issue go away into everlasting punishment; but the sheep or righteous, into life eternal. I shall here inquire into the following things, viz.

I. What is meant in this and the preceding chapter, by Christ's coming in his glory, and when that period was.

II. Who are meant by the sheep and goats: and what is to be understood by placing the sheep on the right hand and the goats on the left.

III. In what sense the goats go away into everlasting punishment.

I. What is ment in this and the preceding chapter, by Christ's coming in his glory, and when that period was. The coming of Christ in his glory, means, his coming to abolish, and put an entire end to the legal dispensation; and to set up his spiritual kingdom, or the gospel dispensation. This took place, or Christ came in his glory, when Jerusalem and the Temple were destroyed by the Romans, about forty years after Christ's crucifixion.

But what could be the particular glory of Christ's coming, if that was the period? The legal dispensation had great glory in it,

tions. To them pertained the glory, the covenant, the adoption, the service of God, and the promises.

But, Paul says, that this dispensation had no glory, by reason of the glory that excelleth. For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious. The ministration of the spirit is much more glorious, than the ministration of death. Now Christ's coming was glorious, in as much, as he came to abolish the ministration of death, and to introduce and establish the ministration of the Spirit. It was a glorious display of Christ's power, that he should overturn and destroy a dispensation which had so long continued, which was strengthened by all the prejudices of the Jews in its favor, and by the numberless traditions of their own. Now, to see the Temple and nation of the Jews destroyed by the Romans, as the rod of his power; to see all the types and shadows of that dispensation come to an utter end; to see all the prophecies and promises of this event fulfilled at that time, and, instead of the shadow of good things to come, to see the good things themselves; to see a ministration of life instead of death, of the substance instead of the shadow; of light, which is clear and full of glory, instead of that which was imperfect: of grace to all nations equally, instead of a supposed limitation of it to the Jews: to see bigotry and superstition fall before the light of truth; the wonderful influence of the Spirit in qualifying the Apostles to work miracles; to inspire them with zeal and courage to preach the Gospel: the wonderful success which attended their preaching; the display of the mystery of salvation, which for ages and generations, had been hidden; the reign of Christ, as the spiritual, universal head of the Church; and pure, spiritual worship of the Father, in love and truth; these are the things which made his coming glorious at that period. His spiritual reign then commenced, and was thus glorious, but will continue and increase in glory, till all shall see his salvation, and this kingdom be given up to the Father, and God be all in all.

That we have explained the period of Christ's coming in his Glory aright, appears by comparing several passages together. The coming of the Son of man in his glory, was future when declared; but past to us, who now read it; for Christ had satisfied his disciples, as to this point, that his coming and the end of the world, (which was the end of the law dispensation,) should take place before that generation should be passed away. See Matt. xxiv. 3—34. See Luke xxi. 25, 26. There shall be signs in the sun and in the moon and in the stars: and upon the earth, distress of nations, &c. This was verified at the coming of the Roman armies. Verse 27—And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Verse 32—Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled. Compare this, with Matt. xxiv. 30, 35. and Mark xiii. 26

that generation passed away. It cannot be supposed, to be still future, as has been supposed by some.

II. I am to show, who are ment by the sheep and goats, and what is intended by placing the sheep on the right hand and the goats on the left. By the sheep is meant the Gentile world, all nations, the Jews excepted. By the goats, ia meant, the obstinate and unbelieving Jews. The Jews, had been first, in point of privileges, but were now to be the last. These children of the kingdom were now to be cast out, and the Gentiles from all points of the compass, were to called in, to enjoy the blessings made sure to Abraham, by the ancient promise made to him concerning the Seed.

The Gentiles, as they were to be favored with the blessings of the new dispensation, and believers of the Gospel, are denominated sheep. The Jews, as they were obstinate unbelievers and rejected the counsel of God against themselves, are denominated goats; a term of reproach. The right hand denotes honor and approbation! The left hand denotes the reverse, or a place of dishonor and disapprobation. Now the sheep, (the whole Gentile world,) are placed on the right hand of Christ, by being admitted to all the privileges and blessings of the Gospel. It is sent to them, it is preached to them; and it is no where else preached or believed, but among the Gentiles. The Church of Christ, for ages, has been no where, but among the Gentiles. And though all the nations and individuals among the Gentiles have not yet embraced the Gospel; yet they are the people to whom it is sent, & the time will come, when all will embrace it; the fulness of the Gentiles must be brought in, before the Jews will discover their mistake. Thus the sheep are placed on the right hand.

The goats, (the Jews,) are set on the left hand by being rejected, cast off, and deprived of the privileges which they enjoyed while in their national capacity, and shut out from all the privileges of the Gospel. They are scattered among all nations, forsaken and despised. Thus are these goats, who resemble Esau the hairy man, who set light by the birthright, placed on the left hand.

III. I am to show in what sense the goates go away into everlasting punishment. The destruction of the Jewish dispensation; of the City and Temple at Jerusalem; the amazing calamities which befell the nation; their being dispersed and scattered; and being given over to a blind mind and a hard heart, and remaining under the same blindness and prejudice against Christ, even to this day; and the certainty that they will so remain, for a long period yet to come, is the punishment here spoken of.

As to the everlasting duration of this punishment, we can have no hesitation in saying, that it will be evelasting in the same sense that many other things have been, which have long since ceased and come to an end. The priesthood of Aaron was to contine through the legal dispensation; when that dispensation ceased, the

priesthood, was to cease with it; yet it was called an everlasting priesthood; a statute forever unto him and his seed after him.—Exod. xxviii. 48. Num. x. 8. Lev. vii. 34. It has ceased, it has long since been at an end. The rejection and dispersion of the Jews will be everlasting, in the same sense that Aaron's priesthood was. That remained till every thing was accomplished by it, that was intended, and then it ceased; when another priest arose, after the order of Melchisedeck, and not after the order of Aaron. Thus likewise, will the dispersion, rejection, blindness & infidelity of the Jews continue, as an everlasting punishment, till every thing be accomplished, which was designed, and then it will cease, as Aaron's priesthood did.

But what could be the design to be accomplished by this punishment of the Jews?—It was two fold. The casting away of the Jews, was so great and signal an event; so great a fulfilment of the prophecies and does, to this day, cast so much light on the Scriptures; that it has been, and still is, a great argument to convince the Gentiles of the truth of the Christian religion, and of the authenticity of the scriptures in general; agreeable to Paul's expression, "If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be but life from the dead." It was designed, and is made use of, as a mean of reconciling the world. Thus this casting away of the Jews will continue till the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. Here we may discover, that the Gentiles are benefited from the example, made of the Jews, in their sufferings.

The next thing is that this casting away of the Jews, will, in the the issue, be a good to themselves. They are not only cast away, as a mean of reconciling the world; but they will be again received, and that will be, to them and the Gentiles both, as life from the dead. This casting away of the Jews, will be made use of, as a mean to humble, and prepare their minds for a thankful reception of the Gospel, when all the miracles and wonderful works of our Saviour, had failed to do it. Thus their punishment, agreeable to our forementioned ideas of justice, is designed, and will be a mean of good to them and the Gentile world; consequently not endless. Paul says again, "If the fall of them, (the Jews,) be the riches of the world; and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles; how much more their fulness;" Again, "For I would not brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceit, that blindness, in part, has happened to Israel, till the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, and so all Israel shall be saved; as it is written, there shall come out of Zion, the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. As concerning the Gospel they are enemies for your sakes; but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes; for the gifts and callings of God, are without repentance." Thus, though Israel be placed on the left hand, and are gone away into

everlasting punishment; yet there is certainty, that they will again be received into the Divine favor, and that all Israel shall be saved

IMPROVEMENT.

This subject is of the greatest importance, not only on account of the opinion of many; but likewise, on account of the honor of God, and the glory and happiness of mankind.

I am sensible, from my own experience, of the difficulty under which many labor, of giving up a point, which, for so many generations, has been taught, and received as a doctrine of the Bible. And I am equally sensible that in searching after truth, we should proceed modestly, and especially, in a case, where the long received opinions of our forefathers are to be called in question. But I am convinced of this important point, from a consideration of the cause of misery, the design of misery, and the nature of Justice.

This subject, teaches us the necessity of discriminating correctly, between ourselves, and the perfections of God. We are finite and changeable; loving and hating the same object, alternately. But God is infinite and unchangeable, ever loving or hating the same object. He, unchangeably loves all the works of his own hands, because they originate in his goodness, and bear his Image. But he eternally hated the d—l and his works, wherefore, it is said that he will destroy them.

Our subject teaches us what ground of everlasting consolation & good hope, we have through grace. All that we can desire, as a real and lasting good, comprehending our present and future happiness, by the will and design of our heavenly Father. That God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by Jesus Christ.

Therefore, let a sense of Divine goodness lead us to repentance; and may the boundless nature of sacred love, universally extended, lead every soul to praise God, the Father and the friend of sinners. Amen

REMARKS BY THE EDITOR.

The passages are very numerous, which refer to the rejection, and long captivity of the house of Israel; most of which have been misapplied, and taken to prove a state of never ending torment. Those I shall have occasion to mention, go to confirm the opinion of Br. Gross, respecting the parable of the sheep and goats.

Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which

all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And come forth : they that have done good unto the resurrection of life ; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation. John v. 28, 29. These words of our Saviour, correspond, immediately, with the words of Daniel the prophet : "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. Dan. xii. 2. These two passages, metaphorically spoken, perfectly agree with that in the close of the twenty fifth of s. Matt. on which Br. Gross has spoken, and have the same chain of connexion in the scriptures ; as may be seen by comparing the following passages together : Dan. xii. 1. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation *even* to that same time : Compared with Matt. xxiv. 21. For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. The time of trouble, spoken of, by Daniel and Christ, being such an one, as was not to be preceeded, or followed by any like it, proves that they were both speaking on the same subject. Again. Dan. xii. 1. And at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. Compared with Matt. xxiv. 15—20. When ye, therefore, shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth let him understand,) Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains ; Let him which is on the house top not come down, &c. At this time of trouble above mentioned, every one was delivered that believed on Christ ; while the rest of of the house of Israel was left to suffer in the general overthrow. Now we may clearly discover, from the manifest connexion of the above passages ; that, at the coming of Christ, the house of Israel were sleeping in the carnal ordinances of the law : represented by Daniel, under the metaphor of dust, and by Christ under that of graves ; both of which were analogous, to their situation. They awoke from their slumber when the Gospel day began to dawn ; see, the parable of the ten Virgins, Matt. xxv. While the bridegroom tarried they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh ; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, &

trimmed their lamps. Thus do we discover, that the voice of John the baptist was heard by the house of Israel, at midnight, the time of gross darkness, when they were roused from their slumber : *Some to everlasting life ;—* He that believeth on him, [Christ] is not condemned ;— but, cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God. He that believeth on me hath everlasting life. John iii. 18, 21. & vi. 47. These virgins, which have the light of Divine truth enter the holy of holies with Christ, when the door of the law, or way to life through types and symbols, was closed too and no man can open it : and the door of Gospel grace opened, and no man can shut it.—*And some to shame & everlasting contempt, or damnation.* And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light because their deeds were evil. If I had not come, and spoken unto them, they had not had sin, but now they have no cloak for their sin. He that hateth me hateth my Father also. Then said Jesus again unto them, I go my way, and ye shall seek me and shall die in your sins : whither I go ye cannot come. Wherefore, Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law : for they stumbled at that stumbling stone. John iii. 19. xv. 22. & viii. 21. Rom. ix. 32. Thus, the most of the house of Israel ; were brought under codemnation, by opposing the light of the new dispensation : they were broken off through unbelief, and fell into a atate of death, and while this continues they cannot come to Christ. When the dispensation of law closed their lights went out ; and they were thrust out of the kingdom. Since that they have been in outter darkness, weeping wailling end gnashing their teeth. Their situation is represented by virgins without knocking for enterance, but are answer'd I know you not, i e. after the law, at which door they are still stiving to enter.

Notwithstanding the rejection, dispersion, and long captivity of the house of Israel; the period of which is called everlasting : we are assured that their captivity shall be returned. The forgiveness of the house of Israel, for their rejection, and crucifixion of Christ, is as certain as it is evident, that Christ's prayer, will ever be granted.

Is It possible that a petition of Christ should not be offered, in faith, and if offered in faith will it not be granted: (who in his right mind will deny this?) and if granted, that transgression, which constituted the grounds of their rejection, will be forgiven. Hence, their house, is only, left unto them dessolate, untill the time cometh, when they shall say blessed is *he* [*Christ*] that *cometh in the name of the Lord*.

Assertion. A denial of the ETERNITY of future TORMENTS, leads to licentiousness; because without it, there can be no morality.

Reply. It is granted that all morality, built upon eternal torments, will fall with it; when the rains descend and beat upon that house built upon the sand. But all morality, built upon a sense of God's goodness, arising from a change of heart, from internal sensations of gratitude, to the benign AUTHOR of our existance, does not stand in need of so feble a prop to support it. Yet those who suppose themselves converted, because, restrained from overt acts through fear of torment, possessing a desire still to do evil, may be of a different opinion; and I venture to say no others.

THE DOCTRINE of endless misery, has been placed uppermost in THE CONVERSION of the CHRISTIAN world; and it is feared that this has been THE GROUND of all difficulties, in, the CHRISTIAN world; by restraining men, to POSSESS THE FORM OF GODLINESS, without CHANGING THEM, TO POSSESS THE POWER. THIS mode of CONVERTING men, falls under CHRIST's censure to THE JEWS: Woe unto you Scribes and PHARISEES, HYPOCRITES! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselite; and *when* he is made, ye make HIM twofold more a CHILD of HELL *then* yourselves.

It is the goodness of God, that leads men to repentance, and the knowledge of him, that gives THEM eternal LIFE.



3 9077 04069388 2

REPRINTED BY L. KNAP.

HENRIETTA N. YORK. 1820.