

assented to it with myself, and contenting myself with making some reference to it, now and then, in my ministrations, without caring to dwell deliberately upon it and considering what might be urged against it.

“The controversy which arose about Mr. Maurice’s *Essays* and my own little volume of *Sermons*, brought the whole subject closely before me. And for the last seven years I have carefully studied it, with an earnest desire to know the truth of God upon the matter, and with an humble prayer for the guidance and teaching of the Holy Spirit in the search for it. I now declare that I can no longer maintain, or give utterance to, the doctrine of the endlessness of future punishments,—that I dare not dogmatise at all on the matter,—that I can only lay my hand upon my mouth and leave it in the hands of the righteous and merciful Judge. But I see that the word *eternal* does not mean *endless*, and for such reasons as the following I entertain the ‘hidden hope’ that there are remedial processes, when this life is ended, of which at present we know nothing, but which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will administer, as He in His wisdom shall see to be good.”¹

The time may not be far distant when most or all of these reasons may seem trite or superfluous. Some of them may seem so already, as they seemed in later years to the Bishop himself. Religious thought has made great strides within the last thirty years. But it is by no means unnecessary yet to retrace the path along which thinkers like Maurice and Colenso travelled. The old superstition, though weakened and circumscribed in its teaching, has not been conquered; and we have still to do battle in many quarters with notions which more than all others are barriers in the way of the Divine working. His reasons, then, were (1) that Christians generally believe in some remedial process after death, a small section only of the Church universal contending that the hour of dissolution from the mortal body fixes the condition

¹ *Commentary*, p. 198.

of the man for ever and ever ; (2) that the warning of the few and the many stripes for different degrees of guilt points in the same direction, for, if these words mean anything at all, they must imply gradations of punishment, and there can be no gradations of *endless, infinite, irremediable* woe.

"Can the punishment in any sense be spoken of as one of *few stripes* where the unutterably dreadful doom is still assigned of endless banishment from the Presence of God and all beautiful and blessed things into the outer darkness among all accursed things, where not one single ray of Divine Mercy can ever enter ? It seems impossible. The very essence of such perdition is utterly, and for ever and ever, to lose sight of the Blessed Face of God. If it be certain that never, never, in the infinite endless ages to come shall one ray of Divine Light shine upon the gloom in which the condemned soul is plunged, how can such a state be described as one of 'few stripes,' however differing from that of another soul, by the pangs of bodily pain being less acute, or even (if it be conceivable) the anguish of mind being less intense ?"

But (3) the drawing of a sharp line between all those who shall be admitted to endless blessedness and all who shall be consigned to endless woe is really inconceivable. The shades of difference discriminating the moral character of men are infinite, all the good having some evil in them, and the evil always seeds of good.

"Our God and Father, blessed be His Name, can take account of all, and will do so, and judge with righteous judgement accordingly. But where can the line be drawn between the two classes, when the nearest members of the one touch so closely upon those of the other ? In point of fact, how many thoughtful clergy of the Church of England have ever deliberately taught, in plain out-spoken terms, this doctrine ? How many of the more intelligent laity or clergy do really in their heart of hearts, believe it ?"

There is (4) the further question whether stripes are not needed

“even for many of those who yet, as we humbly trust, shall be suffered to enter into life, whom, at all events, it would be a fearful and horrible thing to suppose consigned to everlasting misery. Are there not many Christians to be met with daily in the common intercourse of life, persons whom, in the main, we must believe to be sincere in their profession, yet whose weak and imperfect characters often betray them into faults which are unworthy of the Name they bear? Do not these seem to need some cleansing process after death, to purify their souls from sin,—not the sin in their nature only, but sin too often allowed and indulged in the life? . . . We have no difficulty, then, in admitting the idea of a remedial process for *some* after death. But, surely, the most saintly character, when viewed in the light of God’s holiness, will have manifold imperfections, spots, and stains which he himself will rejoice to have purged away, though it be by ‘stripes,’—by stripes not given in anger and displeasure, but in tenderest love and wisdom, by Him who dealeth with us as with sons?”¹

Further, (5), all analogy teaches us to expect that there will be growth in the world to come as well as in this.

“We cannot suppose that the spirit of an infant, or young child, will remain always in the undeveloped state in which death found it; nor have we any ground whatever to think that it will, suddenly and in a moment, expand at once in all its powers, to the full perfection of which it is capable. Scripture does not inform us on the subject; analogy is wholly against any such supposition. In all nature there is no instance of such a sudden start into fulness of life, of such a break of continuity as this would be. And would it not in fact contradict the very idea of *life* itself, if there were to be no such growth and progress.”²

¹ *Commentary*, pp. 201, 202.

² *Ib.* p. 205.

But (6) this growth, which we feel sure must await some, furnishes a ground for believing that it will go on in all ; and (7) we must not forget that this belief attests the utterance of the Divine Voice in our hearts.

"Because we are not brute creatures, but made in the image of our God and Father, . . . because we have that within us which bears relation to the perfect Righteousness and Truth and Love which is in God,—therefore it is that we recognise and rejoice in the full revelation of those perfections in our Lord's own life, and the fainter emanations from the same blessed Source of Light, which we see in the better acts of our fellow man, or which we may be enabled to manifest even in our own . . . By that light the sayings and doings of good men, the acts of the Church, the proceedings and decisions of her Fathers and Councils, the writings of Prophets and Apostles, the words recorded to have been uttered by our Blessed Lord Himself, must all be tried. 'We must try the spirits whether they are of God.' If we are required on the supposed authority of the Church or of St. Peter or St. Paul to believe that which contradicts the law of righteousness and truth and love which God with the finger of His Spirit has written upon our hearts, we are sure that there must be error somewhere. . . The voice of that inner witness is closer to him than any that can reach him from without, and ought to reign supreme in his whole being. . . We may be certain, then, that any interpretation of Scripture which contradicts that sense of right which God Himself, our Father, has given us, to be a witness of His own perfect excellences, must be set aside, as having no right to crush down, as with an iron heel, into silence the indignant remonstrance of our whole spiritual being. And it cannot be denied that there is such a remonstrance . . . against the dogma, as usually understood, of endless punishment. This dogma makes no distinctions between those who have done things worthy of many stripes and those who have done things worthy of few,—between the profligate sensualist and the ill-trained child. . . I need hardly say

that the whole Epistle to the Romans is one of the strongest possible protests against such a notion."¹

On this point the Bishop cites from his *Ten Weeks in Natal*,² the words of a missionary who, having enunciated this doctrine to a heathen child, is asked by her where her parents have gone, and on saying that their destiny was the dark place, hears her despairing cry, "Why did they not come and tell us this before?" He cites, as still more horrible and as little short of blasphemy, the following prayer printed for the use of a missionary institution of the Church of England:—

"O Eternal God, Creator of all things, *mercifully remember* that the souls of unbelievers are the work of Thy hands, and that they are created in Thy resemblance. Behold, O Lord, *how hell is filled with them* to the dishonour of Thy Holy Name. *Remember* that Jesus Christ, Thy Son, for their salvation, suffered a most cruel death. Permit not, we beseech Thee, that He should be despised by the heathen around us. *Vouchsafe to be propitiated* by the prayers of Thy flock, Thy most holy Spouse, and call to mind thine own compassion."

"As I have done before," the Bishop adds, "so do I now set forward these passages, to enter, in the name of God's Truth and God's Love, my most solemn protest against them, as utterly contrary to the whole spirit of the Gospel, . . . and operating with the most injurious and deadening effect on those who teach and on those who are taught."

Yet further, (8), the persistent language of the Old Testament and the New on the subject of punishment calls for explanation; and by this dogma of endless and irremediable woe for all who undergo any condemnation it is either nullified or converted into nonsense. What meaning is left for the words that even Sodom and Gomorrhah shall be dealt with more

¹ *Commentary*, p. 211.

² Pp. 252, 253. *Commentary on Romans*, p. 211. See also pp. 55, 56.

lightly than some others? or for the promise, given emphatically by Ezekiel, xvi. 53, 55, that the captivity of Sodom and her daughters shall be brought back? What force is there in the imagery of the refining fire, of the fire trying every man's work and separating the dross from the pure ore, of the worker who shall be saved, made sound or whole, though with loss, because his rotten work, in the guise of wood, hay, stubble, shall be consumed?

But (9) on the other hand the retort may be made, Are there not other passages, which plainly imply that the wicked shall "go into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels,—to the place where their worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched?"

"Certainly there are," the Bishop answers; "only let it be remembered that the word 'endless' is not a proper representation of the word 'eternal' or 'everlasting'—not because it says too much, but because it says too little. 'Everlasting' implies life, permanence, unchangeableness; 'endless' is a mere empty negative and explains nothing but that the object is without an end. We can speak of the Everlasting God and of the Living God, instead of saying the Eternal God: but we feel at once how empty is the formula, if we speak of the Endless, or the Deathless, Being. Surely, there is an Eternal, or Everlasting, Fire—understanding the word 'Fire,' of course, not literally, but as a figure, to represent the Divine Anger and Displeasure—which always has been burning, and ever will be burning, with a living, permanent, unchangeable flame against all manner of evil, so long as there is evil to be destroyed by it. While evil rules in a man, he must be subject to that displeasure, because the master is, whose slave the man is, whose service he has chosen. It is so in this life, and the man is conscious of it at times, though at others he may beguile away, by occupation, business, or pleasure, the burning sense of that displeasure. But the time will surely come when, either in this life, it may be, or in the life to

come, it will be revealed fully,—that Divine Anger, that Eternal Fire, which is burning against sin, against all wilful, allowed evil.”¹

The notion that any can be free of, or can shake off, the duty of examining this subject and sifting it thoroughly, is absurd. We can scarcely say that it is less the duty of every one in this country than of those who leave it in order to teach the heathen. But the Bishop of Natal could not but feel that it was in a special degree incumbent on himself.

“Such questions as these have been brought again and again before my mind in the intimate converse which I have had, as a missionary, with Christian converts and heathens. To teach the truths of our holy religion to intelligent adult natives, who have the simplicity of children, but, withal, the earnestness and thoughtfulness of men—to whom these things are new and startling, whose minds are not prepared by long familiarity to acquiesce in, if not receive, them—is a sifting process for the opinions of any teacher who feels the deep moral obligation of answering truly, and faithfully, and unreservedly, his fellow-man looking up to him for light and guidance, and asking, ‘Are you sure of this?’ ‘Do you know this to be true?’ ‘Do you really believe that?’ The state of everlasting torment, after death, of all impenitent sinners and unbelievers, including the whole heathen world, as many teach, is naturally so amazing and overwhelming an object of contemplation to them, and one so prominently put forward in the case of those who have been under certain missionary training, that it quite shuts out the cardinal doctrines of the Gospel, the Fatherly relation to us of the Faithful Creator. The conscience, healthy, though but imperfectly enlightened, does not answer to such denunciations of indiscriminate wrath, and cannot, therefore, appreciate what is represented as Redeeming Love, offering a way of escape. Hence missionaries often complain bitterly of the hardness of heart of the heathen, and say that

¹ *Commentary*, p 215.

it is impossible to awaken them to a sense of sin. Yet, without such consciousness of sin in the hearer, the threats of Divine vengeance can produce no feeling but aversion and a determinate unbelief. These are questions which deserve to be seriously pondered."¹

The Bishop might have added that, where there is the consciousness of sin in the heathen, these threats must first pervert and then deaden the moral sense, or, at the least, render poor and infertile soil from which otherwise a rich harvest might have been looked for. But on reviewing the general ground taken by him on this subject, we may safely say that never was a protest delivered against an oppressive and crushing dogma more carefully weighed, more sober, more moderate in tone and temper than this of the Bishop of Natal. Some who may have a wider acquaintance with the popular literature relating to this doctrine may regard his criticism as not sufficiently searching, and his judgement as, on the whole, too lenient; and undoubtedly there are aspects in which the words of some who propound this dogma call for treatment altogether more severe. In any shape or form the doctrine is utterly revolting; but the method of setting it forth has been often, and may be even now, characterized by a wilful perversion, malignity, and falsehood, which in the interests of public morality and decency must be grappled with and put down. There are certain classes of theologians or preachers who delight in pictorial descriptions of hell and its physical tortures. These descriptions fall into two classes, the one exhibiting conditions of solitary imprisonment, the other depicting an infinite multitude of sinners left to herd with each other and to sink perpetually lower and lower in the abyss of brutality and sin. The foulness of both these classes of pictures can be realised only by adducing one or two examples of each.

¹ *Commentary*, p. 218.

The Jesuit Pinamonti wrote a treatise which he entitled *Hell opened to Christians*. This treatise has been translated, or adapted, for the use of the English public by the Rev. J. Furniss, also a member of the Society of Jesus, and is put forth, *permissu superiorum*, under the title of *The Sight of Hell*, as a work specially intended "for children and young persons." The price, being only one penny, brings it within the reach of all. In this tract the ideas of Pinamonti are worked out systematically and presented in a schedular or catechetical form. To the question, "Where is Hell?" the answer is "that it is in the middle of the earth." "How far is it to Hell?"—"Just four thousand miles," the assertion proving, it may be, the sincerity and candour with which members of the Roman Church can receive the conclusions of astronomical science. The staunchest Copernican cannot deny that a distance of 4,000 miles intervenes between the outer crust of the earth and its centre; but as the measurement holds good from all parts of the crust, the hell here threatened becomes a mathematical point. The point, however, is boundless, and has ample room for all sinners that ever have lived or ever will live. "It is red hot." "Fire on earth gives light: it is not so in hell: in hell the fire is dark." For each sinner there is a special dungeon. The third dungeon is described as having a red-hot floor. On it stands a girl.

"She looks about sixteen years old. Her feet are bare; she has neither shoes nor stockings."

The door opens, and she falls down asking for mercy.

"'O that in this endless eternity of years I might forget the pain only for a single moment.' 'Never shall you leave this red-hot floor,' is the devil's answer. 'Is it so?' the girl says, with a sigh that seems to break her heart. 'Then at least let somebody go to my little brothers and sisters and tell them not to do the bad things that I did.' The devil

answers again: 'Your little brothers and sisters have the priests to tell them these things. If they will not listen to the priests, neither would they listen if somebody should go to them from the dead.'

The fourth dungeon is the boiling kettle.

"Listen! There is a sound like that of a kettle boiling. Is it really a kettle which is boiling? No. Then what is it? Hear what it is. The blood is boiling in the scalded veins of that boy; the brain is boiling and bubbling in his head; the marrow is boiling in his bones."

The fifth dungeon is the "red-hot oven," in which is "a little child."

"Hear how it screams to come out. See how it turns and twists itself about in the fire. It beats its head against the roof of the oven; it stamps its little feet on the floor of the oven. To this child God was very good. Very likely God saw that this child would get worse and worse, and would never repent; and so it would have to be punished *much more* in hell. So God in His mercy called it out of the world in its early childhood."

It would not be easy to speak in words too severe of this farrago of abominable and blasphemous trash; but if we could realise the wretched terror and torture inflicted even by the more ordinary teachings about hell on the minds of the young and the sensitive, we could not fail to perceive that such teachers are committing the most serious of offences against the best interests of the nation. It is enough to say that they sit down to their desks with the deliberate intention of telling lies, in order to terrify *children* into goodness. That many are driven into reckless defiance, and others into madness, is a sad and stern fact; and thus these writers inflict injuries to which the crimes of murderers are as nothing. But there is yet one degree further of cool malignity, which

can be reached in these descriptions ; and it has been reached by Protestant writers or preachers, or by Catholics who are not in the Communion of Rome. The pictures of the Jesuits are horrible and blasphemous. But at least the punishment of sinners is confined to the sinners, and we are not told that they are allowed or compelled to heap sin on sin in a continually increasing measure. The pictures drawn by preachers of the Church of England depict a *society* from which all restraints are removed, but in which the weakest retain the better qualities which had marked them during their sojourn upon earth. This society Dr. Pusey described for the benefit of the University of Oxford in the following terms :—

“ Gather in your mind all which is most loathsome, most revolting, the most treacherous, malicious, coarse, brutal, inventive, fiendish cruelty, unsoftened by any remains of human feeling ; conceive the fierce, fiery eyes of hate, spite, frenzied rage ever fixed on thee, glaring on thee, looking thee through and through with hate, sleepless in their horrible gaze. Hear those yells of blasphemous concentrated hate as they echo along the lurid vaults of hell, everyone hating everyone,”

with more to the same purpose.¹ Dr. Pusey's words are cited from a published sermon. I must cite some passages from an unpublished sermon by a very eminent Prelate, and I do so without scruple, because I heard it myself and write from the notes which I made at the time, and, further, because these passages illustrate the astounding ideas of justice which leave the performances even of the Jesuits Furniss and Pinamonti in the shade. The sermon from which I quote was addressed to boys and girls at their Confirmation, and it dealt with the future lot of those sinners on whom the world would be disposed to look favourably. The poet, the statesman, the orator, the scholar and philosopher, the moralist, the disobedient child,

¹ *Everlasting Punishment*. A sermon preached before the University of Oxford, on the Twenty-first Sunday after Trinity, 1864.

the careless youth, were each in turn described as standing before the judgement seat, and deceiving themselves still until the delusion was dispelled for ever by the words which bade them depart into the lake of fire.

"What," he asked, "will it be for the scholar to hear this, the man of refined and elegant mind, who nauseates everything coarse, mean, and vulgar, who has kept aloof from everything that may annoy or vex him, and hated everything that was distasteful to him? Henceforth his lot is cast with all that is utterly execrable. The most degraded wretch on earth has still something human left about him; but now he must dwell for ever among beings on whose horrible passions no check or restraint shall ever be placed. "How, again, is it with many of whom the world thinks well, who are rich and well-to-do, sober and respectable, benevolent and kind? Dives is sick, and his neighbours are sorry, because he has been a good neighbour to them, polite and hospitable, and ever ready to interchange with them the amenities of life. Dives is sick, and his brothers are sorry, because he has been a kind brother to them, and now they must lose his care and assistance and see him no more. Soon all is over. The body lies in state. His friends come together and attend it to the tomb, and then place the recording tablet stating him to be a very paragon of human virtues. For some months they speak of their poor neighbour, how he would have enjoyed their present gaiety, how they miss him at his accustomed seat, until at length he is forgotten. And while all this is going on upon the earth, where is Dives himself? Suffering in torments because in his lifetime he had received his good things."

For the more special benefit of the young candidates for Confirmation was the picture of the school-girl cut off at the age of thirteen or fourteen. In her short life on earth she had not seldom played truant from school, had told some lies, had been obstinate and disobedient. Now she had to bid farewell to heaven and to hope, to her parents, her brothers, and sisters. What was her agony of grief, that she

should never again look on their kind and gentle faces, never hear their well-known voices! All their acts of love return to her again,—all the old familiar scenes, remembered with a regret which no words can describe, with a gnawing sorrow which no imagination can realise. She must leave for ever that which she now knew so well how to value, and be for ever without the love for which she had so unutterable a yearning. She must dwell henceforth among beings on whom there is no restraint, and her senses must be assailed with all that is utterly abominable. The worst of men are there, with every spark of human feeling extinguished, without any law to moderate the fury of their desperate rage. To complete the picture, the lost angels were mingled with this awful multitude, in torment themselves and the instruments of torturing others. They stood round their human victims, exulting in their misery, and increasing perpetually the sting of their abiding anguish. The bodies of men as well as their souls were subjected to their fearful sway and had to suffer all that cruelty inconceivable could suggest.

“The drunkard they seized and tortured by the instrument of his intemperance; the lustful man by the instrument of his lust; the tyrant by the instrument of his tyranny.”

In order to understand fairly the ground taken by the Bishop of Natal, we have to mark the conclusions or axioms involved in these elaborate pictures of the region of the doomed. These are (1) that all mankind are divided into two classes at the moment of what we call death; (2) that hell is the abode of nothing that is not utterly abominable; (3) that it is a chaos of unrestrained passions; (4) that all the inhabitants are mingled together, so that any one may attack another whenever it pleases him to do so; and (5) that all, of whom we should be disposed to judge most leniently, retain their better characteristics. This last axiom seems hardly to harmonise with the rest; but we may ask, as the Bishop of

Natal asked, how, if these things are so, each man is to be rewarded according to his works. The brutal murderer and the bloodthirsty despot remain what they were; their cruelty is not lessened, their physical force is not abated. The philosopher and moralist, the man of learning and elegant tastes, the child who has died almost in infancy, remain also what they were; and all, murderers, philosophers, and children, are hurled together into an everlasting chaos. The strong can choose out victims who cannot resist them; the weak can put none to torment in their turn, and, according to the supposition, they can have no wish to torment any one. The school-girl may be oppressed by Cæsar Borgia; Shelley, Hume, or Gibbon may find himself assailed by Jonathan Wild or Colonel Blood. We thus see (1) that the punishment is wholly unequal, unless all have committed the same amount of sin, and are equally steeped in guilt (and the very sting of the torture lies in the fact that they are not), or unless all become equally fiendish (which it is asserted that they do not); (2) in either case the less guilty are the greater sufferers, the sensitive and refined, the benevolent and honourable man being trampled on by furious beings, who will lead an endless carnival of violence; and (3) these will scarcely be punished at all,—remorse of conscience they may with whatever success put aside, and on their passions there is to be, by the hypothesis, no check whatever; further (4) by this hypothesis evil is to increase and multiply for ever, and (5) the Divine wrath against sin is put wholly out of sight. It represents the lost as preying on each other; but it pictures none of them as brought face to face with the anger of God against all sin. In other words, the sentence of an infinitely perfect Judge has nothing whatever moral about it. It is a mere physical banishment, where sinners may, or may not, feel the sense of an irreparable loss. The degree to which they feel it has no reference to any action of God in their hearts, but is determined wholly by their temper and habits

on earth. In comparison with the sensitive moralist the ruffian will feel none ; and, in short, the Divine hatred for sin will never be brought home to him.

In truth, all these inferences or axioms are born from the deadly habit of "lying for God," or, to express it more charitably, of doing evil that good may come. The hearts of those whom God has not made sad are saddened with an unspeakable misery, and torture is meted out to those who unquestionably do not deserve it.¹ Still more, everything is made to give place to a radically false idea which associates punishment for sin with time. They who maintain that all sinners suffer endless torment do so on the ground that endless torment alone can be an adequate recompense for any sin. It is no matter of surprise, therefore, that their opponents should believe in a deliverance from the Eternal Fire after it has been endured for a sufficient time. Fixed penalties have no necessary tendency to produce a change of character.

To return to the Bishop of Natal, it is true, as he writes,

"that human laws, which aim more at prevention of crime than amendment of the offender, do mete out in this way, beforehand, a certain measure of punishment for a certain offence. The man who covets his neighbour's property

¹ See two sermons on "The Revelation of God the Probation of Man," preached before the University of Oxford, by Samuel, Lord Bishop of Oxford, 1861. In one of these he speaks of a young man of great promise, of much simplicity of character and excellence of life, as dying in darkness and despair because he had indulged doubt, these doubts being whether the sun and moon stood still at Joshua's bidding. I need hardly add that the sermon of an eminent Prelate from which I have already given passages was a sermon preached by Bishop Wilberforce. It is only fair to say that in his work on *Universalism* (London, 1887), p. 116, the Rev. Thomas Allin mentions the name of Bishop Wilberforce among those who in the English Church have avowed, or leaned towards, the "larger hope." This fact, which in any case must belong to quite his latest years, is not mentioned in the *Life of Bishop Wilberforce*; but Archdeacon Farrar states that it rests on high authority. The tidings must be received with a feeling of thankfulness.

may, if he like, obtain it dishonestly, at a certain definite expense. He knows that he may possibly escape altogether ; or, at the worst, he can only suffer this or that pre-arranged penalty, after suffering which he may remain (so far as the effect of the punishment itself is concerned, and unless other influences act upon him) as bad and as base a villain as before. But God's punishments are those of a Father . . . We have no ground to suppose that a wicked man will at length be released from the pit of woe, when he has suffered pain enough for his sins, when he has suffered time enough, 'a certain time appointed by God's justice.' But we have ground to trust and believe that a man in whose heart there is still Divine Life, in whom there lingers still one single spark of better feeling, the gift of God's Spirit, the token of a Father's still continuing love, will at length be saved not from suffering but from sin."¹

There are, in truth, two aspects of the great question of moral evil. There is, first, its existence in men ; and next, the purpose with respect to it in the Divine Mind. This purpose must be its extinction, unless it be His design to make terms at some future time with what may remain unconquered and unextinguished. On the former the Bishop of Natal employs, as he understands St. Paul to employ, the language of hope ; the latter alternative the popular or traditional theology, of which we have been speaking, practically affirms. It admits in words that the final cause of the Divine government of the world is the victory of righteousness over sin ; but the picture drawn of this victory represents it as a frightful failure. According to all theories which regard the condition of men at the accidental moment of their death as final, the immense majority of the whole human race of all times and countries, all wicked heathen, all wicked Christians, all children who die with faults not repented of—according to some, all children dying unbaptized—all mere moralists, all men of indifferent or negative character, depart into a realm where lawlessness

reigns supreme, and from which all external check has been deliberately withdrawn. It is, in truth, a region, not in which evil is conquered, but from which God has retreated. It is the triumph of Ahriman, who may henceforth exult in the endless aggrandisement of sin. St. Paul would have rejected with loathing the thought that the victory of God means nothing more than this ; and it is certain that no man in his senses would ever speak thus of any earthly king who had lost nineteen-twentieths of his kingdom, over which he had been obliged to abandon all control. The failure even in a single instance to overcome evil by good is really the defeat of the Righteous Will. We might give the earthly king all the credit which a qualified success deserves. We might say that he had put bounds to rebellion, and prevented the rebels from harming those who had not joined them ; but it would be an absurd mockery to say that he had overthrown his enemies and recovered all his ancient power and his rightful realm. Of the Divine Ruler we should be compelled to say that His Will was not victorious while even a solitary soul remained under the bondage of evil. To the mind of St. Paul such pictures of mutilated empire never presented themselves. For him Christ was exalted as King over all ; and He must reign until He has put all enemies under his feet, not multitudes of individual men, in whom the evil is suffered to continue unabated or endowed with increasing venom, but all rule, all authority, all power, all the principles of self-will, disobedience, rebellion, everything which in any way opposes itself to the Spirit of righteousness and love. The final conquest and extinction of this opposing power or principle is the destruction of the last enemy which he calls death,—not the accident to which we give that name, but that state which alone with St. Paul deserved to be called death. The former was a change of material particles or elements, if so we are to speak of them,—a change, of which to cite again Bishop Butler's words, we know nothing beyond

some of its phenomena. The latter is the real death, which is the burden of the warnings of all prophets and righteous men under the Old Covenant or the New. It is the death between which and life Moses is represented as calling on the people to choose. It is the condition of those who are dead in trespasses and sins. It is the death which is the wages of sin, the death of which alone St. Paul speaks when he says that, as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all,—all without exception,—be made alive. On this subject he speaks with no uncertain utterance. As to the complete and final extinction of every power or principle antagonistic to the principle or Spirit of Righteousness and Truth he has not a shadow of doubt. Sorrow, sickness, pain, suffering, the dissolution of the frame which we call the body, all these are accidents, which St. Paul describes as part of the Divine discipline, to which God Himself has subjected "the creature" in hope.

"These pains," the Bishop of Natal adds, drawing out the meaning of the Apostle, "though they may not know it, are, in truth, *birth-pangs*, which . . . are tending to a better state of things hereafter."¹

We are apt to look on this wretchedness, or vanity, for so St. Paul terms it, as the necessary consequence of sin and so having its origin in sin only. We have not the faintest warrant for any such supposition. It is a purely arbitrary assumption.² These sufferings, and the accident called death,

¹ *Commentary*, p. 219.

² Yet it is an assumption, which all who will insist on regarding the constitution of mortal creatures in a changing world as having been introduced by the sin of some of these creatures must always be tempted to make. They are right in thinking that on this hypothesis something more than the accident called death has to be accounted for. Tempests, earthquakes, the poison of serpents, the fangs of beasts of prey, are all in a certain sense evils, are evils in the same sense perhaps in which that which we call physical death is an evil. If the latter is the result of Adam's sin, so also must be the former. The topic is generally evaded or slurred over; and he is a bold man who will follow Milton's example in making Eve's transgression the cause of a declination in the earth's axis. The attempt is, however, sometimes made. I have heard the same

which for all we know may end them altogether, have nothing to do with the death of sin from which we pray to be raised to the life of righteousness ; and the conquering of this, the only real death, will be the ending or consummation of the work of the Eternal Son, who will then hand over to the Father the power intrusted to Him, that God may be the All-in-all.

Whatever else these words may mean, they mean at least this, that nowhere shall any room be left for the unrestrained exercise and multiplication of sin, that everywhere it shall be hunted out and put down, and shall finally be extinguished in the creation which it has marred. It means that Divine righteousness can never make terms with sin or allow it anywhere to hold its own. To assert that God can so make terms is to assert that the Divine Nature is to undergo a change, for it is asserted that He is now at war with all sin, whereas the time will come when He will admit that His Will is not adequate to the accomplishment of the consummation which He had desired to bring about.¹

distinguished prelate, of one of whose sermons I have already spoken, inform his hearers that thorns and talons had no place in the world before the fall of man, that the rose and the acacia had no spinæ, the lion and the tiger no claws, that the several stages which ended in the consummation of human rebellion were marked by the beginning and growth or increase of irritation in the bark of the tree and the paw of the beast ; that when the woman resolved on her sin, the spinæ and the claws protruded from the coating of the plant and the flesh of the brute which, as soon as the sin was accomplished, became to its own amazement and against its will a beast of prey. The picture was drawn out with all the fulness of detail which marked this eminent prelate's oratory, and which, in this instance, gave emphasis to the conclusion, "Such, my brethren, was the effect of human transgression on the animal and vegetable worlds." It is hard to believe that a speaker in the present day could draw such a picture without some consciousness of its falsity. The offence here lies in the extravagance with which the hypothesis is worked out ; but the fallacy underlies, of necessity, all the notions which connect with moral disobedience and sin the effects of the changes and chances of this mortal life.

¹ Of theories of conditional immortality and of the annihilation of those who after some definite term may remain impenitent, all that we

But if He wills to conquer sin, what power shall be able to withstand Him in the end? It is not in this age only that men have found it difficult or impossible to believe in the impotence of the Divine Will for subduing finally the disobedience of every enemy. The difficulty or impossibility of believing this led Scotus Erigena to affirm the final restoration of the devil himself, and to cite Origen and others in support of this assertion.¹ The words of St. Paul admit of neither

need say is that they do not differ in principle from the extremest declarations of Augustinian Calvinism. It is unnecessary to give the names of writers who have propounded such theories. The idea of annihilation (whatever that may be) involves the Divine defeat quite as much as the idea of the endless torturing of beings left to themselves in some portion of the universe. It is virtually the assertion that God, unable to make a bad man good, can only put him out of being. Of the possibility of such extinction we know nothing; but we implicitly deny the fact when we assert that the Divine Will must in the end be absolutely victorious.

¹ There is, indeed, no room for doubt that the horrible theology of undying vindictiveness has come like a nightmare on Christendom, and that the greatest thinkers and holiest men in the Church Catholic have lived in a joyful assurance of the complete extinction of sin. From Clement of Alexandria we have the declaration that "all things have been appointed by the Lord for the salvation of *all* both in general and in particular"; that "necessary discipline by the goodness of the great over-seeing Judge compels even those who have entirely despaired to repent"; and that "all things are arranged with a view to the salvation of the universe by the Lord of the Universe." Gregory of Nyssa speaks of Christ as "both freeing mankind from their wickedness and healing the very inventor of wickedness (the devil)," and with an outburst of joy declares that "when in the lengthened circuits of time the evil now blended with and implanted in them has been taken away, when the restoration to their ancient state of those who now lie in wickedness shall have taken place, there shall be with one voice thanksgiving from the whole creation." Elsewhere he declares, "It is needful that at some time evil shall be removed utterly and entirely from the realm of existence. For since by its very nature evil cannot exist apart from free choice, when free choice becomes in the power of God, shall not evil advance to utter abolition, so that no receptacle for it shall be left?" Again, "At some time the nature of evil shall pass to extinction, being fully and completely removed from the realm of existence, and Divine unmixed goodness shall embrace in itself every rational nature; nothing that has been made by God falling away from the Kingdom of God." And again, "When every created being is at harmony with itself, and every tongue shall confess

modification nor exception. The reign of Christ will last until every opposing principle has been utterly extinguished. His salvation, then, is not partial. It cannot be so ; for all theories of partial salvation imply, of necessity, a compromise with sin. This compromise with sin is inconceivable ; and with this inconceivability all such theories fall to the ground.

The Bishop of Natal's conclusions might have been put more decisively had he thus fixed his mind on the consummation of the Divine Work in the conquest and extinction of evil. In other words, he might have advanced somewhat further ; but the actual work accomplished by him was great indeed. He moved with no faltering step. He refused to allow himself to be entangled with any theological inconsistencies and contradictions ; and the result was a vindication of the Divine Love and Righteousness, the meaning of which could neither be wrested nor put out of sight. This was the great purpose which he set before himself in his *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans*. It is not surprising, therefore, that this little book roused the deepest "theological hatred" in the minds of his accusers at the so-called "trial" in Capetown.

that Jesus Christ is Lord, when every creature shall have been made one body, then shall the body of Christ be subject to the Father. . . . Now, the body of Christ, as I have often said, is the whole of humanity. . . . When then all who once were God's enemies shall have been made His footstool (because they shall receive in themselves the Divine imprint), when death shall have been destroyed in the subjection of all, which is not servile humility but immortality and blessedness, Christ is said, by St. Paul, to be made subject to God." With equal assurance Theodoret declares "that in the future life, when corruption is at an end and immortality granted, there is no place for suffering, but it being totally removed, no form of sin remains at work. So shall God be all in all—all things being out of danger of falling, and converted to Him."

In short, the traditional notions on the subject of future punishment may be regarded as virtually a modern heresy, to be beaten down and summarily cast aside. For super-abundant evidence of this fact I may refer to Mr. Atkin's work on *Universalism*, already mentioned, p. 164.

CHAPTER V.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE GREAT WARFARE.

1862-63.

WE have seen that the necessity of raising funds must in any case have taken the Bishop to England at this time: but the uncertainty as to the results which might follow the publication of his criticisms on the Pentateuch rendered it unwise to leave his family in Natal. Speaking of their departure, Mrs. Colenso says that

“they packed all their most valued possessions and set out with the feeling that quite possibly they were bidding a last farewell to a much-loved home and people. Archdeacon and Mrs. Grubb (Miss Alice Mackenzie) remained in charge of the Mission, the sadness of the parting being deepened by the arrival, two days before, of the news of the death of Bishop Mackenzie. After a farewell service in the little wooden chapel, the journey down to Durban was accomplished by ox-waggon, in the same patriarchal fashion as the journey up seven years ago, and lasting for three days. Part of the ‘trek’ was by night, when the Bishop beguiled the weariness of the little party with talk about the stars and with stories of the wanderings of Ulysses. Passage by sailing-vessel rather than by the then monthly mail steamer was chosen for economy’s sake. It was an interesting voyage. The *Medusa*, though small, was a capital sailer, outstripping every vessel we fell in with.’

It cannot be said that the Bishop found himself in quiet waters when the ten weeks' voyage came to an end. Bishop Gray had preceded him to England, and, as the sequel will show, had in concert with some of his brother-Bishops determined on a line of action which, it was hoped, would end in his complete discomfiture. The Bishop of Natal was wholly in the wrong. He must be made to confess himself in the wrong, and, if possible, to eat his own words. But while he had thus to parry the manœuvres of not very ingenuous opponents, he had at the same time to undergo the harder struggle between duty and personal affection. If he was met by resistance, either active or passive, in some quarters from which he might have looked for sympathy if not for support and encouragement, this disappointment was as nothing compared with the forfeiture of old and precious friendship. Almost from the moment of his landing it became manifest that he must prepare himself for the great warfare ; and as this warfare was solely and wholly in the cause of truth, he was ready, rather than be untrue to that cause, to yield up, if need be, even the good opinion of dear friends. All that he could do was to see that the breach of friendship should not come from himself ; and to this resolution he was persistently faithful.

The terror felt at this time by the several parties which professed to regard the raising of any questions as to the date, authorship, and historical value of any books of the Old Testament as an onslaught on the very principles of Christianity and even of all religion, is curiously shown in Bishop Gray's Charge to the Diocese of Natal, delivered in 1864. In this charge the one over-mastering desire by which he acknowledges himself to have been actuated in reference to Bishop Colenso's criticisms on the Pentateuch was not to prove their falsity, but to prevent their publication. There are some, perhaps many, who lose their tempers in discussions

on the antiquity of our *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, and regard as a terrible heresy, or even as a sign of moral obliquity, the assertion of the manifest fact that they were not known in their present form in the days of Perikles. But this agitation is as nothing to the scare of those who feel, or profess to feel, that everything, their peace of mind here and their highest hopes hereafter, must give way beneath them, if it should turn out that Moses had nothing to do with the composition of the book of Genesis. Accordingly, the Bishop of Capetown was anxious, not to insure a fair examination, but to prevent all scrutiny whatsoever. His Charge¹ gives the story of his doings in a passage, of which almost every sentence bristles with assumptions and misrepresentations.

“Upon the appearance,” Bishop Gray tells us, “of his first work, assailing the faith through his Commentary [on the Romans], I wrote a letter, earnestly intreating him not to publish, and, when too late to hinder publication, sought to point out to him wherein he had taught amiss. When unable to convince him, I referred the book and the correspondence to the Fathers of the Church at home, who met, at the call of the late Archbishop, now with God, to consider it. Before I could receive their sanction the death of the well-beloved Bishop Mackenzie compelled me to proceed to England.² I then received the concurrence of the Bishops, generally, in the course which I had pursued; and on the arrival of your late Bishop³ shortly after me in England, I communicated their views to him. At the same time I intreated him to meet three of the most eminent Bishops of our Church, who had expressed their willingness to confer with him on his arrival and discuss his difficulties with him, hoping that he might thereby be induced to

¹ P. 27.

² Bishop Gray must have started by the first steamer after getting this news. He therefore reached England some weeks before the Bishop of Natal in his little sailing vessel.

³ It suited Bishop Gray's purpose to use this form.

suppress his book, so full of error. He, however, declined. He would not meet more than one, and then, not as if he were in any error, but only as a common seeker after truth. At that time he had not published his open assault upon the Word of God; but, hearing that he had printed, for private circulation in the colony, a work reputed to be sceptical in its tendency,¹ I besought him not to put it forth in England, until he had met and discussed his views with the Bishops. But this also was declined, and the work was published.

Two years before the delivery of this Charge, the Bishop of Natal had told Bishop Gray that the rough draft of the book had been printed, not for circulation in the colony, but solely that it might be submitted to the judgement of valued friends in England. One charge is thus rebutted; and after the denial given to it by Bishop Colenso, Bishop Gray ought to have been ashamed to repeat it. There remained the other charge, that Bishop Colenso rushed impetuously into publication, without caring for the advice of those eminent scholars on the English Bench who might have lightened or removed his difficulties. This charge is disposed of, or rather turned against the accuser, by the following narrative of the Bishop of Natal.

“Within a few days after my arrival in England, I received a letter from the Bishop of Oxford. . . . In this letter the Bishop said, with reference to some points in my Commentary on the Romans, ‘On these points I should greatly like calmly and prayerfully to talk with you, if you will let me. They are too long for writing. But what I mainly wish for now is, to pray you not to take any irretrievable step, until you have, in free discourse with

¹ By whom was it so reputed? Bishop Gray admits that the book was not published at the time to which he refers. He must, therefore, have formed his opinion on mere hearsay or on information received by breach of confidence.

some of us, reviewed the whole matter. . . . All I would ask for Christ's sake is that you rest not satisfied until you have given us some such opportunity for free brotherly converse. . . . If you would come to me to give a day or two to such a consultation, you would find a warm greeting, and, I hope, a loving and unprejudiced discussion of differences.'

"To this affectionate appeal I was about to respond at once in the same spirit, accepting heartily the invitation given, when another post on the same day brought me a letter from the Bishop of Capetown, which seemed to change wholly the character of the proposed discussion.¹ It appeared to me, in short, that, instead of being invited to a friendly conference, I was about practically to be 'con-

¹ The Bishop of Natal was quite right. The nature of the scheme taken in hand is revealed by the Bishop of Oxford himself. Writing to Bishop Gray, June 1st, 1862, before the arrival of the Bishop of Natal, he says: "We have now held two episcopal meetings on the Bishop of Natal's case. . . . We met on Friday—a large number. . . . The Bishop of Winchester had your letter to Natal and his answer communicated to the Archbishop, and offered to read them. London objected. The book [*The Commentary on the Romans*] was all we had to do with. I replied. St. David's backed me, and after tedious discussion your letter was read. The Bishop of London (Tait) declared it to be an absolute perversion of the whole book: a tissue of misrepresentations, &c. I responded, and Salisbury, that it was a clear, loving, fair, and most considerate statement of his errors. . . . Another discussion again settled for reading, and it was read through.

"Then came a long discussion as to our course. I suggested that on his landing we should open personal communication with him. . . . that *we* had read his book . . . and invited its suppression; and, failing that, agreed to request him not to officiate in our dioceses until the matter had been legally examined. . . . St. David's seemed to fear that such a common action had too much the appearance of a synodical condemnation without a hearing. . . . London was strong against action as action, 'was not prepared to say,' &c. The old story. 'Did not know that it was beyond the teaching of Mr. Maurice. . . . If he did this, must he not forbid the Bishop of Brechin,' &c."—*Life of Bishop Wilberforce*, vol. iii. pp. 114, 115.

In short, a trap was laid for the Bishop of Natal before he had landed, in England; and he was then left to believe, it would seem, that no trap had been laid at all.

vened' by him, as Metropolitan, before a bench of bishops, for my offences. And that I was not wrong in this supposition is shown by the fact, that the Bishop of Capetown did not correct my own view of the matter, as expressed to him in my letters, copied below, and that he still says, in the extract cited from his charge, 'He would not meet more than one, and then *not as if he were* in any error, but only as a common seeker after truth.'

"This language may be compared with the expressions of the Bishop of Oxford, 'free discussion with some of us,' 'free brotherly converse,' 'loving and unprejudiced discussion of differences.'

"(i) As by submitting to be thus called to account by him, I should have recognised indirectly the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan, I thought it my duty to reply to the Bishop of Oxford and to the Bishop of Capetown, as follows:—

"TO THE BISHOP OF OXFORD.

"August 9, 1862.

"I thank you most sincerely for your most kind and friendly letter. I should be most happy to discuss any points in my book on the Romans, either with yourself, or any other brother bishop *singly and privately*; though I must confess that I do not anticipate much result from such a conference as the views which I have expressed in that book are, generally speaking, not the result of a few years' Colonial experience, but have been long held by me, have grown with my growth, and are, as I fully believe, quite compatible with a conscientious adherence to the Articles and Formularies of the Church of England. I do not think, however, that any good would result from my meeting a number of Bishops together upon the subject, and, therefore, would prefer declining your very kind invitation.

"Under any circumstances I am sure that you would be the last person to wish me, for any personal reasons, to shrink from the confession of what I believe to be the truth.'

"TO THE BISHOP OF CAPETOWN.

"Just before your letter reached me, I had received one—a very kind one—from the Bishop of Oxford, making a similar proposal. I should be most happy to meet any of my brother Bishops *singly*, and discuss with him any portion of my book on the Romans; but for various reasons I do not think it would be productive of any good result for me to meet a number of them together; and I have written to that effect to the Bishop of Oxford.

"With respect to my other book . . . it is quite true that I have been for some time past deeply engaged in the study of the Pentateuch, and have arrived at some startling results. I have had a portion of them privately printed, for the express purpose of laying them before such of my friends in England as would be most likely to be able to give me assistance and advice in this matter, by possessing sufficient acquaintance with the subject, and by being free from those strong prejudices which would prevent their discussing calmly and dispassionately with me the points in question. I trust that I duly reverence both the Church and the Bible; but the truth is above both. I have already taken measures for submitting my views on the Pentateuch to some of my friends, and shall be glad to do so privately to any intelligent, candid, and truth-seeking student. Among others, I had *thought of asking the Bishop of St. David's to confer with me* upon the subject. But I am not prepared at present to propound my views prematurely *to any one*.'

(ii.) The Bishop of Capetown replied as follows:—

"August 12, 1862.

"I think you have not quite understood the object of my proposal. I have been placed in great difficulties by the book [*Commentary on the Romans*] which you have published. People in England, and many of the Bishops who have read it, are pained and shocked by it. They have thought, and so have I, that the most Christian course was

for those who were able to do so to meet you and endeavour to convince you that you were in error.

“If by God’s blessing they should succeed in this, it might lead to your withdrawing a book which so many think unsound, and *render all other proceedings unnecessary.*

“I doubt much whether *one* Bishop would meet you (!) ; and I do hope that you will not decline to meet any who wish to discuss the language used, lovingly with you, as a Brother.’

“As from the expression above italicised it was now plain to me that the proposed proceedings, under the guise of a friendly conference, were really intended to have a formal meaning, and to be in fact, indirectly, an assertion of jurisdiction over me,—and as I did not believe that in my book on the Romans I had written anything which could warrant such a course of conduct towards me, so that I must not so much as indulge the thought that any Bishop of the Church of England would be willing to meet me singly, in private friendly conference,—I replied briefly, adhering to my former resolution.

“(iii.) I now quote the Bishop of Capetown’s answer, dated August 20, 1862.

“I am very sorry that you have come to the conclusion that you will not meet the Bishops ; and I do earnestly hope that you will reconsider your decision.

“Just think what the position of this painful case is. You have published a work [on the Romans] which has distressed many both in this country and in Africa,—which has led some of your clergy to communicate formally with me on the subject,—which, when examined, appears to me and the other Bishops of the Province to contain teaching at variance with that of the Church of which we are ministers, and which is, in consequence, referred by me to the Archbishop of Canterbury, and through him to certain other Bishops for their opinions.¹ These Bishops, without pretending to sit

¹ In other words, the whole plan of action had been preconcerted before the arrival of the Bishop of Natal in England, and the trap had been laid accordingly.

in judgement upon the work, do, nevertheless, very generally [not unanimously] concur in thinking that its teaching is extremely painful, and apparently not in accordance with that of the Church of England,—so much so indeed that several of them have expressed themselves as unable under present circumstances to admit you to officiate in their dioceses. You may be able at an interview to explain much that shocks the mind of others; or they may, if they should meet you, be able to convince you that you have expressed yourself unguardedly and unscripturally.

“In the hope that by God’s grace they might be able to do this, men like the Archbishop of York, the Bishop of Oxford, the Bishop of Lincoln, and I doubt not others too, would meet you and endeavour to show you where your error lies. If they should succeed, they would win a brother. If they should fail, they would at least have used every effort to lead him back to the truth from which they believe him to have departed. Is not the course proposed, of “two or three” meeting you, the truly Christian and Scriptural one? Is it right to refuse to be a party to it?

“The case is not an ordinary one. You cannot but be aware that you have propounded views which are very startling,—which you did not hold when you were consecrated,—some of which have just been condemned by a legal Court,—and which it is impossible that the Church should silently acquiesce in. It is not we who are the first to move in this matter. It is you that have departed from your former standing-ground, and have been led to adopt views which I am sure you are far too honest to maintain are those of the Church of England, and to propagate those views by your writings and by word of mouth. As the guardians of the Church’s faith, we cannot but, under such circumstances, plead with you.¹

“Forgive the freedom with which I write. There is, I believe, on the part of the Bishops a very earnest desire to do what

¹ When, and by what authority, and by what instrument, have the Bishops of the several English dioceses been constituted “guardians of the faith of the Church of England”?

in them lies to recover one who is [I omit some complimentary expressions]. I venture to hope that, if you are willing to meet the chief pastors of the Church at home in the same spirit in which they are prepared to meet you, and to discuss with them those views which you have recently adopted and propounded, good only would result from it. But I confess that *I do not see how they can consent to meet you one by one, merely in a private way*, or treat the grave statements which you have made as open questions.¹ Many of these statements, however qualified by a different language in other parts of your book, appear to all the divines that I have met with, who have studied your book, to be both unsound and dangerous. You may be able to show them that you have been misunderstood; or you may be led to qualify statements which we regard as rash and erroneous. Do not lightly throw away the chance of setting yourself right, and settling a matter of very great importance to yourself and to the Church.²

“(iv.) My reply to the above was as follows, dated August 27, 1862 :—

“‘I received your last letter before I left Cornwall; but have delayed replying, that I might give its contents a due consideration. I thank you most sincerely for the kind expressions which you have used towards myself in it. I wish indeed that I were more worthy of them. But as to the main question I am sorry to be obliged to say that I feel it due to myself and to my rightful position to adhere to my resolution of declining to meet a number of Bishops together in the way proposed.

“‘I do so for the following reasons among others. I am so far from considering that the views which I have expressed

¹ The case was therefore prejudged by the system of Jeddart justice.

² The conceivable *possibility* that these Christian-minded counsellors might find themselves mistaken and the Bishop of Natal right is not taken into consideration at all. In other words, the infallibility of the would-be advisers is taken for granted; and their infallibility, it is to be supposed, is to rest on the infallibility of the Church of England, which disclaims this infallibility for herself and denies it to all other Churches.

in my *Commentary on the Romans* are contrary to the teaching of the Church of England, that—as indeed I have already stated in the first letter which I addressed to you from Natal in reply to yours expressing your disapproval of my book—I entirely believe that what I have taught in that book I am permitted to teach within the liberty allowed me by the Articles and Prayer-Book of the Church of England, and with a conscientious adherence to the letter and spirit of them. With, I think, two exceptions only, those views I held as strongly and preached them as plainly when I was consecrated as I do now. On two points, I admit,—the Scriptural doctrine of the Atonement, and the subject of Eternal Punishment,—my mind has progressed with advancing age, experience, inquiry, and meditation, to my present views. But I have said nothing, as I believe, and as able and eminent divines assure me, which can justly deserve the censures which some have passed upon my book.

“Of course, I am aware that the recent judgement of Dr. Lushington [in *Essays and Reviews*] brings me under condemnation on certain points.¹ But you cannot surely believe that that judgement will be maintained in the Court of Appeal, when it obviously departs from the very principles which the Judge himself laid down, and which the higher Court has laid down in other cases. Mr. Grote’s pamphlet makes this absolutely plain. If, however, it should be confirmed on these points, it will then be the duty of myself, and a multitude of other clergymen who have held and taught views like my own, to decide on our future course.

“Believing, then, that there is no real ground whatever for the opinion that the views expressed in my *Commentary on the Romans*, however they may differ from those of some of my episcopal brethren, are in any way condemned by the Articles and formularies of the Church, and having already

¹ This is very doubtful, even on the supposition that these points were law. But they have been set aside on appeal; and the inquiry, therefore, is superfluous.

entered into a full explanation on all those points on which you expressed objection to my teaching in a letter which (I presume) has been laid before the Bishops assembled to discuss my book, I feel that I should place myself in a false position, if I should consent to be convened before a number of Bishops in the way proposed, which would, in fact, amount to a recognition of their right to interrogate me.

“Nevertheless, as I have said, I shall be most glad to meet singly and privately with any Bishop who—either from a sense of duty to the Church and to what he believes to be the truth, or from a feeling of charity towards a brother whom he wishes to ‘recover,’—would be willing to meet and discuss with me any of the questions I raised in the *Commentary*. It seems to me that this course will be most truly in accordance with the Scriptural rule to which your letter refers.

“I was wholly unaware that Bishop Cloughton had joined in the condemnation of my book [though I knew that he did not agree with some of my views]; and certainly from his letters to myself I should never have inferred it.

“The only pain I feel is that of causing to yourself so much anxiety and grief in addition to your other vexations. But this God lays upon you (and upon me also) in the path of duty.’

“(v.) At the end of three weeks, I received this note from the Bishop of Capetown, dated September 17, 1862:—

“I think I ought to tell you that the dear good Bishop of St. Asaph has expressed a readiness to discuss your views with you, if you choose to visit him with a view to that purpose, and that, although I have no commission from the Bishop of Oxford to say so, I cannot help feeling that he would be ready to do the same. I cannot tell you how deeply I grieve over the case.’

“As the Bishop of Capetown must have discussed the whole matter with the Bishop of Oxford, and ‘had no commission from him’ to say that he would be willing to see me, of

course the latter portion of the above note had no meaning for me under the existing circumstances. For the Bishop of St. Asaph I have the deepest esteem and respect, and, perhaps, I ought to have gone to him for the purpose. But I was in London, he in Wales ; and I hardly felt that with a Prelate of his advanced years a discussion upon my *Commentary* would be likely to lead to any practical result, and I had no reason to suppose that he had studied at all the criticism of the Pentateuch. To the Bishop of St. David's [Thirlwall], whom I myself mentioned to Bishop Gray, and whose learning might, indeed, have been profitably consulted by us, my proposal, as his lordship has informed me, was never in any way communicated. The fact was, as I believe, and as the above correspondence, I think, will sufficiently evidence, that the Bishop of Capetown was determined from the first *to bring me to account*, if possible, in some form or other, for my book on the Romans, which, though containing, as I maintain, no single statement at variance with the Articles and formularies, was yet very strongly condemned by himself and others, holding extreme views in the Church on either side, both in England and in South Africa. If I had consented to be thus 'convened,' no doubt the act would have been quoted, as my private letters have been, to show that I had recognised the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan."

Had the Bishop under these circumstances accepted the invitation, he would either have betrayed a wonderful simplicity in running his head into the noose prepared for him, or, if he saw the snare, would have grossly failed in his duty. Possibly the Bishop of Oxford, in acting on this ingeniously arranged plan, may have counted on the Bishop of Natal's simplicity and earnestness as likely to blind him to the motive and the purpose which prompted it. The attitude of the Bishop of Capetown in this singular correspondence is significant of his whole bearing through all the incidents of the coming year. From first to last it is that

of the infallible ecclesiastic towards one whom he calls a brother, but who, come what may, must be proved to be in the wrong. Had there been, in anything that he said or wrote, the faintest admission that he himself might possibly turn out to be mistaken, the case would have been altered. But any such admission is implicitly held to be equivalent to a rejection of all faith in God. He and the Bishops who were acting with him had resolved on taking "the most Christian course," and this course imposed on them simply the duty of striving to convince the Bishop of Natal that he was "in error."

Six years later the Bishop of Oxford felt himself called upon to say something in reply to Lord Houghton, who in the House of Lords had expressed the opinion that the Bishop of Natal had not been met generally with feelings of kindness and brotherly friendship. The fact, he declared, was as diametrically opposite to Lord Houghton's statement as it could possibly be.

"Dr. Colenso had received private remonstrances, brotherly counsel, the tenderest and kindest counsel, from his seniors at home; and such counsel had led him only to some new outbreak of violence."

If these words meant anything, they meant that Bishop Colenso had repeatedly received kind remonstrances from his episcopal brethren at home, to all of which he had turned a deaf ear. What these kind remonstrances and tender counsels were, we have seen in part already. The next step of the majority of the Bishops, after the publication of Dr. Colenso's first volume, was to send him a circular letter calling upon him to resign his see; and to this he returned a reply, together with the following letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury:—

“ *March 5, 1863.*”

“ MY LORD ARCHBISHOP,

“ I beg to inclose my reply to the address which has been forwarded to me by your Grace from the Archbishops and Bishops of the Church of England.

“ I share very deeply in your Grace’s expression of regret that your first act of intercourse with me should have been of this character. And I am painfully sensible of the fact that ever since my landing in this country—with the exception of one letter from the Bishop of Oxford more than six months ago, and a message from the Bishop of Capetown to the effect that the Bishop of St. Asaph had expressed a readiness to discuss my views (upon the Romans) with me, if I chose to visit him for that purpose—not a single expression of sympathy or brotherly kindness has reached me from any one of my spiritual brethren in England or Ireland, though it was well known that I was suffering under great mental trial and perplexity.

“ I am, &c.,

“ J. W. NATAL.”

On the same day, at his wish, “ expressed through a mutual friend,” he had an interview with the Bishop of London ; but, although he felt Dr. Tait’s courtesy and kindness, the latter offered nothing in the form of either advice or remonstrance. To the preceding letter, however, he received from the Archbishop the following reply :—

“ LAMBETH PALACE, *March 6, 1863.*”

“ MY LORD,

“ I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your answer to the address of the Bishops, which I will cause to be forwarded to all the subscribers to that address.

“ In reference to your remark that since your landing not a single expression of sympathy or brotherly kindness from any of your episcopal brethren had reached you, I feel it due to myself to observe that I believed that the Bishop of

Capetown had intimated to you my willingness to hold an amicable conference with you on the painful subject of your publications; but I understood that you declined all such intercourse.

“Then I must in Christian candour and sincerity state that I did feel that the tone and spirit of your writings, irrespective of the matter, were such as rather to repel than invite friendly intercourse.

“I can with the greatest truth assure you that I feel very deeply for what I must consider your very unhappy position; and it will be my constant prayer that you may have grace to perceive the peril in which you stand, and retrace your steps before it be too late.

“I am, my Lord,

“Your faithful friend and brother in Christ,

“C. T. CANTUAR.”

Like Bishop Gray, Archbishop Longley addresses Dr. Colenso as a man who has been not merely accused but tried and condemned. There is not the faintest hinting that, even if he were condemned in his archi-episcopal Court of Arches, the judgement might be reversed by the highest Court of Appeal. The reckless assurances of his present peril and his future vain regret are proofs, at least, of complete lack of the judicial sense. To this letter the Bishop sent the following answer:—

“*March 10, 1863.*

“MY LORD ARCHBISHOP,

“I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your Grace’s reply to my former letter. I am sorry that the Bishop of Capetown did not in any way intimate to me your Grace’s ‘willingness to hold an amicable conference with me on the subject of [my] publications.’ I should at once have gladly availed myself of such an intimation; nor have I ever given him any reason for saying that I ‘declined all such intercourse.’ On the contrary, I wrote to him on August 27 to say that

'I should be most glad to meet, singly and privately, with any Bishop who—either from a sense of duty to the Church and to what he believed to be the truth, or from a feeling of charity towards a brother whom he wished to recover—would be willing to meet and discuss with me any of the questions raised in my *Commentary*.' But the Bishop of Capetown was anxious to bring me before a *number* of Bishops,—in other words, to 'convene' me,—and to that, and that only, I objected. Your Grace will perceive that the above was written *two months* before my Part I. on the Pentateuch was published. And I had been in England *nearly* three months before I had published anything to which I can suppose your Grace to refer when you say that 'the tone and spirit of [my] writings were such as rather to repel than to invite friendly intercourse.' I shall very much regret if there is anything in my First Part to which such language can justly apply. I cannot doubt that I might have profited much by friendly counsel from some, at least, of my episcopal brethren, if any such had been offered. And on this account alone I must especially regret the complete state of isolation in which I have been left by them upon returning to my native land after some years of labour in the missionary field.

"Your Grace speaks of my 'unhappy position.' Conscious that I am striving by God's help to do my duty as a servant of the Truth, I cannot deem my position 'unhappy,' however at times my faith and hope and patience may be tried. Rather, I bless God for the peace which He has granted me inwardly, while the roar of tongues has been raging without.

And I pray that He may grant me grace to correct any faults which may be justly held to disfigure my writings, and to be steadfast to the end, striving ever to speak the truth in love.

"I am, my Lord Archbishop,
 "Your Grace's very faithful and obedient servant,
 "J. W. NATAL."

Writing on September 1, 1868, the Bishop says:—

“From that time to this not a single word of ‘sympathy,’ ‘brotherly counsel,’ or ‘private remonstrance’ of any kind has reached me from any one of my seniors at home. I am not now complaining of this. I only state the fact.”

Among the friends to whom the Bishop soon after his landing in England submitted the rough draft of his first criticisms on the Pentateuch was Mr. Maurice, to whom, at a time when the voices of the “religious world” were loudly raised against him, the Bishop had dedicated the little volume of *Sermons* preached at Forncett.¹ To his amazement, instead of counsel or comfort, he received from this honoured friend little more than denunciation. The correspondence which ensued has unhappily been imperfectly preserved; but enough remains to show the part taken by both in this momentous discussion. In Mr. Maurice’s letters there may be (I venture to say that there is) much to regret: in those of the Bishop there is not one word for which either apology or excuse can be needed.

TO THE REV. F. D. MAURICE.

“6, CRESCENT, BLACKFRIARS,

“September 4, 1862.

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

I need hardly say that your letter has seriously distressed me. I am pained, in the first place, to think that you should suppose I could be guilty of so much ingratitude and insolence as to suggest that *you* were clinging to orthodox views merely *because they were orthodox*. Such a thought could never have entered my mind, or been expressed by my pen. I am pained also—very much pained—by your references to those blessed ones who have been taken to their rest. I have a mother, and a sister, and a brother, who, like your dear sister, my most true and honoured friend, have died in the belief of those

¹ See p. 47.

matters, which I myself believed, till God has led me in his Providence to believe otherwise. Can you suppose that I have not daily and hourly beloved forms such as these before my eyes—that I should pursue the path I am now taking, if I did not think and most entirely believe that they from their higher places look down and breathe their blessing upon my work, while struggling here on earth—(amidst much infirmity and every kind of temptation to give up the struggle and be content to lie)—to be true to the Living God and His truth? The reproaches which you have, I am sure in haste, uttered with reference to the dear departed, and the employment of my native boy, lose all their sting with me, except as coming from you, if I believe that in this book I am doing that which your sister would have me to do, which I was really sent to Natal to do, which our Church itself, that protests against all manner of lies, would have me do, to my life's end.

“In point of fact, such a book as this is, by the recent judgement, strictly within the licence given to a clergyman of the Church of England. You say that I shall be carried on beyond my present views. I admit that that is possible. But I call on such as yourself to help to stay me and a multitude of others, not by denouncing a few hasty expressions, such as ‘fiction’ (a word which obviously was ill-chosen, and does not properly express my meaning), ‘reasoning person,’ &c. (all of which I shall do my best to expunge from my book, and I thank you sincerely for correction of this fault), but by seriously examining into the truth of the main argument. Is it true, or is it not true, that the Pentateuch in a number of places distinctly maintains that there were 600,000 warriors in the wilderness, yet in other places distinctly shows that there could not have been a hundredth part of that number?

“But, my dear friend, you write as if I had no fear of God, no faith or living hope, no desire, however weak, to serve Him. God only knows how unworthy I am to be called His servant, much more His child; and yet I trust in His mercy. But others there are whom you yourself would

regard with more charitable thoughts, and who do not shrink, as you have done, from the views which I have expressed. I do not think you would class Dr. Davidson with the band of impious unbelievers. I breakfasted yesterday with Canon Stanley, and had much interesting talk with him upon the matters discussed in my book. Why should you say that they, or that even I, *undervalue* the Bible, because we do not adopt the same views as yourself with respect to its historical value and the age and manner of its composition? Your remarks will certainly lead me to insert a few passages to save me from such misconstruction as you have put upon some of my expressions. I told you that the book was a mere first proof, and had many faults which would be removed before it was published. But your argument seems mainly to be based on these defects in my style. You do not so much as touch one point in the reasoning.

"I am afraid that it would be useless for me to come to you at this time. Please excuse me now. I shall yet hope to see you when you return to London. Meanwhile, may God have us both in His holy keeping.

"Ever yours affectionately,

"J. W. NATAL.

"P.S.—I have again perused and considered your letter; and while most heartily thanking you for your great kindness in writing it, I am constrained to say that the more I consider it, the more I feel your words—very many of them—to be harsh and unjust. You have only a fraction of my book. You do not know what I should say of the Bible itself before I close the argument."

TO THE SAME.

"6, CRESCENT, BLACKFRIARS,

"September 5, 1862.

"I must say a few words more in reference to that part of your letter in which you speak of Ewald and Bleek. With reference to the former, Dr. W. Bleek, when he sent me his

father's posthumous work, wrote, 'You will see that your estimate of Ewald pretty nearly agrees with my father's', as you would also find if you read Bleek's last work. Ewald, in fact, is far wilder in his hypotheses and far more rash in his conclusions than I should wish to be. It is not because he is *too* conservative that I cannot agree with him, but just for the very contrary. Nevertheless, I had long ago struck out from my book every word that might give unnecessary pain to a great and good man, though I do not at all doubt that what I have said of him, supported as it is by Bleek's calm judgment, is perfectly true.

"With regard to the native boy, it is right perhaps that I should say that the Natal Government granted me £300 per annum, without any reference to religion, strictly for industrial purposes,—that I had to find industrial employment for my printing boy,—that I gave him what he very much needed and the Government desired, practice in printing from *English copy*, under my own surveillance, by which he is now fitted to take work in an English printing-office,—and that I was glad of the opportunity of so doing, and having matter, which you deem so dangerous, privately printed by one who *could not* understand what he composed, instead of by an English printer."

TO THE SAME.

"LONDON, *September 6, 1862.*

"I said, on p. 159 [of the proof], 'It seems impossible that any reasoning person, *'if he only considers the facts which have already been laid before him,'* &c.

"I do not believe that you have considered these facts. All your expressions imply that you have merely glanced at the matter, and not really weighed the force of any of my arguments. It is not that I doubt the exactness of the number 600,000 that I cannot receive the Pentateuch as historical, or teach others to do so. And, of course, I could retort—if that were seemly from me to one whom I

shall ever revere—that those who will not look at the plain facts of the case, will employ no argument of reason, but simple denunciation, to check a work which *may be*, and I verily believe is, from God, the God of Truth, may themselves one day deeply regret the course which they have taken.

“Stanley has seen my book with all its faults, and so have others, whose piety and charity you would respect ; and yet not one of them has taken that view either of the facts of the case, or of my duty under the circumstances, which you have done. Is it not possible that you may be mistaken in your judgement? I will quote a few words from a letter which I have this moment received from Stanley. You will see that he does not think it necessary to condemn either my purpose or my work as you do. ‘I have written this abruptly’ [he says] ‘and critically. But do not suppose me insensible either to the vast labour or the painful efforts which this work must have cost you. It is my full consciousness of this which renders me so anxious that *no indiscretion of expression or exaggeration of argument* should lead off the public scent from your real meaning and intention.’

“But it is useless in your present frame of mind to argue upon the matter. May the great Being, whom we both desire to serve, be our guide and grant us mercifully His blessing.”

TO THE SAME.

“LONDON, *September 8, 1862.*

“MY DEAR FRIEND,

“I think you will feel upon consideration that there is not a shadow of real ground for reproach¹ against me with reference to the Mission Press, when you are made aware of the following facts:—

(1) The printing of my books does not cost the *Mission* Fund one penny, unless it be supposed that the iron press itself has been worn by use. It would have been more injured by rust if it had not been used.

¹ In a later letter Mr. Maurice withdrew this reproach.

- “(2) Half was printed at my own expense by a town printer.
- “(3) The rest was printed with means given me by the Government for the express purpose of training native youths in industrial work of any kind, without any reference to religion.
- “(4) I had taught my boy to print well from Zulu MS.; but I had no Zulu MS. in hand to give him.
- “(5) To carry out the Governor’s wishes and make him useful to the colony at large, with a view to which the Government money was given, it was necessary that he should be able to print from English MS.—which he had never yet attempted to do.
- “(6) I taught him to do this by giving him my MS., the only means I had of employing him at all.
- “(7) As, though knowing a little English, he was utterly unable to follow the argument of my book or understand its real meaning, it was as good employment as I could have found for him, and has, in fact, made a man of him.
- “(8) In employing him about what you would consider the most deadly part of my book, I did what I could to prevent any injury being done through the employment of Europeans.
- “(9) These few copies were printed not for general circulation, nor for *sale*, but to be laid before Heads of the Church and others eminent for piety and ability, who might prevent altogether, perhaps, the publication of the work.
- “(10) Lastly, a friend writes, as it seems to me, very justly: ‘If you are right, you are not less, but more, orthodox than Hengstenberg, than Paley, than myself.’
- “I believe that in the main I *am* right. Not one, at least, of my other friends, whom I have consulted (though they have given me many kind and judicious hints, and have urged me to modify some of the strong expressions of my rough draft) have expressed a single doubt as to the general correctness of the argument in my book, or as to my duty to ‘act,’ as you say, ‘upon the Truth which I see, even though it does involve a very great sacrifice of my own will.’ *My own will* would have me to be a paltry sneaking coward who, seeing the truth, would for the sake of avoiding

reproach and calumny of every kind, and bitter censures from one at least of my most revered and valued friends—for the sake of living comfortably and quietly, in honour and comparative wealth—consent to ‘suppress’ that truth which I see so plainly, and leave brave good men like Davidson and others to bear all alone the burden and heat of the day. May the good Spirit of God not leave me to myself at any moment for this: but *your* letters are a sore temptation—at least, they would be, did I not perceive that you appeal only to my feelings and my pride, not to my reason.

“P.S.—According to *your* reasoning, I myself have committed a crime in spending my time in writing such a book, since, according to your view, I was not ‘sent out,’—the Colonial Bishopricks Fund was not ‘meant’—for such purposes. I, indeed, think differently. I believe that I was sent out to speak the *truth*,—that our Protestant Church will have us speak the truth at all cost, and will not in her *principles*—however, for the moment, she may seem by the letter of the law to do otherwise—countenance any kind of lie, whether by perversion or suppression of the truth. But see how the very same argument might be turned by an *enemy*—not certainly by a *friend*—against yourself. Many of the doctrines which you preach—though, as you believe, and as I believe, in accordance with the spirit of the Church of England, however seemingly at variance with the latter—are certainly not considered by the mass of our fellow-Churchmen, and by the judge administering the law of the Church, as being in accordance with her teaching. You and I were not ‘sent,’ it might be said, to preach such doctrines: we have no right to eat the bread of the Church, while we teach counter to her teaching. Of course, *we* do not believe that we are doing wrong; but the great body of the Church, undoubtedly, does condemn us. And I suppose there would be found quite as many ready to support my view on the Pentateuch, including men of unquestionable piety and ability, as there are who would agree with the views which you and I have expressed on the subject of Eternal Punishment. Certainly, till Lushington’s judgement

was delivered, I did feel a great difficulty about the words in the Ordination Service of Deacons. The judgement, and Stephen's reasoning, have removed that difficulty. I see that we cannot mean to express 'unfeigned belief' in the historical veracity of the story of the Exodus any more than in the historical veracity of Job or the Song of Solomon. The passages in my preface, which refer to that Ordination answer, of course, are now without point. And, indeed, the whole preface requires, I find, to be remodelled, now that I know the present state of feeling in England. But what you appear to me to have done is to have rushed at once to conclusions, as a necessary consequence of my view of the Pentateuch, which do not at all follow from it *necessarily*, and to which I certainly at present do not intend to commit myself. As I have said before, most truly glad and rejoiced should I be, if the whole fabric of my book should be swept away by true and powerful reasoning; and then all the conclusions, which may seem to you to follow from it, and some of which, perhaps, *may* really follow from it, would be swept away also."

The Bishop, no doubt, was absolutely sincere in wishing that his arguments and conclusions should be decisively refuted and convincingly proved to be worthless and untenable. But he seems to have forgotten for the moment, or perhaps he had not yet come to see, that, if such should be the case, an enormous power would be given to the system of popular tradition which upholds the fetish-worship of bibliolaters.

TO THE REV. F. D. MAURICE.

"FOWEY, *September 11, 1862.*

"I most certainly believe with you that the Jehovah, the I AM, is the ground of all that is true and good, in individuals and nations.¹ I believe also that the name was revealed from above to man,—whether to Samuel or to some one else. We differ on this point only, as it seems to me, in this, that I do not think it *necessary* to believe that it was

¹ See *Life of F. D. Maurice*, ii. p. 510.

revealed to *Moses at the bush* in the way described in Exodus iii., and that my critical examination of the story of the Exodus has convinced me that it is not historically true. But supposing it to be true (as I conjecture, and am not far from believing) that it was first revealed to the inner consciousness of Samuel and by him communicated in Exodus iii., it does not at all follow in my own judgement, and in that of others whom I have consulted, that Samuel must have been a liar and deceiver. I grant that the use of the word 'fiction,' as it is commonly understood, might imply this; but I did not intend to imply it, and used the word, as the best I could think of, to imply 'not real,' 'not historically true.' One of my friends writes, objecting to the word, and adding, 'Many traditionary facts must be imbedded in the annalist's conglomerate; and it will not do to beg the question of the annalist's honesty by the use of any word implying fraud. Perhaps an imagination of an exalted order was at work; and the annalist may have had no more consciousness of wrong or historical deception than Homer had, or the early Roman annalists.'

"I am sorry that any of my expressions have been such as to leave you under the impression that I thought contemptuously or arrogantly of those whose views and conclusions do not agree with my own. By such expressions I have not done justice to myself; but if I know myself, I have no such feelings. For Hengstenberg's works, certainly, I do feel something like contempt, for his arguments are often dishonest—I can use no milder term,—and that with a prodigious affectation of honesty and censure of others as suppressing the truth from interested motives. But I have no such sentiments with regard to any one else whose opinions conflict with my own. And I shall endeavour to mend my faulty language. I am sure that your words are those of a friend, and faithfully meant. I receive them as such.

"Believe me to be, .

"Ever yours affectionately,

"J. W. NATAL."

It is not easy to understand how a man like Mr. Maurice could read such a series of letters as those which were addressed to him by the Bishop of Natal in the memorable September of 1862 without pausing to think that his own view of the matter might perhaps be not the only one which might legitimately be held. But it can scarcely be said that on this subject Mr. Maurice deliberated at all. The friends met, it seems, early in September ; and Mr. Maurice, we are told, gave expression to his thoughts in the form, "Well, I think that the consciences of Englishmen will be very strongly impressed with the feeling that you ought to resign your bishopric." Such is the report of Colonel Maurice in his father's *Life*,¹ and there is, unhappily, not the least ground for questioning its perfect accuracy. Colonel Maurice is undoubtedly right in saying that his father

"drew a very wide distinction between the duty of paying respect to men's consciences, to the sense of right and wrong developed by genuine care and thought upon a question, and the absolute duty of disregarding mere opinions, the things that men glibly repeat after their fogleman."

But inasmuch as the Bishop of Natal had been impelled to his task solely by regard to the instruction offered to the poor, the ignorant, the helpless, the perplexed, we might suppose that the consciences of Englishmen would rather be impressed with the need of reform in a system which could be upheld only by falsehood. If the mere questioning of historical statements in the Pentateuch was held to damage the Church of England, then her whole system must surely demand a very searching scrutiny. Allowing, or rather assuming, as Colonel Maurice admits, that Mr. Maurice's position was unassailable, and therefore that at least to him

¹ Vol. ii. p. 422.

the unfairness of such an appeal as he had made ought to be clear, the Bishop replied that there were many who said that he had no business to retain his living. The fact spoke for itself. This language had been for years applied to men of all parties. It was a weapon thrown recklessly in every direction. The religious press and those who paraded a cynical secularism had denounced the wickedness of Dr. Pusey or Mr. Newman or other Tractarian leaders for not finding their proper home in the Roman Church. There had been broad hints that the Christianity of Dean Stanley or even of Dean Milman was not such as to justify them in the retention of their deaneries or even of their position as clergymen in the English Church. But on hearing the Bishop's words Mr. Maurice instantly jumped to the conclusion that the charges of mercenariness and dishonesty were being urged against himself in particular, and he answered therefore that if any supposed him to profess belief in the Church's creeds and in the Bible for the sake of the money which he got from his chapel, such a scandal called for his immediate resignation. He wrote, accordingly, to Mr. Llewellyn Davies, in a strain which showed that there was very little chance of sober reflexion on the matters with which he was professing to deal.

"The pain which Colenso's book has caused me," he says, "is more than I can tell you. I used nearly your own words, 'It is the most purely negative criticism I ever read,' in writing to him. Our correspondence has been frequent, but perfectly unavailing. He seems to imagine himself a great critic and discoverer; and I am afraid he has met with an encouragement which will do him unspeakable mischief. He says I have only appealed to his pride in my argument. I fancy I wounded his pride¹ even more

¹ We might be pardoned for thinking that Mr. Maurice was talking at random. The Bishop had no pride to wound; he was shocked at such vehemence from one whom he had always revered and loved.

than I ought. I appealed to his love of truth. I asked him whether he did not think Samuel must have been a horrid scoundrel if he forged a story about the I AM speaking to Moses, and to my unspeakable surprise and terror he said, 'No: many good men had done such things. He might not mean more than Milton meant.' He even threw out the notion that the Pentateuch might be a poem; and when I said that to a person who had ever asked himself what a poem is the notion was simply ridiculous, he showed that his idea of poetry was that it is something which is not historical. And his idea of history is that it is a branch of arithmetic. I agree with you that it is very difficult to say to what point of disbelief he may go; but it seems to me just as likely, with his tolerance of pious frauds, that he may end in Romanism and accept everything."¹

We shall find a while later the Bishop's accusers at Capetown expressing themselves in language even more absurd and extravagant than this. It is enough here to say that neither they nor Mr. Maurice were in the least aware how absolutely void of all effect such language is on the minds of those who have honestly worked in any branch of human history. For such students it soon becomes luminously clear that negative conclusions must of necessity be additions to our positive knowledge; that there are many subjects which admit of none but purely negative criticism; and that the honesty of chroniclers or other writers must be measured by the circumstances of the age in which they lived. No story is forged, unless it is put together with the purpose of cheating and deceiving; and the Jews are not the only people amongst whom the practice of putting forth books under the names of thinkers whose reputation might secure them some attention was very general, if not universal. There is scarcely one illustrious Greek writer whose sanction has not been claimed

¹ *Life of F. D. Maurice*, vol. ii. p. 423.