

*NEW TESTAMENT TEACHING ON THE FUTURE
PUNISHMENT OF SIN.*

I. ETERNAL DESTRUCTION.

THE subject placed at the head of this paper I approach with extreme reluctance and diffidence. For I am deeply conscious of my powerlessness to remove the serious difficulties which surround it. No feeble torch of mine can illumine even with intellectual light the gloomy caverns of the lost.

Under these circumstances, a writer more cautious than myself would probably have maintained silence. But the widespread mental unrest, and the consequent spiritual injury, call loudly for help. And, although I cannot remove all difficulties, it seemed to me that a careful grammatical examination of the chief statements of the New Testament on this solemn subject might do good, by removing misconception touching the meaning which the sacred writers intended their words to convey. I was therefore unable to refuse the request of the editor of this magazine to discuss in its pages this exceedingly difficult subject.

In these papers I shall make no dogmatic assertions. It is not mine to pronounce sentence even upon those who reject the Gospel of Christ, but simply to reproduce, as accurately and fully as I can, the teaching of Christ and of His Apostles as embodied in the New Testament.

Our inquiry shall begin with the Epistles of Paul. These we will take in chronological order, except that in some measure we shall trace the more important words and phrases in their use and meaning throughout the Epistles, and indeed throughout the New Testament. This will give us at times a broader view of the teaching of the sacred volume. From the writings of Paul we shall pass

to the Fourth Gospel, to the Synoptist Gospels, then to other parts of the New Testament, and lastly to the Book of Revelation.

After completing this study, we shall discuss, in the light of it, various opinions now prevalent, and close this series of papers by summing up the chief results of our investigation.

The above method will have the advantage of shedding light, not only upon the subject before us, but on its relative importance as compared with other doctrines of the Gospel of Christ.

We begin with the Epistles to the Thessalonians, the earliest we have from the pen of St. Paul.

In 1 Thessalonians i. 10 we read that "Jesus *delivereth* us from the coming *wrath*," or *anger*; in chapter ii. 16, "*Anger* is come upon them to the end." The same word, commonly rendered *wrath*, but meaning simply *anger* of God or man, is frequently used by St. Paul to describe the future punishment of sin. In Romans ii. 5, he says to an impenitent man, "Thou art treasuring for thyself *anger* in a day of *anger*." And we read in verse 8 that "for those who obey unrighteousness there will be *anger* and fury." In chapter v. 9, St. Paul hopes to be "saved from the *anger*;" and speaks in chapter ix. 22 of "vessels of *anger* prepared for destruction." Similar language in Ephesians v. 6, Colossians iii. 6: "Because of these things cometh the *anger* of God."

From this conception of Divine anger must be carefully removed all thought of vindictive emotion. In this, the righteous anger of a loving parent affords a human pattern of the Divine. The anger of God is simply His determination to punish sin.

In 2 Thessalonians i. 8, we find a still stronger word: "*vengeance* for them that know not God." But even this by no means implies resentment. God's *vengeance* is, as the

form of the Greek word (ἐκδίκησις) suggests, the due punishment of sin.

In 1 Thessalonians v. 3, we read that in the day of the Lord there comes to the wicked "sudden *destruction*," from which "they shall in no wise escape." The word rendered destruction, ὄλεθρος, meets us again in a passage quoted above, 2 Thessalonians i. 9, as a description of the *vengeance* or due punishment awaiting those who know not God: "who will pay penalty, even eternal *destruction* from the presence" (literally "the face") "of the Lord, and from the glory of His might." These last words may mean either that the destruction will proceed from the manifested *face* of Christ appearing to judge the world and from the splendour which will accompany the putting forth of His might, or that the destruction will remove the guilty from the benign presence of Christ and from the splendour with which His power will cover His people. The latter is perhaps the better exposition; but certain decision is impossible. The same word is found in 1 Corinthians v. 5, "for *destruction* of the flesh;" and in 1 Timothy vi. 9, where it is associated with a cognate word ἀπόλεια. This last word is usually rendered *destruction* or *perdition*, and is used frequently in the New Testament to describe the fate of the lost. So Romans ix. 22, "prepared for *destruction*;" Philippians iii. 19, "whose end is *destruction*;" Matthew vii. 13, "leadeth to *destruction*." The cognate verb is frequently used by St. Paul and throughout the New Testament in the same sense.

These words demand now our most careful study.

The active form ὀλλυμι is common in Homer and the tragic poets in the sense of *kill*. So in *Iliad* bk. viii. 498 Hector speaks, "I said that I would *destroy* both the ships and all the Achæans, and depart back again to windy Ilios." So Æschylus, *Agamemnon*, l. 1456: "One woman (Helen) who *destroyed* many, very many, souls before Troy."

She caused the death of many Greeks. The same active form is often used by the same writers in the sense of *lose*. So in the *Odyssey*, bk. xix. 274, we read that Ulysses "lost his dear companions and hollow ship;" *i.e.* they perished at sea. In the same way the Latin *perdere* unites the senses of *destroy* and *lose*. In the middle voice and in the second perfect ἄλωλα, the Greek verb before us is frequently used in the sense of *perish* by death. So *Iliad*, bk. iv. 450: "The shriek and the shout of men *destroying* and *being destroyed*."

In the same sense we find frequently, especially in later Greek, the corresponding forms of the verb ἀπόλλυμι. So Xenophon, *Hellenics*, bk. vii. 4, 13: "Many men and many weapons they *lost*, retreating through a rough country." The men were killed in battle. In both senses, *viz.* *to lose* and *to destroy* by death or otherwise, the word is very common.

In view of the frequent use of the word ἄλλυμι and its derivatives as synonyms of death, it is important to reproduce the current Greek conception of the state of the dead. This is made easy by bk. xi. of the *Odyssey*, which describes a visit of Ulysses to the realm of the dead, and his intercourse there with the souls of his dead acquaintances. All are conscious, all remember the things of earth, and some describe even the mode of their own death. But their existence is utterly worthless. Darkness and gloom overshadow the whole picture. Achilles (ll. 489-91) declares that the poorest lot on earth is better than that of the highest among the dead. We wonder not that such wretchedness is spoken of as *destruction*. For, according to Homer, the dead had lost everything worth having. Plato (e.g. *Republic*, pp. 614ff) describes the dead as still conscious. And this seems to have been the general conception of Greek writers.

With the above uses of the word agrees a not uncommon

use of the middle form ἀπόλλυμαι, especially in later Greek, in the sense of *ruin* of any kind. So Polybius, bk. xxxii. 19: "They did not wish the people in Italy to be in any way *ruined*, i.e. demoralised, by reason of the long peace:" ἀπόλλυσθαι διὰ κ.τ.λ. Dio Chrysostom speaks (Or. xxxi. p. 348c) of very immoral men as "those to the last degree *ruined*:" τοῖς ἐσχάτως ἀπολωλόσι. Plutarch (*On the Love of Riches*, § 7) says of misers: "The children they think to educate they *ruin* (ἀπολλουσι) and pervert, planting in them their own love of money." The same writer (*Avoidance of Debts* § 8) represents Philoxenus as saying, in reference to the luxury at Syracuse, "These things shall not *destroy* (ἀπολεῖ) me, but I them." And in the *Life of Mark Antony*, chapter lxvi., the same writer speaks of Cleopatra as "the woman who had already *ruined* him, and would *ruin* him yet more:" τὴν ἀπολωλεκυῖαν ἤδη καὶ προσαπολοῦσαν αὐτόν. These last quotations I owe to an excellent paper by Mr. John Massey, of Mansfield College, in vol. ii. (p. 64) of the second series of this magazine.

Similarly, Sophocles in his *Œdipus in Colonus* represents (l. 394) Ismené as saying to Œdipus, who had been smitten with a terrible calamity, "The gods lift thee now, but before they were *working thy ruin*:" ὄλλυσαν.

In the *Phædo* of Plato the middle voice of the same word is frequently used about the soul in the sense of its ceasing to be, of complete dissipation. But it is worthy of note that when thus using the word Plato is careful to define his own meaning. So in the *Phædo*, p. 70a, we read: "In what relates to the soul men are apt to be incredulous; they fear that when she leaves the body she may be no longer anywhere, but that on the very day on which the man dies she may perish and *be destroyed* (διαφθεῖρηται τε καὶ ἀπολλύηται), immediately on her release from the body issuing forth dissolved like smoke or air, and in her flight vanishing away into nothingness." So p. 91d: "the soul

herself *be destroyed*, and this be death, *destruction* of the soul:” *αὐτὴ ἀπολλύηται, καὶ ἡ αὐτὸ τοῦτο θάνατος, ψυχῆς ὄλεθρος*. And so frequently.

In the New Testament the simpler form *ἄλλυμι* is not found. But *ἀπόλλυμι* is very common in precisely the same senses as in classic Greek. It is a frequent synonym of death, both of righteous and of wicked. It was foretold in Matthew ii. 13 that Herod would seek to *destroy* by death the infant Jesus. Christ declares in Matthew xxvi. 52 that “they who draw the sword *will be destroyed* by the sword.” The Pharisees took counsel (Mark iii. 6) in order to *destroy* Jesus. Even righteous Zacharias is said, in Luke xi. 51, to *have been destroyed* between the altar and the house. Christ is recorded, in Luke xiii. 33, to have said that “it is impossible that a prophet *be destroyed* outside Jerusalem.” On the stormy sea, as we read in Matthew viii. 25, the disciples cried, “*We are perishing* :” *ἀπολλύμεθα*. For they seemed to be sinking into the jaws of death.

In Matthew ix. 17 broken wine-skins are said to be *destroyed*, for they had received damage which made them useless.

In other passages the same word means *to lose*. Hence we have in Luke xv. 4-9 the *lost* sheep and the woman who *lost* a coin: *τὸ ἀπολωλός . . . ἀπόλεσα*. And in Matthew x. 42 we are told that he who gives a cup of cold water shall by no means *lose* his reward: *οὐ μὴ ἀπολέσῃ τὸν μισθὸν αὐτοῦ*.

In a similar sense we have the substantive *ἀπόλεια*. The myrrh poured on the head of Christ, as recorded in Matthew xxvi. 8, is spoken of by the disciples as *destruction*: *εἰς τί ἡ ἀπόλεια αὕτη*; “to what end this *waste*?” For it was incapable of further use.

In exact agreement with the above is the use of the same family of words in the Septuagint. But the agreement makes quotation needless.

The central meaning underlying the various uses of the words before us is now quite evident. They denote **UTTER AND HOPELESS RUIN**; but they convey no idea whether the ruined object ceases to exist or continues a worthless existence.

The word is therefore appropriately used for the *lost* coin; for, although still existing somewhere uninjured, the owner's purposes with regard to it were utterly thwarted, to her it was absolutely useless. So were the wine-skins in reference to their original purpose; for we must suppose them to have been injured beyond repair. The same word is appropriately used of Ulysses' companions and ship *lost* at sea; for to him they were virtually non-existent. It may be used as a familiar synonym of death, *e.g.* of the martyr Zacharias, even by those who look for a life beyond the grave; because from the common point of view of bodily life on earth death is utter ruin. Similarly, we speak even of good men as *lost* at sea, and of a man putting an "end to his existence." It may be used, as we have seen in the quotations from Polybius and Plutarch, for complete demoralisation, without thought of the death of the demoralised one. For demoralisation is utter ruin of all that which gives real worth to manhood. It may be used for the absolute extinction of consciousness. But in this case the kind of destruction referred to must be, as in the quotations from Plato, clearly indicated in the context. Taken by itself, the family of words denotes simply utter and hopeless ruin of any kind. It says nothing whatever about what becomes of the ruined object.

It is however right to say that these words do not in themselves necessarily assert a ruin incapable of reversal; for the *lost* sheep and coin were afterwards *found*. And men on earth are spoken of as "the *lost* sheep of the house of Israel;" but "the Son of man came to *seek* and to *save* the *lost*." Whether the New Testament holds out any

hope of ultimate salvation for those on whom at the last day destruction will fall, is matter for further inquiry. The word *destruction*, though not in itself excluding, leaves out of view all such hope.

This family of words, bearing in classic and later Greek, in the Septuagint and in the New Testament, the meaning expounded above, is used by St. Paul and other sacred writers to describe the punishment which, at the coming of Christ, will befall those who reject the Gospel. So we read in 1 Thessalonians v. 3: "When they say, Peace and safety, then comes upon them sudden *destruction*; . . . and they shall not escape."

In another connexion these words might mean unexpected and quick death. They cannot do so here. For, although death is the common lot of good and bad, St. Paul repudiates, in 1 Corinthians xv. 18, the idea that the dead servants of Christ *have been destroyed*. Moreover the destruction threatened in 1 Thessalonians v. 3, 2 Thessalonians i. 9 must be much more than the common lot of all men. It can be no less than a supernatural infliction of utter and hopeless ruin. The word means neither extinction of consciousness nor endless conscious torments, but simply the loss of all that makes existence worth having. But either extinction or endless torment might properly be described as *destruction*; for each of these is complete failure to attain the true aim of life.

We need not be surprised that this destruction is said to be inflicted at the last day. In a correct sense, the unsaved are already *lost*; for they cannot possibly save themselves. So Matthew xv. 24. But they are within reach of the salvation offered in the Gospel. Now the coming of Christ will close the Gospel dispensation. It will therefore remove the unsaved from the salvation promised in the Gospel, and in this sense be their destruction. The tremendous reality of this destruction, and therefore the appropriate-

ness of the word here used to describe it, will become still more evident as we proceed with our investigation.

In 2 Thessalonians i. 9 the same substantive is further defined by an all-important adjective: "They who know not God, and obey not the Gospel of the Lord Jesus, shall pay penalty, viz. *eternal destruction* (ὄλεθρον αἰώνιον) from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His might." The use and significance of this adjective demand now our best attention.

The meaning of the word αἰών is well given by Aristotle, *About Heaven*, bk. i. 9: "The limit (τὸ τέλος) which embraces the time of each one's life, outside of which there is nothing by nature, is called each one's αἰών. In the same way the limit of the whole heaven, and the limit embracing the whole time and infinity, is αἰών, taking its name from ἀεὶ εἶναι." This double use is found in all Greek literature. In other words, αἰών means primarily a man's lifetime, or human life in the aspect of time. It was then felt that there is a life longer than that of an individual, that the realm of things around has its time, and with lapse of time will or may pass away. But in all cases the idea of time is more or less conspicuous.

In these two closely related senses the same Greek word is used in the Septuagint as a very frequent rendering of a Hebrew word of similar significance. So in Exodus xxi. 6, Deuteronomy xv. 17, in reference to a slave who refused to leave his master's house, we read, "He shall serve him *for ever*," i.e. *for life*: εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα. Not unfrequently it denotes a long period whose beginning is lost in the dim distance of the past. So in Genesis vi. 4, in reference to men before the flood, "The same were the mighty men which were *of old*": οἱ ἀπ' αἰῶνος. Also Isaiah lxiii. 9, in reference to Israel in the wilderness, "He bare them, and carried them all the days *of old*," or "the days *of eternity*:" τὰς ἡμέρας τοῦ αἰῶνος. In verse 11 the same Hebrew phrase is rendered

ἡμερῶν αἰώνιων. In Amos ix. 11 we find the phrase again : "I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of *old*." So Micah vii. 14. Of future time we read in Isaiah xxxii. 14, "The hill and the watchtower shall be for dens for ever (*ἕως τοῦ αἰῶνος*), a joy of wild asses, a pasture of flocks." But that this does not refer to endless desolation is proved by the words following : "Until the Spirit be poured upon us from on high, and the wilderness become a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest." God promised to David in 2 Samuel vii. 16 : "Thy house and thy kingdom shall be made sure *for ever* before thee : thy throne shall be established *for ever*." In this last passage the same Hebrew phrase is rendered, first *ἕως αἰῶνος*, and then *εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα*. So Ecclesiastes i. 4 : "One generation goeth, and another generation cometh ; and the earth abideth for ever : " *εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα*. Very emphatic is the use of a phrase similar to, but stronger than, this last in Daniel ii. 44 : "The God of heaven shall set up a kingdom which *for ever* shall not be destroyed, nor shall the sovereignty thereof be left to another people ; but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand *for ever* : " *εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας*, twice.

In the New Testament we frequently meet the contrast of *this age* and *the coming age*. The former denotes the present order of things from the point of view of its duration ; the latter points to a new order of things which the coming of Christ will bring in. So Ephesians i. 21 : "Not only *in this age*, but also in that which is to be." Also Luke xx. 34, 35 : "The sons of *this age* ; . . . they who have been counted worthy of *that age*." And 1 Corinthians i. 20, ii. 6, 8 : "The disputant . . . the wisdom, . . . the rulers of *this age*." In a few passages the same word denotes past time. So John ix. 32 : "*Since the world began* (*ἐκ τοῦ αἰῶνος*) it was never heard that any one opened the eyes of a man born blind." And Acts iii. 21 :

“Which God spake by the mouth of His holy prophets, which have been since the world began:” ἀπ’ αἰῶνος. Similarly chapter xv. 18. So in 1 Corinthians ii. 7 we are told that *before the ages* (πρὸ τῶν αἰώνων) *i.e.* before the long periods known as ages began, God formed His all-wise purpose of salvation. It was therefore “the purpose of *the ages* :” Ephesians iii. 11. But it was “hidden *from the ages* :” Ephesians iii. 9, Colossians i. 26.

Most frequently the word is used in reference to the future, especially in the phrase, already used by the LXX., *for the age*, εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα; or in the superlative phrase *for the ages of the ages*, which we may understand to be ages whose moments are ages, *i.e.* reaching the ultimate limits of human thought.

Corresponding with the substantive αἰών is the adjective αἰώνιος. And with the latter as with the former the idea of duration is always associated. We naturally expect to find in the one the same variety of meaning we have already found in the other. If so, we might render it in the one case *lifelong*, in the other *agelong* or *agelasting*, of time past or future; *i.e.* lasting as long as the man lives to whom it pertains, or as long as the order of things to which it belongs.

In classic Greek the adjective is very rare. Plato in his *Laws*, p. 904 *a*, speaks of soul and body as being indestructible, but not *eternal*: ἀνώλεθρον, . . . ἀλλ’ οὐκ αἰώνιον. This implies that the latter is the stronger word. In his *Republic*, p. 363 *d*, he says that some men “count the best reward of virtue to be *eternal* revelry.”

In the Septuagint the word occurs more than a hundred times. In Job xli. 4 God asks touching leviathan, “Will he make a covenant with thee, that thou shouldest take him for an *eternal* (*i.e.* a *lifelong*) servant?” This corresponds with the common classic meaning of αἰών. In Psalm xxiv. 7, 9 it seems to describe the ancient gates

of Jerusalem. In Psalm lxxvii. 5 we read, "I have considered the ancient days, and have remembered the years of old:" ἔτη αἰώνια. Similarly in Isaiah lviii. 12 we read, "Thy ancient (αἰώνια) ruins shall be built;" *i.e.* walls which for long ages had lain in ruins. So chapter lxi. 4: "They shall build the *agelasting* ruins, they shall raise the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations." These passages correspond with another use of αἰών, *viz.* to describe a period beginning in the forgotten past. On the other hand, in Genesis ix. 16, God speaks of an *eternal* covenant between Himself and Noah. In chapter xvii. 8, God promises to Abraham "all the land of Canaan for an *eternal* possession." The various Levitical ordinances are often called an "*eternal* statute:" so Leviticus vi. 18, 22, vii. 24, 26. In Daniel iii. 33 (LXX.) Nebuchadnezzar says of God, "His kingdom is an *eternal* kingdom, and His authority for generation and generation:" so chap. iv. 31, vii. 14, 27. In all cases the conspicuous idea is that of time reaching backwards or forwards to the speaker's mental horizon.

We now pass to the New Testament. In Titus i. 2, we read that before *eternal* ages God promised *eternal* life: πρὸ χρόνων αἰώνίων. These promises must have been made in time. Consequently, the adjective before us describes here not limitless, but long, periods of time past. Similarly, in Romans xvi. 25, we find the same phrase, *eternal times*, describing a period during which the mystery of the Gospel was kept secret. In 2 Timothy i. 9, we read of grace given to us in Christ Jesus *before eternal times*: same words as in Titus i. 2. In Jude 7, Sodom and Gomorrah are said to lie before us as "a pattern, suffering the punishment of *eternal* fire." The word appropriately describes the long ages during which the cities of the plain, destroyed by fire, had lain conspicuously desolate.

Elsewhere the word *αἰώνιος* refers to the future. Out of seventy times in which it is used in the New Testament, it is found forty-three times in the phrase *eternal life*. It describes the reward of the righteous also in Luke xvi. 9, "the *eternal* tents;" 2 Corinthians iv. 17, "an *eternal* weight of glory;" chapter v. 1, "a house *eternal*, in the heavens;" 2 Timothy ii. 10, 1 Peter v. 10, "*eternal* glory;" Hebrews v. 9, "*eternal* salvation;" ix. 12, "*eternal* redemption;" verse 15, *eternal* inheritance; 2 Peter i. 11, "*eternal* kingdom." We have also in Revelation xiv. 6 "an *eternal* Gospel;" in Hebrews xiii. 20, "the *eternal* covenant;" in 2 Thessalonians ii. 16, "*eternal* encouragement;" and in 2 Corinthians iv. 18, "the things which are not seen" are said to be *eternal*. In Hebrews ix. 14, we read of "*eternal* spirit;" in 1 Timothy vi. 16, "*eternal* might;" and in Romans xvi. 26 of "the *eternal* God."

In Philemon 15, Paul writes: "For perhaps for this reason he was separated from thee for a season (literally, for an hour) that thou shouldest have him *for ever*." He means that in heaven Onesimus will be an abiding enrichment to Philemon. The contrast with *πρὸς ὄραν* makes conspicuous here, as in 2 Corinthians iv. 18, the idea of long duration involved in *αἰώνιον*.

The same word describes the fate of the lost in Hebrews vi. 2, "*eternal* judgment" or sentence; Matthew xviii. 8, xxv. 41, "the *eternal* fire;" chapter xxv. 46, "*eternal* punishment;" Mark iii. 29, "*eternal* sin;" and in 2 Thessalonians i. 9, the passage now before us.

The word is not used elsewhere in the New Testament.

In view of this varied yet harmonious use of the word *αἰώνιος*, we now ask what ideas it adds in this last passage to those already conveyed by the words "destruction from the presence of the Lord." Already we have seen that these solemn words assert utter and hopeless ruin caused apparently by banishment from the presence of Him whose

smile is life. This ruin is now said to be *eternal*, i.e. either *lifelong* or *agelasting*. If we take the latter rendering, the word asserts that the threatened "destruction" will continue as long as continues the age which the coming of Christ will inaugurate. And of that age we know not how to conceive an end. If the former rendering, the ruin will continue as long as shall continue the mode of existence into which at the voice of the Son of man,¹ the wicked will awake. It will be "*eternal* shame:" *αισχύνη αιώνιος*.² But we must remember that in the Bible the future state of the lost is never called *life*. It is the Second Death. In either case the word *eternal* suggests very strongly the idea of finality. Certainly, the words before us leave altogether out of sight all hope of restoration. Is not this an understatement of the case? It seems to me that these words exclude from the writer's thought all hope for those here said to be eternally lost.

We wait to see whether this inference is confirmed or modified by other teaching of the great Apostle.

Another passage from one of the later Epistles of St. Paul sheds so much light on the phrase we have just been endeavouring to understand, that I cannot delay a reference to it. In Philippians iii. 19, touching some who are called "the enemies of the cross of Christ," we read the awful declaration, "whose end is destruction." Similarly, of some who are called ministers of Satan we read, in 2 Corinthians xi. 15, "whose end shall be according to their works," i.e. manifestly a bad end.

The word *τέλος*, here translated *end*, denotes in classic Greek much more than mere cessation. It is the attainment of a goal, the full outworking of all inherent tendencies. So we say "end and aim." This meaning becomes very conspicuous in some of its derivatives: e.g.

¹ John v. 29.

² Daniel xii. 2.

τέλειος, meaning *perfect* or *full-grown*; τελειόω, to *fulfil* purposes or promises or commands. And it gives great force to such passages as Romans vi. 21, "the *end* (*i.e.* full outworking) of those things is death." But this fuller meaning includes always the idea of finality. And the word is sometimes used in the simple sense of cessation. So Luke i. 33: "He shall reign over the house of Jacob *for ever*, and of His kingdom there shall be no *end*:" εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας . . . οὐκ ἔσται τέλος. And Mark iii. 26: "It cannot stand, but has an *end*:" τέλος ἔχει. So far as I have noticed, the word τέλος never leaves room for subsequent reversal.

St. Paul writes with tears, "whose *end* is destruction." But if for the ruined ones there were final restoration, even after long ages of ruin, these ages of darkness would roll by, and give place to sunshine and life. That sunshine, we must believe, would know no sunset or cloud. And as age succeeds age of increasing glory, the ages of darkness would dwindle into insignificance as a dim and fading memory of a retreating past. Of such happy spirits none could say that their *end* was destruction or was according to their bad works. To them destruction would be not an *end*, but a dark pathway into eternal light. The *end* of all men, good and bad, would be the same; *viz.* eternal life.

In other words, if St. Paul had had any idea whatever that all men will at last be saved, he could never have written the words which indisputably he has written. And this subsequent declaration strongly confirms our interpretation of 2 Thessalonians ii. 9. It almost compels us to believe that St. Paul added to the word *destruction* the adjective *eternal*, in order to mark as final the ruin of those who, in the day of vengeance, shall be banished from the presence of the great Judge.

Such is the result of our first study. We have found

three conspicuous passages in which St. Paul asserts, or at least seems to assert, that the future punishment of sin will be ruin, utter and hopeless and final. In our next paper we shall consider other passages in which the great Apostle speaks of a universal purpose of salvation.

JOSEPH AGAR BEET.

*THE TWENTY-SIXTH AND TWENTY-EIGHTH
PSALMS.*

THE 26th and the 28th are twin-psalms, and reflect light upon each other. You might imagine that in the first verse of the former the Church, which is the speaker, says more than it can justify, and that its rash self-confidence will sustain a fall. For there are two kinds of self-confidence. One belongs to the man who says that he can do without God, because in the depths of his nature there are inexhaustible springs of strength and happiness; another to him who says, "I trust in the Lord without wavering," without having learned in the school of the Holy Spirit what this rare experience means. To do the psalmist—that is, the Jewish Church—justice, we want to see how his profession wore. The 28th Psalm may enable us to do so. Anxious as the times were in which the 26th Psalm was written, a deepening gloom is manifest at the first glance in the 28th. If the Church's confidence is still maintained, it will be a proof that the words of Psalm xxvi. 1 are no exaggeration. But before we lovingly examine the expressions of the 28th Psalm—expressions which are as much a historical document as any chronicle could be,—let us seek to realize the situation portrayed in the earlier psalm. In vers. 9 and 10 we read,