

# History of Opinions on the Scriptural Doctrine of Retribution

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## CHAPTER XXII.

### EARLY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARIES AND RETRIBUTION

We have spoken in general terms of Origen and of his system of theology, based on preexistence and universal restoration. We have spoken of his age, and of his relations to it, and to the coming ages. We have spoken of his eminent piety, of his distinguished scholarship, of the great work accomplished by him in the field of sound literature, and of his educating power on the great minds of the generations that followed him. We have also, in general terms, given the debased character of the age in which his doctrine of universal restoration was denounced as heretical and subjected to an anathema by the local Council of Constantinople in the year 544. We now come back to his age to unfold it more fully in its relations to theological schools, which from his time were most fully developed. At the time when he published his system of theology he was the leading teacher in the great Theological School of Alexandria.

#### Dr. Shedd's View.

But we are told by Dr. Shedd, in a passage which we have quoted in a preceding chapter, that the doctrine of future universal restoration was entirely confined to that school. He does not say how many other schools there were, nor what course these dissenting or opposed schools took, when, in a school so prominent and influential as that of Alexandria, a doctrine was promulgated which they regarded as erroneous and dangerous. It is, therefore, the more important for us, if we would get a true view of the facts of history, in all their relations, to consider these points. The idea conveyed by him is that of a general and united public sentiment in the Church, from which one theological school dissented as a kind of wandering star, while all the other luminaries revolved harmoniously around the great centre of truth.

#### Consequences of the View.

If this is a true view of the facts of the case, then it is morally necessary that certain other facts should be found in the records of history. It cannot be supposed that any teacher in a theological school would be allowed to continue from year to year to train up teachers hostile to the prevailing views of the main body of the churches, without some effort to arrest the course of the evil, either by his removal, or by founding opposing schools, or by elaborate argumentative refutations of the errors promulgated, or by all these measures at once.

#### Appeal to Facts.

What was done when Dr. Ware, a Unitarian, was appointed professor in Harvard College, and it was felt that the institution had come under the control of Unitarians, and would be used as a means of promulgating their views? Why was Andover founded, except because it was felt that the college, originally designed to train up godly, orthodox, religious teachers, was to be used in opposition to the doctrines of the churches by which it was founded? Why was Amherst College founded, except to make good the loss? Why did the Unitarian controversy break out, and lead to earnest argument and profound research? Was it not to vindicate and defend the

endangered truth? Suppose now, after Andover had been founded, that Dr. Griffin, or Prof. Stuart, had published an elaborate system of theology, resulting in the doctrine of universal restoration, would an orthodox board have allowed them to continue to teach in peace? Would they not have been speedily removed? Or, if not, if they could carry the trustees and overseers with them, would not the seminary have become at once the object of ceaseless attacks from Princeton, and other schools devoted to the defense of the true faith?

If then, the state of opinion existed of old in the Church at large which is alleged by Prof. Shedd, ought we not to find in history facts analogous to those which have been briefly sketched from the history of the Church in New England? And, if we do not find them, is it not proof conclusive that the state of things alleged did not exist?

#### Real State of Facts.

What, then, was the state of facts as to the leading theological schools of the Christian world, in the age of Origen, and some centuries after? It was, in brief, this: There were at least six theological schools in the Church at large. Of these six schools, one, and only one, was decidedly and earnestly in favor of the doctrine of future eternal punishment. One was in favor of the annihilation of the wicked. Two were in favor of the doctrine of universal restoration on the principles of Origen, and two in favor of universal restoration on the principles of Theodore of Mopsuestia. It is also true that the prominent defenders of the doctrine of universal restoration were decided believers in the divinity of Christ, in the Trinity, in the incarnation and atonement, and in the great Christian doctrine of regeneration; and were, in piety, devotion, Christian activity, and missionary enterprise, as well as in learning and intellectual power and attainments, inferior to none in the best ages of the Church, and were greatly superior to those by whom, in after-ages, they were condemned and anathematized.

It is also true that the arguments by which they defended their views were never fairly stated and answered. Indeed, they were never stated at all. They may admit of a thorough answer and refutation, but, even if so, they were not condemned and anathematized on any such grounds, but simply in obedience to the arbitrary mandates of Justinian, whose final arguments were deposition and banishment for those who refused to do his will.

#### Consequences.

If all these things are so, it does not of course follow that the doctrine of universal restoration is true. That is a question to be decided on Scriptural grounds. But it does follow that the assumption that this question was settled by the Church, so called, in a manner deserving either confidence or respect, is utterly fallacious and delusive.

#### Demand of Proof.

Of course the statements that have been made by us demand proof. They differ greatly from the statements of Prof. Shedd, and, though they can be sustained by the combined testimony of all the most authoritative Church historians, yet they present the case in a stronger light than will be found in any one of them. But a careful examination of the original sources of evidence will abundantly sustain every historical proposition that we have laid down.

It will be in order, then, to mention the six leading theological schools of which we have spoken.

#### Geographical Position.

Geographically, they are situated around the Mediterranean Sea, except one, which is on the upper courses of the Euphrates. Beginning, then, at the great school of Alexandria, whose position on this question is conceded, and passing up on the east end of the Mediterranean Sea, we come to Cesarea, which for some years was the seat of a distinguished theological school, under the care of Origen and his friend Pamphilus.

For a time, Dr. Schaff tells us, it "outshone that at Alexandria, and labored for the spread of the kingdom of God." From this school came the celebrated Gregory Thaumaturgus, ever the grateful scholar and admirer, and finally the eulogist of Origen. Passing on to the

north we come to Antioch, in West Syria, where was the celebrated Antiochian school to which belonged such representatives as Diodore of Tarsus, and Theodore of Mopsuestia, those well-known advocates of universal restoration, not as followers of Origen, but on principles of their own. Passing on farther to the east, we come to Edessa, in Eastern Syria; and, farther on, to Nisibis. The Eastern Syrian great theological school was sometimes in one of these places, and sometimes in the other, according as they were tolerated or persecuted by the orthodox Greek Church and the emperor. But here was the great centre of the persecuted Nestorians, when excommunicated and anathematized by the orthodox Greek Church and the imperial decree.

### **Theodore of Mopsuestia.**

As Nestorians, they could not but revere the great Theodore of Mopsuestia, who was, in fact, the father of Nestorianism. Accordingly, his works were translated into Syriac, and he was revered in the Nestorian churches, as "The Interpreter" of the Word of God. It must be conceded that he was especially honored as the father and defender of Nestorianism. But it is impossible that his views of restoration should have been unknown, for they are an essential element of his system, and are prominently declared in his works and in his creed. In addition to this they are, as has been said, introduced into the liturgy which he drew up for the Nestorian Church. Yet his views on this point were not enforced as a creed, and the eminent James of Nisibis, and Ephraim the Syrian, in their popular discourses, teach future eternal punishment. Whether this was their interior belief we cannot say, but the fact that Theodore was so honored, as "the interpreter," and that his works were translated, studied in the seminary, by the students, and circulated without protest, authorizes the statement that the influence of this school was in favor of universal restoration.

### **Analogous Case.**

To see the force of these facts, suppose that the theological works of the most eminent modern advocate of universal restoration were to be introduced into the Union Theological Seminary at New York, or into the Princeton Theological Seminary, as a text-book, and that he was highly honored as "the interpreter" of the Word of God, and that no protest was uttered against the doctrine of universal restoration, would it be unfair to say that the influence of those seminaries was in favor of that doctrine? Add to this that he was permitted to introduce it into certain acts of public worship in that denomination, and would not the evidence be complete?

### **Testimony to Theodore.**

Consider, now, who Theodore of Mopsuestia was, not as viewed by a slavish packed council, met to execute the will of a Byzantine despot, but as judged by one of the most eminent evangelical scholars of Germany, Dorner. Of him, he says: "Theodore of Mopsuestia was the crown and climax of the school of Antioch. The compass of his learning, his acuteness, and, as we must suppose, also, the force of his personal character, conjoined with his labors through many years, as a teacher both of churches and of young and talented disciples, and as a prolific writer, gained for him the title of Magister Orientis ("Master of the East"). He labored on uninterruptedly till his death in the year 427, and was regarded with an appreciation the more widely extended as he was the first Oriental theologian of his time," ("Doctrine of the Person of Christ," Div. II., vol. i., p. 50, Edinburgh).

### **Statement of Neander.**

Add to this the statement of Neander as to other schools springing from the school of Edessa and Nisibis: "From this school arose others among this church party (the Nestorian); and through many centuries it contributed to diffuse great enthusiasm for Christian knowledge and theological culture, and particularly for Biblical studies, to which the spirit of Theodore of Mopsuestia had given the incentives; and the Nestorian churches became an important instrument of diffusing Christianity in Eastern Asia" ("Church history," vol. ii., p. 552).

We cannot at this point speak of the wonderful missionary spirit of the Nestorian churches whom Theodore thus inspired, nor of their connection, through the Saracens, with the revival of Europe from the paralysis and darkness into which they had been plunged by the corrupt and persecuting despotism which anathematized Theodore.

Humboldt, Dr. Draper, and Lecky have noticed it as one of the sublime and wonderful dispensations of Providence, and at another time we may speak of it more fully. But now we must resume our circuit of theological schools.

### **School of John.**

Returning, then, to Antioch, and passing to the north of the Mediterranean, we come to Asia Minor, the field of the seven churches of the Apocalypse, and of the apostle John. As the evangelist Mark is said to have founded the school of Alexandria, so the apostle John is regarded as the founder in Ephesus of the school of Asia Minor, from which came Polycarp, Melito, and Irenaeus, the great defender of the Church against the Gnostic heresies, and Hippolytus his hearer and follower.

### **Dr. Schaff on Irenaeus.**

Of this father Dr. Schaff says: "Irenaeus was the leading representative of the Asiatic Johannian school in the second half of the second century, the champion of Catholic orthodoxy against Gnostic heresy, and the mediator between the Eastern and Western Churches. He united a learned Greek education and philosophical penetration with practical wisdom and moderation, and a sound sense of the simple and essential in Christianity. We may plainly trace in him the influence of the spirit of John" ("Church History," vol. i., p. 488).

### **Dr. Kurtz.**

Of this school Dr. Kurtz says that it was "distinguished by its firm adherence to the Bible, its strong faith, its scientific liberality, its conciliatory tone, and its trenchant polemics against heretics" ("Text-book of Church History," p. 137, Philadelphia). It is, therefore, the more remarkable that the doctrine of future eternal punishment was not taught by any of this school so far as we know, nor the doctrine of universal restoration; but, on the other hand, the doctrine of the final annihilation of the wicked was clearly taught by so eminent a man as Irenaeus. Thus in five out of six of the early theological schools we do not find the doctrine of future eternal punishment. Nor do we find any assault on the schools of Alexandria, Cesarea, Antioch, Edessa, and Asia Minor, from any quarter, for their unfaithfulness to that doctrine, nor any general combination against them, nor any effort to found seminaries against them, nor any general excitement and controversy in behalf of the doctrine of future eternal punishment. What shall we say, then? Was it held in no school? Yes, in one - the school of Northern Africa. Making the complete circuit of the Mediterranean Sea, we come at last to the field in which labored Tertullian, Cyprian, Minucius Felix, and, greatest and last of all, Augustine. In this school the doctrine of future eternal punishment had faithful defenders, and universal restoration and final annihilation found no place. From it came an influence that, maturing during the course of centuries, united at last with other attacks on both Origen and Theodore of Mopsuestia, and led to their condemnation for their heresy as to future eternal punishment.

### **General View.**

This, however, is but a general view of the position of these schools on the question of future retribution. But it illustrates and confirms our previous statement as to the freedom of opinion that long prevailed on the subject, for the believers in eternal punishment encountered no odium from any quarter.

### **Particular View.**

But a more particular view of these schools and their eminent teachers and scholars is necessary to a clear understanding of the state of things at large in the churches, and the course of events. We shall first look a little more closely at the school of Asia Minor founded by the apostle John, and of which Polycarp and Irenaeus are representatives. It is of great moment to verify the statements which we have often made concerning Irenaeus, of his belief of the annihilation of the wicked, and also to inquire to what extent these views were adopted by others. After this it will be in order to consider the different grounds on which the doctrine of universal restitution was held and defended in the different schools.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

### IRENÆUS AND THE SCHOOL OF JOHN

We have, in our history of previous ages, spoken of an earnest desire to produce an harmonious universe, as the ultimate result of all things - a universe free from every form of sin and suffering. We have also remarked that this final result may be conceived of as secured in two ways: One is the annihilation of all unholy beings after enduring a punishment of such duration and severity as are demanded by infinite benevolence and justice, from a regard to the welfare of the universe. The other is a final restoration of all to holiness, through the influence of remedial punishment. It also appeared that, of the six early theological schools, the influence of four was in favor of the doctrine of universal restoration, of one in favor of the doctrine of eternal punishment and suffering. It appeared, also, that, although the majority of the schools were in favor of universal restoration, yet the doctrine of annihilation was earliest developed, and that very great claims are made for it in the earliest ages of the Church by the modern advocates of that doctrine. Of these claims we have admitted that some are well founded, while we reject others.

#### Irenæus.

The strongest and most influential authority for this doctrine is clearly Irenæus, of the school of John. But from his prominence as a saint, and the great defender of Christianity against the Gnostics, as well as from his relations to Polycarp, and through him to the apostle John, there has been a very great reluctance in the ranks of the orthodox, in modern times, to concede that he was a defender of the doctrine of the annihilation of the wicked. It is important, therefore, to state his case very clearly.

#### Course Pursued.

When it has been alleged that Irenæus defended this doctrine, the common mode of refuting the allegation has been to quote from him in various forms his statement of the sentence of the Saviour at the last judgment, by which the wicked are consigned to aionian punishment, and to regard it as proof conclusive of his belief in eternal suffering, and, on the strength of these passages, to explain away the passages in which he seems to teach annihilation. This is the course pursued by Massuetus, in his standard edition of Irenæus. At the same time he overlooks other parts of the system of Irenæus which ought to exert a decisive influence on the question, and which render it certain that he did not understand aionian punishment to mean eternal punishment, but rather the punishment of the world to come, as affirmed by Prof. Taylor Lewis.

#### System of Irenæus.

In order, then, to present his system in all its parts, it is necessary to consider, first, his views as to the final reorganization of all things. Then the way will be prepared to present his views of the annihilation of the wicked, and to confirm them by his account of the proceedings of the last judgment, in conferring immortality on the righteous, and not on the wicked.

#### Reorganization of the Universe.

His views on the final reorganization of all things are given in the fourth of the passages of his writings discovered by Pfaff at Turin, in 1715, and first published by him. Dr. Schaff refers to it in vol. i., p. 490, of his history, and sates that it relates to "the object of the incarnation, which is stated to be the purging away of sin, and the final annihilation of all evil." He also says that "the genuineness of these passages has been called in question by some Roman divines, but without sufficient reason."

This statement of Irenæus would not decide of itself whether all evil was to be annihilated by the restoration of all sinners to holiness, or by their annihilation. We therefore give an exact translation of the passage itself, from the edition of A. Stieren, Leipsic, 1853, vol. i., p. 888:

"Christ, having been proclaimed the Son of God before the ages, appeared in the fullness of time, that by his blood he might purify us who were under sin, and present us holy to the Father, if we

surrender ourselves obediently to the teaching of the Spirit, and at the end of the times he is about to come, to do away with all evil, and to restore all things to harmony, so that there shall be an end of all pollutions."

It will be seen that this passage is perfectly decisive against his belief of the eternal existence of sinful and polluted beings in the universe of God; for, according to him, Christ is to produce universal harmony, and to bring all sin and pollution to a perpetual end. But still this passage, by itself, is not decisive of the mode in which these results are to be attained, though, if there were nothing more, it would slightly countenance the idea of universal restoration by the annihilation of sin; for it does not expressly speak of the annihilation of sinners, but of sin and pollution.

#### Decisive Passages.

But we are not left to doubt or conjecture as to the real views of Irenæus. Nothing can be more explicit and unequivocal than his utterances in other places, especially in one in which he speaks expressly as to the annihilation of the wicked. The passage occurs in his work, "Contra Haereses," ii., 34, 2, 3, 4. He begins by denying the necessary annihilation of the spirit after death, by referring to the case of the rich man and Lazurus. This, he says, teaches that at death souls do not cease to exist, or pass into other bodies, but so live as to be recognized. To those who assert that souls, not being self-existent, but coming into being, must die with the body, he replies that, though God only is by nature immortal, yet by the will of God they can continue to exist as long as he pleases. The material system is not self-existent, but was called into being by the will of God, and yet it exists for ages by his will; so also can it be with the souls and spirits of men. From this he passes to consider the question, What, in fact, is the will of God as to the future existence of men?

#### Annihilation.

On this point we will give an exact translation of his words. Referring to Psalm xxi. 4, he says: "Thus it is said concerning the salvation of man, 'He asked life of thee, and thou gavest it him, even length of days forever and ever,' indicating that the Father of all gives to those who are saved length of days forever and ever. For our life comes not from ourselves nor from our nature. We have life, but it is given to us by the grace of God. And therefore he who cherishes the gift of life, and is thankful to him who bestowed it, shall also receive length of days forever and ever. But he who casts it away, and is ungrateful to his Creator for his creation, and does not acknowledge him who conferred the gift, deprives himself of eternal existence." In this passage Irenæus is plainly speaking of the continuance of natural life forever, as denoted by eternal existence, and not of spiritual life in holiness.

This view of the case he sustains by referring to a principle stated in another portion of Scripture:

"Therefore, the Lord says to those who were ungrateful to him, 'If ye have not been faithful in that which is little, who will give you that which is much?' signifying that those who have been ungrateful to the giver for temporal life, which is little, shall justly be deprived by him of eternal existence."

#### Philosophic Immortality.

This view of the case he proceeds to sustain by refuting the Platonic doctrine of the necessary immortality of the soul. This, also, we shall quote; for, though what we have quoted is explicit beyond all evasion, yet efforts are made to render the position of Irenæus on this question doubtful, and therefore we will give line upon line till doubt is impossible. He thus proceeds to refute the doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul:

"As the animal body is not the spirit, but partakes of the spirit so long as God wills, so the spirit is not life, but partakes of the life given by God. Hence, as the inspired Word says concerning the first man, he became a living soul, teaching us that he became a living soul by participating of life, so also the spirit is to be conceived of as something separate from the life of which it partakes. So long, then, as God gives life and continued existence, it follows that minds, though called into being from non-existence, will hereafter exist so long as God wills them to have existence and being. The will of God

must be supreme in all things, and everything must give way to it and obey it. This completes what I have to say as to the creation and continued existence of the mind.

### **Attempt of Massuetus.**

We can now judge of the attempt of Massuetus to neutralize the positive testimony of passages so explicit. He says that Irenaeus, in these passages, is speaking of spiritual life or the life of holiness, and not of the eternal existence of the soul. Truly, this is a desperate evasion. It lies upon the very face of the passage, that he is speaking of eternal existence as the reward of holiness and gratitude, and the loss of eternal existence as the punishment for ingratitude and disobedience. He begins by showing that the soul does not cease to exist at death, since life is the gift of god, and can be continued as long as he pleases. And to exclude the evasion that by life he means holiness, he calls it temporal life, and contrasts it with eternal existence, and not with holiness. In conclusion, he says that, in the whole discussion, he has spoken of the creation and continued existence of the mind, thus denying that he has been speaking of spiritual life. Yet the loss of existence which he teaches does not take place at once. He distinctly sets forth great and fearful punishments to be endured by the wicked in the future state, before they cease to exist.

### **The Judgment.**

This general view is illustrated and confirmed by the closing part of his creed, in which he states that at the final judgment God will bestow upon the righteous the gift of immortality. His words are these: "Wicked spiritists and angels that have transgressed and become apostate, and the impious and unjust, and lawless and blasphemous among men, Christ will send into the aionian fire. But upon the just he will mercifully bestow life, and confer on them the gift of immortality and heavenly glory." This plainly implies that all on whom this gift is not bestowed - that is, all the wicked - will finally cease to exist.

These passages remove all doubt as to the manner in which, in the opinion of Irenaeus, all evil and pollution were to be removed from the universe, and all things restored to the harmony of love. It is plain, also, that he understood the sentence of Christ at the last judgment in accordance with these views.

### **Relations to John.**

The question now naturally arises: If so prominent a man as Irenaeus, in such relations to Polycarp, the disciple of John, held these views, are we authorized to trace them up to the apostle himself? If we could find them in Polycarp, and also a declaration that he received them from John, the case would be a very strong one. But this we cannot do.

### **Epistle of Polycarp.**

There is, it is true, an authenticated epistle of Polycarp in existence. But in that we can find nothing decisive as to any view of retribution. In the second chapter of his Epistle to the Philippians v. 11 (Wake), he says: "If we please the Lord in this present world, we shall also be made partakers of that which is to come, according as he has promised us that he will raise us from the dead; and that if we walk worthy of him we shall also reign together with him if we believe." Again, in chapter ii. 8, he says, "he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also raise us up in like manner, if we do his will and walk according to his commandments."

In these passages, especially the last, a holy life seems to be made the condition of a resurrection from the dead. And in no part of the epistle is the resurrection of the wicked spoken of. Again, in i. 7, it is said that "to Christ all things are made subject that are in heaven, and that are in earth, whom every living creature shall worship." All this, at first, might seem to imply either that all the wicked were to be converted or annihilated, and that so none of them would be raised. But the conclusion would be premature, for he proceeds to say, "He shall come to be the judge of the quick and the dead, and his blood God shall require of them that believe not in him." So, then, there will be wicked ones to be judged, although nothing is said of their resurrection. The fact is, that the epistle is almost entirely confined to the Church, and all allusions to the wicked are incidental. The only

doctrine taught is that the righteous shall be raised and rewarded, and the wicked judged. But nothing is said of the nature or the duration of the punishment of the wicked. The connecting link therefore fails, and the authority of John cannot be invoked to sustain the teachings of Irenaeus. They must stand or fall according to their agreement with the Word of God.

### **Eminence of Irenaeus.**

Irenaeus was not the only one who held these views, but we have not time at present to consider the case of others with any sufficient care and accuracy. The case of Irenaeus assures us that a man may be, as Irenaeus was, to use the words of Dr. Schaff, "the leading representative of the Asiatic Johannean school, in the second half of the second century, the champion of Catholic orthodoxy against Gnostic heresy, the mediator between the Eastern and Western Churches, the enemy of all error and schism, and, on the whole, the most orthodox of the ante-Nicene fathers," and yet hold the doctrine of the final annihilation of the wicked and the reorganization of the universe, and the end of all evil thereby. That such a man, standing in such relations, should hold this doctrine, does not prove it to be true; but it does teach us that there was something that strongly recommended the doctrine to him, and this was, that it was one way, and to him the most reasonable and Scriptural, of reaching a united universe, in which there should be neither sin or misery. After his day, this result was predominantly sought in another way. But as to the result there has been a craving for it by many of the noblest minds in every age.

## **CHAPTER XXIV.**

### **JUSTIN AND ARNOBIUS ON ANNIHILATION**

In our exhibition of the views of Irenaeus, we have finished what we have to say of the views of the school of Asia Minor. We have seen that the annihilation of the wicked after severe punishment was clearly taught by that eminent father. But we remarked that there were others by whom the same views substantially were held. We referred especially to Justin, the Martyr, and Arnobius. Of Justin we shall now speak, as the first in time and in importance. And that he may not be a mere abstraction to us, but a living personage with whom sympathy is possible, we will say a few words concerning his history and labors.

#### **Justin Martyr.**

In the first place, he was not one of the regular clergy. He was not the bishop of any church. He wielded no ecclesiastical authority. He was not properly even a preacher upon whom the hands of the presbytery had been laid. What then, it may be asked, was he? He was a traveling Christian philosopher, engaged in the work of evangelization, and the world at large was his diocese. He was born in Palestine, in Flavia Neapolis, formerly Shechem, and lived between A.D. 100-166. He had a classical education, and was an ardent student of the Greek philosophers. In the opening part of his dialogue with Trypho, the Jew, he tells us how he sought for the truth first under the guidance of a Stoic philosopher, then of an Aristotelian, then of a Pythagorean, but all in vain. At last, seeking a solitary walk for reflection, on the sea-shore, he was met by an old man, a Christian, by whom he was guided to the true philosophy in Christ. To parts of his dialogue with the old man we shall have occasion to refer, as throwing light on his views of future retribution.

#### **Justin As Apologist.**

From the time of this great change, he devoted himself to the promulgation and defense of Christianity. He stands as the leader of a class of writers known as Apologists, not that he was actually the first, but the first whose works have come down to us. He wrote two defenses of Christianity, called his first and second Apologies, addressed, as is generally believed, the first to that illustrious Roman emperor, Antoninus Pius, the second to the no less eminent Marcus Aurelius. These are of intense interest, by reason of the light which they throw on the state of Christianity and the churches in the first part of the second century. He seeks to lay open to the Roman emperors the whole truth as to the slandered and persecuted

Christians. He describes their belief, their mode of life, their meetings, and worship, and invokes for them protection and justice at the hand of the mighty Emperors of Rome. He also defended Christianity against the assaults of the Jews, in his dialogue with Trypho, the Jew.

### **Justin As Evangelist.**

In his work of evangelization he traveled from place to place, talking with all to whom he could have access, and still wearing the philosopher's cloak, as he did when he was converted, for he thought that thus he should gain more ready access to men of all classes. He was a very learned man and a great reader. He led the way in using the Platonic philosophy in the exposition and defense of Christianity, finding in it much truth, though he rejected, or intended to reject, all its errors. In this respect he was in sympathy with the Alexandrian school. He died as a martyr at Rome under Marcus Aurelius. His writings are very noteworthy in one respect.

### **Recognition of Christ's Sentence.**

We find in them the first full recognition of the words of Christ as judge at the last great day, and he sets forth the Christian doctrine of future retribution in language derived directly from the words of Christ. Especially he uses constantly the word *aionios* to denote its nature. To quote all the passages in which he does this would transcend our limits. We will exhibit only his presentation of the Christian doctrine to the Roman emperor. To him he says: "More than all men we are your helpers and allies in promoting peace, seeing we hold this view that it is alike impossible for the wicked, the covetous, the conspirator, and also for the virtuous, to escape the notice of God, and that each man goes to aionian punishment or salvation, according to the desert of his actions. For if all men knew this, no one would choose wickedness, even for a short time, knowing that he goes to the aionian punishment of fire" (Apology I., chapter viii.). Again, he says to the emperor: "You can only kill us, which indeed does no harm to us, but to you, and to all that unjustly hate us and do not repent, brings aionian punishment by fire" (chapter xiv.).

If, now, we assert that Justin by aionian understood absolutely eternal, he is represented as not in accord with the general usage. But, as in the instance of Irenaeus, there are other parts of his writings inconsistent with that view.

### **Other Statements.**

These occur especially in his statement, in his dialogue with Trypho, of the reasonings of the old Christian by whom he was converted, and which, it is generally conceded, are indorsed [sic] by Justin as his own. Of these we propose now to give some account.

The first step in preparing the way for the doctrine of the final annihilation of the wicked is to refute the Platonic doctrine, of which we have before spoken, of the self-existence and necessary and essential immortality of the soul. Denoting the old man by S. (Senex), and Justin by J., the dialogue thus proceeds:

"S. These philosophers know nothing on this point, nor can they even prove that the soul exists at all.

"J. Very likely they cannot.

"S. Certainly they ought not to call it immortal, for if it is immortal it must be uncreated, and self-existent.

"J. In fact, it is held to be thus immortal by some who are called Platonic philosophers.

"S. But do you believe that this world is uncreated, and self-existent?

"J. There are those who say so, but I do not agree with them.

"S. In this you are right. For what show of reason can there be for supposing that a body which has such solidity and reaction, and which is composite and changeable, and subject every day to decay and new growth, can exist without an originating cause? But if this world is not self-existent, but created, it is necessary that souls also should have been created from previous non-existence. For they were made for the sake of man, and other living beings, even if you say that

they were first created by themselves, and not in connection with their proper bodies.

"J. It appears to me that you are correct.

"S. so, then, they are not essentially immortal?

"J. No; since we are agreed in the fact that the world was created.

"S. Nevertheless, I do not affirm that all souls do in fact cease to exist at death. This truly would be a fine arrangement for the wicked! But how is it, then? Thus: The souls of the good still continue to exist somewhere in a better place, all awaiting the time of the judgment. Then the good, being manifested as worthy of the favor of God, shall never die, but the wicked are punished so long as God wills to have them exist, and be punished."

Here by antithesis he asserts that the wicked do finally cease to exist but that they exist and are punished as long as God pleases.

### **This View Indorsed by Justin.**

This view Justin indorses [sic] as in accordance with what Plato has obscurely said about the world, as existing by the will of God. This he applies to the soul and all things else, and thus sustains his view: "All things which have come into being, or shall begin to exist, are by nature liable to die, and can disappear and be no more. For God only is uncreated and incorruptible, and, therefore, is God. But all things that come into being after him are created and mortal - for this reason souls also die and are punished;" i.e., after they have been sufficiently punished, as he had before said, they cease to exist.

### **Old Man Responds.**

To this view the old man responds with additional reasoning, as follows:

"The soul either has life in itself, or it receives it from something else. But if it has life in itself it would be the cause of life to something else, and not to itself; as motion may be said rather to move something else than itself. That the soul lives no one can deny, but, if it lives, it lives not as being itself life, but as receiving life. Now, whatever partakes of anything is different from that of which it partakes. But the soul partakes of life, because God wills it to live; and just so, too, it will no longer partake of life, whenever he does not desire it to live. For it cannot live of itself as God does. But as the personal man does not always exist, and body and soul are not ever united, but the soul leaves the body, and the man ceases to exist whenever this unity is dissolved, so also, when it is necessary that the soul should no longer exist, the vital spirit leaves it, and the soul is no more, but returns again thither whence it was taken," i.e., to non-existence.

In parts of this reasoning a striking similarity to the reasoning of Irenaeus is seen, and, as Justin was his senior, Irenaeus may have followed his line of thought.

We have carefully considered what has been said in favor of a different translation of the old man's statement, "I do not affirm that all souls do in fact cease to exist at death." We cannot now enter into the principles of the case, but are assured that the translation which we have given is required by the whole context, and is the only one capable of a sound philological defense.

That Justin did hold and teach the final annihilation of the wicked the most eminent scholars concede. In the number of such Mr. Hudson appeals to Grotius, Huet, Ropler, Du Pin, Doederlein, Munscher, Munter, Daniel, Hase, Starck, Kern, Otto, Ritter, J.P. Smith, Bloomfield, and Gieseler.

### **Reasons For Doubt.**

The only reason for another view is found in the strong language used by him as to aionian punishment. To those who have not considered the view defended by Prof. Tayler Lewis, the subject must seem to be involved in an inextricable contradiction. But, even without this principle of harmony, J. Donaldson, in his learned work on the writings of the fathers, comes definitely to the conclusion that Justin did not intend to teach a philosophical eternity of punishment, even by his strongest expressions, and that *aionios* is an indefinite word.

But, to judge fairly of the case, let us take a thorough modern believer in the absolute eternity of punishment, and is it supposable that he should, by any possibility, write such statements as have been quoted from Justin as to the annihilation of the wicked? Could any man have written them who thoroughly believed in eternal punishment?

But to remove all uncertainty, there are in Justin still other passages which put his views beyond all doubt.

Apol. I., xxi., he says, "We have been taught that only those who live near to God in holiness and virtue are made immortal, but that those who live unjustly and do not reform shall be punished in aionian fire," that is, in the fire of the world to come.

Here he expressly states that the Christians for whom he is pleading had been taught that only the holy who live near to God are made immortal. Apparently to evade this conclusion, Dodds, in Clark's translations, renders [Greek letters] (apathanatizesthai) are deified. But this implies that Christians were taught in the days of Justin that the holy were in fact deified, which is false. No trace of such a doctrine can be found among the early Christians. The doctrine which Justin declares Christians were taught was, that only the holy were made immortal. His words can properly mean nothing else.

Again, in Trypho 45, he speaks of the wicked and the righteous in these words: "The wicked shall be sent to the judgment and to condemnation to fire, to be punished incessantly, but the righteous shall be free from pain and grief, incorruptible and immortal, and together with God." Here immortality is presented as peculiar to the righteous.

Again, in Apol. I., lii., he says that Christ "will raise the bodies of all men, and invest with immortality those of the worthy." Here the immortality of the wicked is by implication denied.

It is indeed true that Justin speaks of punishment as extending beyond any boundary that can be defined by man, and not limited to one thousand years, as Plato taught.

But in all this his motive is plain. He says that to teach that the wicked are annihilated at death would be a god-send to them, as removing all fears of future punishment. To avoid this result, and increase the power of motives to repent, he teaches the existence and sensibility of sinners in a future state, and their punishment in fire for a very long but undefinable period, because, as he says, the wicked will exist and be punished in the world to come, as long as God pleases, and no man can tell how long that is.

To make him teach more, and to assert the eternal existence and punishment of the wicked, is to involve him in a direct and inevitable self-contradiction. We are not at liberty to impute such a contradiction to him if his statements can be so interpreted as to agree. But his statements, that the holy alone are rendered immortal, are absolute and positive, and cannot be explained away.

But his statements as to the wicked can all of them be properly explained as teaching no more than that the wicked will live in the future world, and be punished by God as long as he sees fit, even to many ages; that neither Plato nor any other man can fix a definite limit to this time; that as it depends on the will of God, it cannot be defined or bounded by man; and that it may properly be spoken of as the punishment of ages, which no man can limit, but which finally results in annihilation.

In Apol. I., xxviii., when Justin says that the devil and his angels, and the men who follow him shall be sent into fire to be punished for an unbounded ([Greek letters], *aperanton*) age, he uses the word as does Pindar, when he says, N. viii., 64, "Some men seek gold, and others ([Greek letters]) a vast or unbounded extent of land;" or when in P. ix., 61, he speaks of unbounded or immeasurable strength ([Greek letters]). Again, when Justin says (Trypho 45) that the wicked are punished ([Greek letters]) incessantly or without cessation, he means that this is true during the time of their punishment, however long it may be.

To illustrate the sensibility of the wicked in the future world, he quotes (Apol. I., lii.) Is. lxiv. 24, "Their worm shall not die, and their fire shall not be quenched," and says that their bodies shall be raised, and in the future life be invested with sensibility, and that God will

send them into the fire of the world to come, or, as it may be translated, into the fire of ages.

In Apol. I., viii., he says, "Plato used to say that Rhadamanthus and Minos would punish the wicked who came before them for a thousand years; and we say that the same thing will be done, but at the hand of Christ, and upon the wicked in the same bodies, united again to their spirits, which are now to undergo the punishment of ages, and not, as Plato said, for a period of only a thousand years." It is only by assuming, without reason, that in this passage *aionios* means eternal, instead of for ages, that eternal punishment can be proved.

And in Trypho, 130, where Justin says that the bodies of those who have transgressed are to be devoured by the worm and ceaseless fire, remaining deathless, no stress can be laid on the word deathless (*athanata*), for it simply denotes the fact that, during the time of exposure to the fire, the bodies cannot die, but not that they cannot be annihilated by God, at such time as he shall see fit.

It now is manifest that both Justin and Irenaeus are intent on so stating the doctrine of annihilation that the terrors and moving power of future punishments shall not be diminished. Both of them are very careful to deny that the soul ceases to exist at death, they do not, at all, teach that the soul is material, and is dissolved with the body. They are very careful to state, in strong terms, that, after the day of judgment, there will be a fearful and long-continued punishment, enduring for ages which no one could bound.

In these things they were very unlike many modern advocates of the annihilation of the wicked. They use the very strongest language as to the nature and duration of future punishment, not being willing to release the wicked from the restraining powers of salutary fear.

### **Arnobius.**

We come now to Arnobius. But his case need not detain us long as to the historic fact, for it is denied by no one that he taught the doctrine of the annihilation of the wicked. Prof. Shedd fully concedes it. But we will briefly consider his opinions. They agree substantially with those of Irenaeus and Justin. He taught that souls have such a nature that they need God in order to secure eternal existence. If they refuse to acknowledge him, and reject his gifts and favors, they will finally be annihilated. He says, "This is the real death of man, when souls that know not God are annihilated by long-continued torment in a fierce fire." Any alleged immortality of the soul that is inconsistent with this he repudiates and disproves. And certainly no considerate Christian can adopt or defend the idea of an endless existence that is not upheld by God, and that cannot be annihilated if God sees fit. It is a question as to the fact. Arnobius believed the fact to be that the wicked will be annihilated, in the manner above stated.

### **Questions.**

But the questions may arise: "Who was Arnobius? What is the weight of his opinion? Was he eminent as a Christian?"

We reply, he was an African, from Sicca in Numidia, once a teacher of rhetoric and an opponent of Christianity. After his conversion he wrote a vigorous work in its defense. He also taught theological scholars, among whom was the eminent and classical Lactantius. Jerome commends his writings as worthy of study, for their learning, with those of Origen, Tertullian, and others. Neander speaks highly of his defense of Christianity, conceding at the same time that in a number of points he was not orthodox according to the views of the Church. Certainly he has never had the prestige and influence of Irenaeus. He lived about A.D. 250-300.

These, then, are the leading defenders of the doctrine of the annihilation of the wicked. We mention none of the apostolic fathers as teaching this doctrine, herein differing materially from Mr. Hudson and others. But even he concedes that it is not expressly taught by them or by the early creeds. It is inferred rather from such facts as this, that Christ is spoken of as the giver of immortality to the good, and that the endless punishment of the wicked is not expressly taught. But, as we have said, that question was not then up for discussion, and it is unsafe to infer any doctrine from incidental remarks, or from omissions. We shall advert to them again in speaking of the doctrine of endless punishment, for, though none of

them refer at all to Christ's sentence on the wicked, yet one of them, Hermas, speaks of endless sin, and endless exclusion from heaven - but says nothing of fire, or of physical torment of any kind.

Mr. Hudson's appeal to Athanasius we also reject. It is true that that eminent father taught that man was by the sin of Adam made liable to annihilation, and that if Christ had not interposed he would have been annihilated. But he did interpose, and by his death secured the resurrection of all men, and redeemed them from annihilation. Theodore of Mopsuestia from these premises inferred the doctrine of universal restoration, otherwise the resurrection would be no blessing but a curse to the majority of mankind. Athanasius did not carry out his premises to this issue, nor did he teach annihilation. He was busy with the Trinity, and is quite reticent as to the details of eternal retribution.

We turn next to the Christian schools in which the doctrine of universal restoration was taught. From the days of Origen, as we have seen, an extended and widespread movement existed in favor of that doctrine. Of the leading agents in this movement we propose to take a comprehensive and critical view.

## CHAPTER XXV

### ORIGEN AND THEODORE OF MOPSUESTIA

We have considered the development of the doctrine of the annihilation of the wicked by Irenaeus, of the school of John in Asia Minor, and also by Justin Martyr and Arnobius. We now come to the schools in which the doctrine of the final restoration of all men to holiness was taught, or favored.

#### School, What?

The word school is used in two senses: One, more general, to denote certain teachers and those who adopt their opinions, though not collected in one place where buildings are erected and teachers employed for purposes of instruction. The other is applied more strictly to denote institutions at which scholars are gathered, and teachers, libraries, and buildings, are provided for their instruction.

Of the former kind were the schools of Asia Minor and of Northern Africa. Of the latter were the schools of Alexandria, Cesarea, Antioch, and Edessa. Of these, that of Alexandria and that of Cesarea were properly schools truly Origenistic; that at Antioch, and that at Edessa, were schools under the influence of Theodore of Mopsuestia and Diodore of Tarsus.

#### Error of Historians.

As Theodore agreed with Origen in teaching the doctrine of final restoration, he has, by some historians, been spoken of as of the school of Origen. Hagenbach (Section 142, note 6) speaks of Diodore of Tarsus, and Theodore of Mopsuestia, as adopting the milder notions of Origen concerning a final restoration. This may have led Prof. Shedd, who follows Hagenbach as to his authorities, and is misled by him, to consider them as of the school of Origen.

But as the principles of interpretation adopted by Theodore, as well as his anthropology, were opposed to those of Origen, the result in which they agreed was reached in ways so different that it is not proper to call Theodore a scholar of Origen. Moreover, the history of the opinions of Origen, and their final condemnation under Justinian, is entirely separate from the history of the opinions of Theodore, and their condemnation under the same emperor. In addition to this, the extension of the influence of Theodore among the Nestorian churches was peculiar to him, and was not at all shared by Origen.

#### Origen and Theodore Contrasted.

We will, therefore, before continuing the history of the opinions of Origen, and then of Theodore, give a summary statement of their points of difference, and as Theodore, though a voluminous writer in his day, is little known by us, since his condemnation led to the destruction of the greater part of his works, we shall be more full in the presentation of his opinions. A great ignorance of them seems to

be manifested even by some intelligent historians.

Theodore rejected almost entirely the spiritual, allegorical, and mystical interpretation of Origen; and, in common with the Antiochian school, adopted the principles of historical and grammatical interpretation.

#### Origen on Free-Will and Preexistence.

The system of Origen, also, was based on free-will, carried to its utmost extent, and never lost, so that reformation in sinners would be always possible. He also held to the preexistence of men, and that the original sinfulness of man in this world was the result of his fall and transgressions in a previous state of being. This fall, however, they had the power to avoid, and multitudes did avoid it. The hope of their final restoration lies in the fact that they have this indestructible power of free agency, and that God is able, in the course of ages of suffering, to induce them finally to use it aright, and to return to him, in love and obedience.

#### Opposite View of Theodore.

The fundamental principles of Theodore differed entirely from these. He did not hold to preexistence, or to any such extreme power of free agency as Origen taught. He held, on the other hand, that sin is an unavoidable part of the development and education of man; that some carry it to a greater extent than others, but that God will finally overrule it for their final establishment in good.

#### Dr. Bushnell Anticipated.

His principles of development and establishment in stable virtue, through an experience of sinning, in some points anticipate those of Dr. Bushnell, except that the latter does not push them to the result of universal restoration. Neander thus states his fundamental principles: "Human nature, nay, the nature of all created spirits, is, according to this system, so constituted from the beginning that it could no otherwise than by a redemption attain to its final destination." Of course, sin is unavoidable. This resembles Dr. Bushnell's idea of the necessity of turning the corner of a fall and redemption. But Dr. Bushnell would not agree with all the statements of Theodore, some of which we give, from the records of the Fifth Ecumenical Council, in which he was condemned for his Nestorian doctrines.

#### Two States.

He says: "It pleased God to divide his creatures into two states. One is the present, in which he has made all things mutable; the other is to occur when he shall renew all things and render them immutable. Of this final state he has showed us the beginning, in the dispensation of our Lord Jesus Christ, whom in his human nature he raised from the dead, and rendered immortal in body and immutable in mind, by which he demonstrated that the same result shall be effected in all his creatures." To illustrate the extent of his last remark, he proceeds to say that millions of angels and spirits will be established with men in immutability.

This immutability is to be the result of a final and full communion with God, in order thus to be pervaded by a principle of divine life. Any created beings, left to themselves, would be sure to sin and to need redemption.

#### Reason of the First State.

The reason why God left his creatures to themselves, in the first mutable and sinful state, was that they could in no other way than by an experiment of evil learn the worth of the opposite blessings. In book v., "De Creatura," he says: "God knew that men would sin in all ways, but permitted this result to come to pass, knowing that it would ultimately be for their advantage. For since God created man when he did not exist, and made him ruler of so extended a system, and offered so great blessings for his enjoyment, it was impossible that he should have not prevented the entrance of sin, if he had not known that it would be ultimately for his advantage."

#### What the Benefit?

But, it may be asked, what is the benefit to be derived from leaving

the creatures at first to a state of mutability and sin? This question he thus answers: "It was not possible that in any other way we should have a full knowledge of the nature and consequences of sin, and the evils of our sinful passions, and know our weakness, disclosed in these experiences, so as to show by contrast the greatness of the immutability to be given to us, unless it had been so ordained by God from the beginning, that by experiment and comparison we might know the magnitude of those infinite benefits that are to be conferred on us. On this account knowing that it would, on the whole, be for our advantage, he permitted sin to enter." And, again: "It is the prerogative of a rational creature to distinguish between good and evil things. If, therefore, there were not opposite qualities, it would not be possible for him to discern the differences. Therefore, at the outset, he introduced these great contrarieties into his creation.

### **General View.**

We will give another extract from Theodore, in which some of the things already said are repeated, but in new relations, and with a more full view of his system: "God did not introduce death among men unwillingly, and contrary to his judgment, nor did he permit the entrance of sin for no beneficial end. He was not unable to prevent it if he desired, but he permitted it, because he knew that it would be beneficial to us, or rather to all intelligent beings, that there should be first a dispensation including evils, and that then they should be removed and universal good take their place. Therefore God divided the creation into two states, the present and the future. In the latter he will bring all to immortality and immutability. In the former he gives us over to death and mutability. For if he had made us at first immortal and immutable, we should not have differed from irrational animals, who do not understand the peculiar characteristics by which they are distinguished. For if we had been ignorant of mutability we could not have understood the good of immutability. Ignorant of death, we could not have known the true worth of immortality. Ignorant of corruption, we could not have properly valued incorruption. Ignorant of the burden of sinful passions, we could not have duly exulted in freedom from such passions. In a word, ignorant of an experiment of evils, we should not have been able properly to understand the opposite forms of good."

### **Agency of Christ.**

In the view of Theodore, therefore, this universal restitution of all to holiness was the end aimed at in the first dispensation, involving sin and to be effected through it. Christ and his cross, moreover, he regarded as the centre of the great movement toward universal restitution. In support of this view he appealed to such passages as Col. i. 19, 20: "For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell; and having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth or things in heaven." These, then, were the doctrines of Theodore "the Interpreter," the great oracle of the Nestorians and of their schools

### **Person of Christ. - Nestorianism.**

Out of this system grew his peculiar views of the person of Christ, whose supreme divinity he fully believed. God ordered, in his view, that in his human nature he should go through a development which should be the type and exemplar of the development to be wrought in us, and therefore he maintained that sharp separation between the human and divine in the person of Christ that resulted in Nestorianism. For these reasons to the Nestorian churches he was ever the great Scriptural interpreter and theological oracle.

### **Nestorian Liturgy.**

We are now prepared to understand the full import of the following extracts from the sacramental liturgy which he drew up for the Nestorian churches, in which he introduced the great proof passage from Colossians, which we have quoted. (See E. Renaudot's "Oriental Liturgies," vol. ii., p. 610.)

In the opening part of the service, in accordance with the statements of Theodore as to the relations of Christ to the harmonizing and establishment of the universe in holiness, the priest sets forth "the Son of man, an acceptable victim offered to God the Lord of all for all creatures in the universe."

Then, in prayer, the priest reviews the dispensation of the incarnation, and says of Christ: "He is the head of the Church, the perfecter of all beings, by whom all things are accomplished. He, by the Eternal Spirit, offered himself an unspotted offering to God, and sanctified us by the oblation of his body once made. Moreover, he made peace by the blood of his cross, among those in heaven and in earth." After this he says, "Let us celebrate the great, tremendous, sacred, and divine mystery, by which a great salvation was made for the whole human race."

After this he says in prayer: "We offer with contrite heart and humble spirit, before thy glorious Trinity, this sacrifice, living and holy, which is the mystery of the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world, asking and entreating before thee, O Lord, that thy adorable divinity may take pleasure in it, and by thy compassion this pure and sacred offering, by which thou art appeased and reconciled, may be accepted in behalf of the sins of the whole world."

Farther on he says, "This sacrament is offered for all kinds of men who live in sin and error, that by thy grace thou wouldst make them worthy to know thy truth and adore thy majesty, that they may know thee whose will it is that all men should live, and turn to and acknowledge the truth."

The true meaning of this liturgy no one can doubt who knows the system of Theodore, and notes the emphatic extension of the atonement to all the universe declared in it, presenting Christ as the perfecter of all creatures, and who considers the fact that it does not confine the efficacy of the sacrament almost or quite exclusively to the Church, as the Romish liturgy does, and others of that class, but extends it to all mankind without exception, and to the whole creation. Any one who will read this liturgy side by side with the Romish will not fail to be struck with this radical difference.

Of the liturgy of Theodore, Renaudot says it is the second of those generally used in the Nestorian Church, and is found in all the manuscripts. It was also translated for the use of the churches of India.

Of the Nestorian churches, he says they peculiarly revere Theodore, and call him, by way of eminence, the Interpreter, on account of his numerous commentaries on the word of God.

### **Theodore's Confession of Faith.**

In Theodore's confession of faith this relation of Christ to the salvation of all is once more clearly presented. Of him he says: "He is called the second Adam, by the blessed Paul; constituted an Adam of the same nature, and showing to us the future state, and exhibiting so much difference from the first Adam as will exist between him who bestows the ineffable gifts of the future state, and him who began the present mournful state of things. In like manner, he is called the second man, as disclosing the second state, because Adam began the first, a state mortal, and possibly full of many pains, in which he showed a typical similitude to him. But Christ the Lord began the second state. He in the future, revealed from heaven, will restore us all into communion with himself. For the apostle says, The first man was of the earth earthy, the second man is the Lord from heaven, that is, who is to appear hereafter thence, that he may restore all to the likeness of himself."

Those who recall the statements of Dorner and other leading historians, of the influence of Theodore as a theologian, and the most eminent divine, and the master of the East, will regard as of great historical moment the statements we have given coming directly from himself. Of the influence of these Nestorian churches more will be said hereafter.

## **CHAPTER XXVI.**

### **THEODORE OF MOPSUESTIA AND THE NESTORIANS.**

The history of the Nestorians and of their connection with Theodore of Mopsuestia is less known than it should be. In like manner, the history of their connection with the destinies of humanity through the Arabians is less understood than their merits require. Indeed, there



is not a more interesting and important chapter in the development of human destiny than this.

### **Followers of Theodore.**

We have exhibited in contrast the principles of Origen and of Theodore of Mopsuestia. We have seen that, although they agreed in the doctrine of the final restoration of all beings to holiness, yet their systems were based on very different fundamental principles. It should now be added that the range of their influence was very different. The followers of Origen were chiefly in the Greek and Latin Churches. Those of Theodore in Central and Eastern Asia. They are commonly known as the Nestorians, and are by the so-called Catholic Church reckoned among the heretical sects.

### **The Church - What?**

But, in order to understand the relations of the Nestorians to Christianity and the Church, it is of special moment to know what the Church was by which they were condemned, and by which Theodore was anathematized. In our history before Christ, the geographical scene of our investigations was limited. It was mainly confined to Palestine, and to the scenes of the captivities in Egypt and Babylon. After the coming of Christ, it was enlarged until it included large portions of Asia, Europe, and Africa.

### **Triple Division.**

Beginning in Palestine, Christianity extended its conquests until, in the sixth century, there were three great geographical divisions of the Christian body, two of which were sometimes called churches. The Western Church included Italy, Gaul, Spain, England, and the western part of Northern Africa. Its centre was Rome, and it was called sometimes the Latin Church. The Greek Church included the rest of the Roman Empire to the east of the Western Church, to the Euphrates. This was also called the Greek Church, whose centre was Constantinople. East of this, and without the bounds of the Roman Empire, there was a large body of Christians, not united around one centre. They were, to a great extent, Christians who had been driven out by the other two churches because they did not agree with the Ecumenical Councils, so called, in their decisions as to the person of Christ. Those thus driven out were organized as separate, independent, dissenting churches, not centralized by one government, but called heretical sects by those from whom they dissented. Prominent among these independent bodies were the Jacobites and the Nestorians, called sometimes the Chaldean Christians.

It is a matter of indispensable necessity to form a clear idea of the condition and extent of all these churches at the sixth century, in order to obtain a vivid conception of the early history of the Church, for that history lies to us in a kind of world beyond the flood.

### **The Flood.**

By the flood, I mean the great Mohammedan invasion and conquests. Of Christendom, as it then was, the greater part came under Mohammedan control, and to this day Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch – in short, all the great centres of the Christian world as it then was, except one, Rome – are under Mohammedan sway. Moreover, every one of the great ancient centres of theological study is at this hour in the hands of the Mohammedans. This is true of Alexandria and Carthage, in Africa, of Asia Minor, and of Cesarea, Antioch, Edessa, and Nisibis, in Asia. To understand the history of those six centuries, we must go back beyond that Mohammedan flood, and think of Christendom as it then was, and not of Christendom as it now is, for what is now the most powerful part of Christendom was not then included in it at all, but was under the sway of German barbarism and idolatry.

### **The Church Outnumbered.**

It is of more importance to do this, inasmuch as statements are often made of the Church, collectively, that will fall asunder at once when tested by an accurate and comprehensive view of geography and of history.

Although, according to common parlance, The Church, had condemned these independent churches as heretical sects, yet two of

them, the Nestorians and the Jacobites, soon became so numerous in Central and Eastern Asia that they outnumbered both the Greek and Latin Churches united. Of this fact Gibbon gives a statement, based on authorities, in his great history (chapter xlvi., vol. iii., p. 272, Harper's edition). Dr. Draper, in his "History of the Intellectual Development of Europe," makes the same statement (p. 291). To give some idea of the extent of the Nestorian Church, it is sufficient to say that, at the time of the capture of Bagdad by Hulaku Chan, the Nestorian Patriarch was recognized by twenty-five metropolitan bishops as the head of the Eastern Church. A list of these is given by Layard ("Nineveh," vol. i., p. 214). Of them, he says: "This list will show the success of the Chaldean (Nestorian) missions, and the influence which they possessed at this time in Asia. The sees of these metropolitans were scattered over the continent, from the shores of the Caspian to the Chinese Seas, and from the most northern boundaries of Scythia to the southern extremity of the Indian Peninsula." When to the Jacobites and Nestorians we add the Armenians and the other independent bodies, we see how entirely they outnumbered what was called the Church of which the Roman emperor was the head, and the doctrines of which were dictated by his authority. Indeed, these Oriental churches did not hesitate to charge on the Church that excommunicated them, and truly, that it was not a free Church, but he slave of the emperor. This idea they expressed in the word Melchites ("King's men"), by which they designated them.

### **Nestorian Church and Theodore.**

We shall at this time consider only the Nestorian churches, inasmuch as they stand in a peculiar relation to Theodore of Mopsuestia, the father of Nestorian views as to the person of Christ. As we have seen, Theodore and Diodore of Tarsus held and taught universal restoration. We have given an outline of the views of Theodore. To what extent these views were positively adopted by the clergy of the Nestorian churches, it is impossible to say. Certain great facts only are sure. These views were introduced by Theodore into the liturgy which he drew up for the Nestorian Churches. Of this Renaudot says that it was generally used in the Nestorian Church, and is found in all the manuscripts, and that it was translated for the use of the churches of India. Moreover, there was no protest against these views ever issued by any of the Nestorian churches or clergy. On the other hand, Theodore is spoken of at all times and everywhere as the great interpreter of the Word of God. Neander says that the seminaries of the Nestorians were conducted in the spirit of Theodore of Mopsuestia. It cannot be denied that the doctrine of universal restoration is an essential part of his system, and is inwrought [sic] into its whole development. Yet, besides Theodore, and his confession and liturgy, I can find the doctrine expressly stated in no other Nestorian creed and no Nestorian writer.

### **Nestorian Creed.**

They adhered to the general councils up to the condemnation of Nestorius. Layard gives their creed as it was up to that date, and it differs very little from the Nicene creed. (Layard's "Nineveh," ii., 219, New York). In this creed no reference is made to eternal punishment. After this they seem to have issued no additional creed of their own. Hence, the Rev. T. Laurie, a missionary to the modern Nestorians, says of them: "It is difficult to give an accurate statement of the doctrines of the Nestorians. For as a church they have no regular confession of faith, and their treatises on Christian doctrine express the views of individuals, rather than the belief of the whole body" ("Dr. Grant and the Mountain Nestorians," p. 55). But to a certain extent Theodore's sacramental liturgy is practically a confession of faith, for it sets forth the incarnation, and its ends and results, as based on the unfolding of the Trinity.

### **Influence of the Doctrine.**

It is a matter of great interest to ascertain what was the influence exerted by the declaration of this doctrine by Theodore. Were those who came most under his influence injured thereby? Were those who held the doctrine of eternal punishment elevated thereby above the followers of Theodore? Universalism in America has generally been connected with a denial of the Trinity and the evangelical views of atonement, depravity, and regeneration. It was not so with ancient Restorationism. Its advocates were in all other respects orthodox. Were they less imbued with the spirit of active, self-denying missionary Christianity?

## Reply As To Nestorians.

Account for it as we may, the fact is beyond denial, that the Nestorian churches were the most distinguished for a missionary spirit of any of those ages. They, too, were most inclined to reform the leading errors of the Church. They were the providential channel through which Europe was aroused from the ignorance and torpor of the dark ages. Of them in the fifth century Gieseler says: "They were found in every part of Asia and were of great use in diffusing the learning of Greece in that part of the world, as well as in founding schools and hospitals. At a later period they became the instructors of the Arabians" (Hist. Period ii., sec. 87). As late as the fourteenth century Gieseler says, "Of all the Christian parties, the Nestorians alone had penetrated as yet into the interior and eastern parts of Asia" (Period iii., sec. 90).

### Dr. Anderson.

Of the extent of their missionary enterprises, Dr. Anderson gives an account in an extract taken from Tracey's "History of Missions." Of the Nestorians he says: "This sect continued to flourish, though occasionally persecuted under the Persians, the Saracens, and the Tartars. They had celebrated schools for theology and general education. For centuries they maintained missions in Tartary, China and other Eastern regions. Their churches were scattered from Syria and Cyprus to Peking, and from the coast of Malabar and Ceylon to the borders of Siberia" (R. Anderson, "History," vol. i., p. 167). Dr. Anderson, in a note on p. 168, speaks thus of their seminaries: "Narses, on being expelled from Edessa, opened a school at Nisibis, A.D. 490, which became celebrated. About the same time Acacius, also from Edessa, established a school at Seleucia. It was revived in 530, and was in existence as late as 605. A school was established at Dorkena, A.D. 585. At Bagdad were two schools in 832, and two others were in its neighborhood. Schools existed at Terhana, Mahuza, Maraga, and Adiabene, in Assyria, and at Maraga in Azerbaijan. There were also schools in Elam, Persia, Khorassan, and Arabia. The school at Nisibis had a three years' course of study. The studies to a great extent were theological; but to the study of the Bible they added, in the schools generally, the study of grammar, rhetoric, poetry, dialectics, arithmetic, geometry, music, astronomy, medicine," etc. (p. 168).

### Dr. Draper.

Of the anathematized Nestorians Dr. Draper says: "The philosophical tendency of the vanquished was soon indicated by their actions. While their leader (Nestorius) was tormented in an African oasis, many of them emigrated to the Euphrates, and founded the Chaldean (Nestorian) Church. Under its auspices the college at Edessa, with several connected schools, arose. In these were translated into Syriac many Greek and Latin works, as those of Aristotle and Pliny. It was the Nestorians who, in connection with the Jews, founded the medical college of Djondesabour, and first instituted a system of academical honors which has descended to our times. It was the Nestorians who were not only permitted by the khalifs the free exercise of their religion, but were intrusted [sic] with the education of the children of the great Mohammedan families, a liberality in striking contrast to the fanaticism of Europe. The Khalif Alraschid went so far as even to place all his public schools under the superintendence of John Masue, one of that sect. Under the auspices of these learned men, the Arabian academies were furnished with translations of Greek authors, and vast libraries were collected in Asia" (p. 290).

Of the expulsion of the Nestorians from the Church by Cyril, Dr. Draper truly says: "The expulsion of this party from Constantinople was accomplished by the same persons and policy concerned in destroying philosophy in Alexandria. St. Cyril was the representative

of an illiterate and unscrupulous faction that had come into power through intrigues with the females of the imperial court, and bribery of eunuchs and parasites. The same spirit that had murdered Hypatia tormented Nestorius to death. Of the contending parties, one was respectable and had a tincture of learning; the other ignorant, and not hesitating at the employment of brute force, deportation, assassination. Unfortunately for the world, the unscrupulous party carried the day."

Is it not a striking fact that the midnight of the dark ages in Europe, hastened by Cyril, coincided with the noon-day of Arabic learning, kindled at the fires of the Nestorians, expelled for no good reason from the so-called Church?

### Humboldt.

Alexander von Humboldt, in the second volume of his "Kosmos," is quoted by Dr. Schaff as recognizing this obligation of the Arabs to the Nestorians, and of the world to them through the Arabians. He says of the Nestorian school of Edessa: "It awakened the scientific search for materia medica in the mineral and vegetable kingdoms. When it was dissolved by Christian fanaticism under Zeno, the Isaurian, the Nestorians scattered toward Persia, where they soon attained political importance, and established a new and thronged medical institute at Dschondisapur, in Khusistan. They succeeded in spreading their science and their faith to China."

Of the Arabs he says that "they were a race which had long lived in free converse with Nature, and had preserved a more fresh sensibility to every sort of study of Nature than the people of Greek and Italian cities. What gives the Arabian epoch the universal importance which we must here insist upon, is in great part connected with the trait of national character just indicated. The Arabians, we repeat, are to be regarded as the proper founders of the physical sciences in the sense which we are now accustomed to attach to the word."

### Mosheim.

In addition to the merits of the Nestorians thus far indicated, we ought to mention another. We will express it in the words of Mosheim: "It is to the honor of this sect that, of all the Christians resident in the East, they have preserved themselves most free from the numberless superstitions which have found their way into the Greek and Latin Churches." Layard illustrates this statement in many particulars, such as the rejection of the worship of the Virgin Mary, of the worship of images, of the doctrine of purgatory, and transubstantiation, and of the celibacy of the clergy. At first all the clergy were allowed to marry. Afterward the patriarch and bishops were forbidden.

### Conclusions.

In view of these facts one thing is plain. The belief of the doctrine of eternal punishment, as it was held, did not save the so-called Church from the dark ages of intellectual and moral degradation. On the other hand, the full and firm belief and earnest advocacy of universal restoration by Theodore of Mopsuestia did not prevent those churches who revered him as the great interpreter of the Word of God from unexampled missionary enterprises, from establishing widespread systems of education, from illuminating the Arabs, and through them the dark churches who had sunk into a midnight gloom.

As to the real efficient causes in each case, those who can must judge. It is a field for deep thought and careful inquiry.