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## THE PASSIBILITY OF DEITY.

COLOSS. ii. 9-15.

**D**EITY is a mystery unfathomable by any creature. Only the divine consciousness is able to measure the divine capacity. It becomes us frail, finite beings, to acknowledge our dependence upon revelation for all our information concerning the divine nature. What God has been pleased to reveal to us, in his works and in his word, we are to accept with reverent gratitude and unfaltering faith, even where the *modus* of any revealed fact or statement is, to us, incomprehensible. In our metaphysical wanderings among the vasts of the divine attributes, we see little, know less, and are not

warranted in many of the conclusions we announce: often, too, with a confidence that should be exhibited only by those who estimate their logic as being infallible, we affirm the attributes of Deity to be infinite. But what do we mean by such a word? Does it amount to anything more than our casting our finite selves down upon the immensity we are assuming to measure, and declaring that it goes, in every direction, beyond our insignificant stretch? And yet we mouth such words as infinity, omnipresence, omniscience, with entire familiarity, as if we comprehended their meaning, and arrange them in the premises of our arguments, as being easily managed by our logical force and skill.

“Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as Heaven; what canst thou do? Deeper than hell; what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea.” *Job xi. 7, 8, 9.* And, while proclaiming the incomprehensibility of this awful Deity, a presumptuous theology dogmatizes as to what he is, and what he is not; imagines him to be circumscribed by its diminutive system, and declares him to be a cold, motionless, passionless entity; so that to affirm the passibility of God, is heresy, and we are required to teach that the expiatory sufferings of our Lord, did not, could not extend to his divinity.

If the doctrine of the divine passibility be heresy, it is a very safe one, for the Holy Scripture abounds with it; and it savors much more of heresy to deny it; *i. e.* to deny the divine passibility; for it is by far safer to trust in what God reveals concerning himself, than in the delirious assertions of the metaphysicians. The Scripture reveals God as repentant, grieved to the heart, compassionate, patient, disappointed, etc.; all which are states of suffering. If the Deity reveal himself passible, shall we, who say he is incomprehensible, deny

it? Do we mean by the doctrine of the divine incomprehensibility, that God does not understand his own nature? That he is conscious of nothing in the vastness of his nature, but what our logic has discovered? Orthodoxy makes but a poor show of it, in a flat contradiction of God.

But it is *not* a flat contradiction; orthodoxy *explains* the revelation; in the cases referred to, the expressions are anthropic; they are after the manner of men; Deity cannot suffer; and, therefore, such Scriptures as represent him to be patient, grieved, etc., must be understood in a sense accommodated to the divine nature; which divine nature we understand; so we are to take the patience, pity, grief of God, as meaning something other than patience, pity, grief, and, therefore, orthodoxy does not *flatly*, but only *metaphysically*, contradict revelation; as the wise old philosophers held, that while the gods existed in human form, they had not *blood* and *body*, as we, but *quasi* blood, *quasi* body.

The Scriptures reveal Deity as patient, pitying, grieved; and so, suffering; but, then, they do not mean *real* patience, pity, grief, suffering; but *quasi* patience, pity, grief, suffering; for, the Deity is impassible. Impassible, because, otherwise, he could not be perfectly happy. But, can we explore and fix the constituents of perfect, infinite happiness? Do we know that suffering is incompatible with perfect, infinite happiness? Do we know that suffering is incompatible with the perfect, infinite happiness of the Deity? In what does the divine happiness consist? Is it anywhere revealed, that suffering is incompatible with the divine happiness? It is not incompatible with human happiness, as Paul and Silas demonstrated by their midnight songs, in the Philippian dungeon.

What can be the meaning of *Gen. iii. 22*, "and the Lord God said, behold the man has become as one of

us, to know good and evil"? As we stand aghast before this deep mystery, do we see no glimpse of the divine passibility?

But, the Deity has come among us, in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ. God hath spoken to us by his Son, who is the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person: *Heb. i. 1-3* We agree, as to the divinity of Christ. But, admitting that, how can we hold the divine impassibility, without separating the divinity from the Christ, and leaving him as only a human sufferer, to expiate our guilt? It is absolutely certain, that the sacred narrative has not a word of such an occurrence, as the withdrawment of the divine element of the Christ. It was the Christ begotten of the Holy Ghost, the Son of God, who bore our sins in his own body on the tree, and by whose stripes we are healed. He suffered for us: and in those sufferings which exceed human understanding, demonstrated, that more than human energy was required to endure that woe. As to impinging the divine happiness, it is recorded of this divine sufferer, that it was his delight to do the will of him, who sent him to endure that woe. Dr. Watts is not wrong, when he affirms:

Down from the shining seats above,  
With joyful haste he fled:  
Entered the tomb in mortal flesh,  
And dwelt among the dead.

As to the mystery of God's suffering and yet being happy, it is absurd to urge it in presence of the incarnation; the prayers of the divine Christ, who was omnipotent; and many other features of the wonderful plan of salvation.

We, frail, miserable mortals, how can we be wise, in turning away from the sweet assurance, "that as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that reverence him," to the icy demonstration of the metaphysician, that there is no *real* pity in the heart

of God; but merely a *quasi* pity: and so all this revealed *affection* of the tender heavenly Father, is a mere seeming and sham; for metaphysics excludes the divine nature from all capacity for emotion.

It has not been our intention to attempt any demonstration of the divine passibility, as a matter of metaphysics and logic: but merely to show that the holy Scripture so represents it; holding that to be the impassable limit of the question. There we must stop. We know nothing, on this topic, beyond what is revealed: and the suffering image of God, leaves no room for the idea of a merely human, or merely figurative sorrow. We must deny the divinity of Christ, or admit divine passibility.

Paul, *Acts* xx. 28, exhorts the bishops of Ephesus, "to feed (or guide) the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood:" and this reading is sustained by the oldest MSS. in existence: Lange does not attempt to criticise it: and the passage definitely connects divinity with the anguish of the cross. Death is not annihilation. If a mere man die, he is not annihilated, extinguished. The Scripture affirms that Christ had life in himself; and also, that he suffered and died: that his death was *voluntary*: the Jews intended to slay him, and are charged with such guilt, properly; because they intended it, and did what they could to accomplish their intention. But, their wicked hands were not necessary to the death of Christ. He had power to die, and power to live. He would have died, had his "own" received him, and consoled him with their sympathy, as he proceeded to the agony and the tomb; for the agony and the tomb were the necessary penalty of human guilt, which he had taken upon himself to expiate. If the Jews were allowed to participate in the dreadful scene of the crucifixion, perhaps it was to have the surpassing wickedness of man, to meet the

surpassing love of the Redeemer at the cross, as a spectacle of the power of sin, and the power of redeeming love; to excite the horror and the gratitude of mankind. But it was no merely *human force*, that was capable of enduring that expiatory anguish; to lay down that wonderful life; and take it again; and Paul meant that, when he affirmed that "God had purchased the church with his own blood."

The passibility of Deity is clearly revealed. The HOW is beyond our comprehension, and equally so is the HOW NOT.

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## THE END OF THE COMMANDMENT.

I TIM. i. 5.—Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned.

PAUL had "besought" Timothy to "abide still," to remain, at Ephesus; himself about to go into Macedonia. He did not order him so to do; which must be odd to those who hold a high estimate of apostolic authority: nor did he request it: but he besought, and so prevailed. The aim of Paul in this, expressed in *hina*, was, that Timothy should remind the Ephesians of the true doctrines of the gospel of Jesus, the Christ, as preached by him, and warn them against "other doctrine" and fables and genealogies ministering strife.

"Now the end (*telos*) of the commandment:" The commandment, *paraggelia*, refers to the true doctrine of the gospel, it being a message from God to man, by his Son. In this gospel we have the will of God, as to our inward condition, and outward conduct; and his

will, thus expressed, is not inward hatred and outward strife. If any, then, be found in this condition, it must not be attributed to the gospel: for the one object, aim, purpose (*telos*), of the gospel message is love. Thus we read, "For Christ is the end (*telos*) of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." *Rom.* x. 4. What the law aimed at, the end it sought, was that men should keep its precepts, and be righteous. This end, it could not accomplish because of the weakness of the flesh; which weakness and consequent impossibility to be righteous by law, having been demonstrated, the law handed us over to Christ, that we might, by faith, obtain the righteousness, which was the end, the scope, the object sought, of the law. "Wherefore the law was our pedagogue (child leader) unto Christ, that (*hina*, to the end that) we might be justified by faith." *Gal.* iii. 24. The end of the law was to make us righteous; and had it accomplished its purpose, it would have made us loving; for nothing is more righteous than love. The perfectly righteous One is Love. *I John* iv. 16. Love is the fulfilling of the law. *Rom.* xiii. 10. Therefore the doctrine of the gospel by teaching us how to be righteous, teaches us to love.

But the love comes out of a pure heart; and the pure heart, out of a good conscience; and the good conscience, out of faith unfeigned; and the faith unfeigned, out of the true doctrine of the gospel: and not out of "other doctrine, fables, or genealogies."

The gospel then is the basis of the whole Christian scheme: this is the message from God to men: this is the only message: anything else, is "other doctrine, fable, genealogy," etc.: to which we should give no heed. We hear the gospel and unfeignedly believe it; believe it with the heart; glad to believe it; it is precisely what we need; and when we thus believe, it is faith, the faith that delightedly grasps the delightful

truth, that Jesus, the Christ, bore our sins, expiated our guilt, paid our debt.

From this comes a good conscience, a peaceful conscience, an absence of condemnation. For our debt is paid; our sin is punished; we being crucified with Christ, also arose from the grave with him cleared of the law by the payment of the penalty. We are sorry that sin entered the world, marring God's beautiful work; sorry that it entered into us, and that we cherished it as a good, while it was defacing in us the divine image and making us to be hateful: but, we are in Christ Jesus, and have no condemnation.

So from this good conscience, this righteousness by faith in Jesus, the Christ, our Christ, our substitute, our surety; comes a pure heart. "How shall we that are dead to sin (having been crucified with Christ) live any longer therein." *Rom. vi. 2.* Faith in Christ, producing a good conscience, we find our hearts anxious to empty themselves of self, the world, and Satan; and to be occupied by Him who bought us with his groans and blood. We open our hearts to make him room: and whenever Christ is in the heart, it is both pure and loving.

Thus then the end of the commandment is obtained, by its securing our faith, which produces a good conscience; which produces a pure heart, which produces a steady stream of love, blessing all within its influence.

## THE ROOT OF EVIL.

I TIMOTHY vi. 9, 10.—But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

“**B**UT they that will be rich” (*boulomenoi*, devising, plotting; *ploutein*, to grow rich): They who aim at becoming rich; make their plans to that end; riches being their object. This does not refer to those who seek to make a livelihood, in an honest employment; and are prospered in the routine of regular business; living in acknowledgment of their obligations to God, and man; and yet prospering and becoming rich, while acting with Christian propriety. Those referred to make wealth their one grand object: plotting not to make an honest competency, but to be rich: gathering money for the sake of having money.

“Fall into temptation and a snare, and many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.” They are so set upon being rich, that they easily fall in the hour of temptation, and are taken by the devil in his snares secretly set for their souls. In this way, many are caught and ruined, on what they suppose to be the route to wealth, and find themselves in the penitentiary or on the scaffold, instead of in a sumptuous villa. Many use their riches in such manner as to contract ruinous habits, that not only prevent further accumulation, but destroy them. Many are so fond of their money, that they hear not the calls of God whose stewards they are, and their souls are eaten away as by canker.

“For the love of money (not the possession of money) is a root of all evils:” It is not THE root of all evils, as though there is no evil that did not grow from this root: but a root from which all sorts of evils spring: all kinds of scandalous trickery, mean frauds, base lying, robbery, murder, etc. Not that every one who loves money, does all these things; but every one does some such, and the money lovers, as a body, do them all.

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## WHY CROWNED WITH GLORY AND HONOR?

HEBREWS ii. 6-9.—“But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him.”

THUS far the reference is to the first Adam, created a ruler, after the image of God the Great Ruler; and dominion given to him; the earth and all the inferior orders of animated beings, placed in subjection to him; and he crowned, not with a jewelled crown, but with glory and honor, by God's own appointment, the vicegerent of earth. *Gen.* i. 26, 28. The phrase “crowned with glory and honor,” is figurative, of course, and signifies that Adam was placed at the head of his own royal line, and was to rule over all the terrestrial domain.

But "NOW," we look around and see all this splendid arrangement defeated. The sovereign has lost his crown and sceptre. Confusion and violence fill the earth; instead of the peace and prosperity that should have resulted, from all things having been subjected to Adam's authority. The order has been broken. Men have usurped dominion over each other. Empire, as God appointed it, has been lost. Slavery, human slavery, in various forms, especially satanic, has been introduced. The royal family is enslaved.

"But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death;" It would seem then, that angels cannot suffer death, and that Jesus who had assumed to die, had to be made somewhat lower than the angels. Adam and Jesus both were "made a little lower than the angels:" a complete parallel so far. But of Jesus only is it said, that his being made a little lower than the angels, was "for the suffering of death." Adam "was made a little lower than the angels," to live; Jesus, was put in that same position to die. In the case of Adam, it was decreed, "Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." *Gen.* ii. 16, 17. In the case of Jesus, it was decreed, "— it (the seed of the woman) shalt bruise thy head, and thou (the serpent, the devil, Satan, *Rev.* xx. 2) shalt bruise his heel." *Gen.* iii. 15. Adam did eat, violated the decree: the decree being not that he should eat; but, that he should not eat (and, thus, the doctrine that, "from all eternity" it was decreed that he should eat, is flatly contradicted by the recorded decree that he should not: besides the phrase "from all eternity" means nothing, it is mere verbal fog): and so he brought human "sin into the world, and death by sin;" and so (*houtoos*) death passed upon all men, for that

(*eph' hooi*, because ; the *houtoos* being thus defined as describing the *manner* of death's passing upon all men ; and *eph' hooi* declaring that all men were implicated in Adam's act, which act was sin) all did sin (*heemarton*, were sinning in Adam's act). *Rom.* v. 12. Adam lost his glory and honor, which had been conferred upon him, the headship of humanity, its representative, plunging them into sin and death.

But Jesus, the seed of the woman, who graciously assumed the position lost by Adam, came to put himself at our head ; and finding us in the realm of death, he "was made flesh and dwelt among us ;" *John* i. 14 ; he was in "the likeness of sinful flesh ;" *Rom.* viii. 3 ; "for the suffering of death ;" that he might associate himself with us in our death ; and be "crowned with glory and honor," i. e. occupy the headship of humanity, as Adam had done ; suffering for us ; representing us in the suffering he endured. So he was made "a little lower than the angels," to be capable of suffering death ; and then "crowned with glory and honor, that he, by the grace of God, should taste death for every man."

He did not win the crown by what he suffered ; but by his love inducing him to become the second Adam. Hence there is no need of being embarrassed, by wondering why the apostle represents him wearing the crown at the beginning, instead of at the end of the struggle. He could not have been prepared for his bruising Satan's head, except by the lowering, the lessening ; nor could the bruising his own heel have been suffered, unless he had assumed the headship of our race, the crown of glory and honor. What he won was life and righteousness for the human race : "Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification." *Rom.* iv. 25. And still he wears that crown, that headship, for "— he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet." *I Cor.* xv. 25 : "Who is gone

into heaven, and is on the right hand of God." *I Peter* iii. 22: "Whither the forerunner is FOR US (*huper heemoon*) entered, even Jesus." *Heb.* vi. 20.

The phrase "tasted death" means nothing more than dying. It is used five times, in the N. T., and in every instance is equivalent to dying, and that with respect to man, except in our passage, where it refers to Jesus; and we know of no rule of criticism, which would allow any special meaning to the phrase here. It is simply equivalent to "that he \* \* \* might die for every man." What is remarkable is, that HE should die; and, that HE should die FOR EVERY MAN (*huper pantas*, in the stead of every man, no man left out, so that there is no man but for whom Jesus died in his stead).

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## WHOSE END IS TO BE BURNED.

HEBREWS vi. 4-8.

IT is wonderful, that any one should reject the gracious overtures of the gospel. Still more wonderful is it, when any one who has sold all that he possessed, and bought the pearl of great price, throws it away! So foolish does it seem, that some deny the fact; holding the final perseverance of all who have been truly converted; really regenerated. Indeed, so sure are they of this, that the persons here described, are held to be only apparently, not really, regenerated. They err.

"It is impossible for those who were once enlightened:" this relates to past time (*phootisthentas*) in which they were enlightened; having been turned from darkness unto light (*Acts* xxvi. 18).

“And have tasted of the heavenly gift:” an item of clear Christian experience, also expressed by a passive participle (*geusamenous*).

“And were made partakers of the Holy Ghost:” the *arraboon*, “the earnest of our inheritance;” *Eph.* i. 14. Again the past (*metochous geneethentas*).

“And have tasted the good word of God:” the good word has not only been heard, but tasted, experienced, as “the power of God unto salvation.” *Rom.* i. 16. Again past (*geusamenous*).

“And the powers of the world to come:” the powers, energies, influences, impulses of Christian faith, energized by “the love shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost given unto” believers. *Rom.* v. 5.

It cannot be that we have here anything other, than a real Christian experience. Where is the true Christian who will fail to recognize this fact? But, now we have arrived at an important point. Can such fall away? They can backslide, all admit that. But can they utterly fall?

“If they shall fall away:” the Greek text is, *kai parapesontas*, and must be rendered “AND having fallen away.” So that the whole reading would be; “For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, and have fallen away,” etc. Their falling away, is in the past, as in the other particulars; each being expressed by a similar participle; and the last one very improperly rendered contingently and future.

And, moreover, the participle *parapesontas*, used here, is found nowhere else in the N. T. Its root *parapiptoo* is not found in those sacred writings, in any other inflection, than this, one of its participles, the aorist, and only here. This compound verb is from

*para* and *piptoo*; the latter signifying to fall, and found eighty-seven times in the N. T. Why, then, should the apostle select this word unused by any N. T. writer, but himself, and that only in this one instance? If he meant a mere ordinary fall, why not write *pesontas*, a form in frequent use? Perhaps *para* has, here, its *intenseness*, from its signification of *beyond*, as in *para-kaluftoo*, to hide entirely. *Parkhurst*. Thus the word would mean, to fall away entirely: according to *Dr. Robinson*, "to apostatize, absol. *Heb. vi. 6:*" by which he means that it must be taken here absolutely; as any scholar would know without our aid: but many for whom we are writing are not scholars.

We have then a fall so great, that an *apax legomenos*, a word used but once, must be brought in to express it; and a fall from a Christian experience of such a grade, that a continuance therein would have secured the maintenance of "peace with God," and final salvation. Then the clear teaching is, that as some of the really regenerate had fallen away utterly, in Paul's day, such an occurrence is not impossible now; and, in fact, such cases are of actual observation, so far as we can judge by "fruits," a test that has divine authority, as to its sufficiency.

But now is such a case hopeless? The apostle declares it "impossible (for such) to renew them again unto repentance, *palin anakainizein eis metanoian.*" There are two words here that we propose to analyze. *Anakainizein*, from *ana*, again, and *kainos*, new; used only here: a similar verb, *anakainoos*, from *ana*, again, and *kainos*, new, is used twice: a similar noun *anakainoosis* from *ana*, again, and *kainos*, new, is used twice. Whatever the root idea may be, it is expressed thus but five times in the New Testament. "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." *Rom. xii. 2*; where the restoration of the soul to the condition it

had lost, is referred to. "He saved us by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost." *Tit.* iii. 5; the meaning being that the renewing, restoration, aforesaid, is by the agency of the Holy Ghost. "Ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new (man), which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." *Coloss.* iii. 9, 10. So far as we can judge this also refers to the restoration (regeneration, as we understand in these cases) and its manner. "But though our outward man perish, yet the inward (man) is renewed day by day." *II Cor.* iv. 16: where the sense of the renewing certainly differs from the three preceding instances; as there it referred to restoration, regeneration, at its incipency; but, here refers to the continuation of regeneration, spiritual life; or perhaps to its reinvigoration when weary or flagging. In this sense we take it here.

*Eis* is defined by *Robinson*, "— with the primary idea of motion into any place or thing, and then also of motion or direction *to, toward, upon*, any place or object. The antithesis is expressed by *ek, out of*:" "The devil taketh him into an exceeding high mountain (*eis oros hupseelon lian*, upon a mountain very high), and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world." *Matth.* iv. 8. "And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain (*anebeei eis to oros*, he went upon a mountain, he ascended a mountain): and when he was set, his disciples came unto him:" *Ib.* v. i. "John did baptize in the wilderness, and preach the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins" (*eis aphesin ham-artioon*, for the remission of sins, one must repent to have his sins remitted, upon repentance his sins would be forgiven). *Mark* i. 4. "But Jesus stooped down, and with (his) finger wrote on the ground" (*egraphen eis teen geen*). *John* viii. 6. "And put a ring on (*eis*) his hand, and shoes on (*eis*) his feet." *Luke* xv. 22. We accept this sense of *on*, or *upon*, for *eis* in our passage.

Then the impossibility of such apostates to renew themselves upon or on repentance may be understood, from the facts of ordinary Christian experience. One may be a sincere believer, and yet "be overtaken in a fault (*prolephtheei*, be taken before he is aware, be overtaken, surprised into a fault)." *Gal.* vi. 1. But such a case is far from hopeless, the apostle, in the very same verse, giving direction for his restoration. In such a case, one is grieved, distressed, out of heart for awhile; but is penitent, and here is his safety; upon this penitence, repentance, he renews himself, restores himself; for he like the publican, smiting upon his breast, says, God be merciful to me a sinner! and is comforted by the assurance, Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out; *John* vi. 37. Such an occurrence is of sad frequency with us. Sad, as to the sin; but, joyful as to our kind Father's forgiving love. Alas! for such shameful lapses: the Lord be praised to our utmost and forever, for such compassion!

But, the apostate, who crucifies to himself (so far as his conduct signifies) the Son of God afresh, and puts him to an open shame; utterly renouncing all hope in him, all allegiance to him, all expectation from him; has lost everything, not even shame and penitence remaining: as if an earthquake had swallowed the very ground on which he stood. Nothing left. No penitence upon which to stand, and look up for mercy and grace to him, who restoreth the soul for his own holy name's sake.

But even for this apostate is there mercy and salvation, should he be brought to see his sin, and turn once more to the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. And to bring him to his senses, and to repentance, the tireless Spirit essays his subduing, melting, moving providence; for his amazing long-suffering finds it hard to give Ephraim up. *Hosea* xi. 8. Therefore the

illustrative figure of verses 7, 8. "For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet (fit, suitable) for them by whom it is dressed (*georgeitai*, tilled, cultivated, farmed), receiveth blessing from God (*eulogias*, eulogy, praise, intimating that such result of production responsive to the judicious toils of the farmer, is pleasing to God; he having endowed the soil with capacity for useful production, and the farmer with capacity, for learning and practicing the art of farming): but that which beareth thorns and briars is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing (*kataras eggus*, near cursing; *kataras* in the eighth, is the opposite of *eulogias* in the seventh verse; and indicates the perversion of the field, farm, earth's capacity for useful to useless production, and the indolence and negligence on the part of the farmer); whose end is to be burned (*hees to telos eis kausin*):" the consequence of which state of things is a burning.

*Kausis* is defined by the judicious *Dr. Parkhurst* to signify, "A burning, or being burnt up, with drought, namely, the husbandman no longer troubling himself, according to the eastern agriculture, to supply it with water, *exustio*, occurring *Heb.* vi. 8, where see *Mac-knight*." But the good and studious Doctor, to whose labors we are so much obliged, forgot that the figure here is not of irrigated land, but of that favored by frequent rains (*huetos*, rain), a shower of rain, as *Dr. P.* properly defines it: and as used elsewhere, and always in this sense; as "— in that he did good, and gave us rain (*huetous*, showers) from heaven." *Acts* xiv. 17.

*Dr. Robinson* understands it, as being burned by fire. And so, *Dr. Clarke*; who, however, limits it to the burning off the thorns and briars, to appropriate the field to the pasturage of cattle: the nature of the case, he says, prevents us from supposing that the apostle alludes to the custom of *pushing and burning*, in order

to further *fertilization*. But, we cannot see how the nature of the case prevents us from such a natural supposition; for this is precisely what the nature of the case demands. The farmer has neglected his field until the thorns and briers have usurped it, and it is now fit for neither tillage nor pasture. What is to be done by a sympathizing neighbor in the way of advice? The Doctor thinks, advise him to burn off the thorns and briers, so as to improve the field into a condition fit for pasturage. But as it had been arable land, and was in its then condition through the scandalous negligence of the farmer; would it not be more neighborly to advise a change of mind and conduct on the part of the farmer? Thus inducing him to resume his farming; and as the fault was that he suffered these nuisances to grow, while he was neglecting to sow and till his land; he is very unlike a farmer, who in the proper time, manures his land after exhaustion from cropping, ploughs, seeds, cultivates in the usual routine: for this man, if he be awakened to a sense of his shameful waste of time, visiting taverns, etc., instead of attending to his abandoned farm; and now determines to resume his business; he has first by fire and mattock, to get rid of the thorns and briers; so as to recover his field for husbandry; and in so doing really benefits the land by the burning and the ashes. As the man who turns his feet toward the cross, not only finds it to be a blessing to be there; but a blessing to be away from his old sinful ways and habits.

Dr. C. quotes from Virgil's beautiful *Georgics* i. 84.

Sæpe etiam steriles incendere profuit agros;  
Atque levem stipulam crepitantibus urere flammis.

Long practice has a sure improvement found,  
With kindled fires to burn the barren ground:  
When the light stubble to the flames resigned,  
Is driven along, and crackles in the wind.

So Dryden translates verbosely, for the sake of his rhyme; and, as all other poets, mars the poetry of his original more by attempting to render it in English verse; than he would have done by attempting to translate into prose. The translation into poetry is impossible. One can come nearer his original with prose than poetry.

But, to return to our figure. The land that bringeth forth thorns and briers is nigh unto cursing: but, thank God, the compassionate and long-suffering God, it is not yet cursed; the bolt has not yet fallen; his mercy is not yet "clean gone forever." And, moreover, a sweet, clear, moving voice is heard, "Father forgive them;" for one has sinned, and yet he has "an advocate with the Father!" Think of this, O desponding soul: the Father, with a father's loving heart; and an advocate with the Father! Either would seem to be enough for the very worst case; and yet we have both! O let God be praised throughout the universe, and forever and ever: for his plan with us is, not what we deserve, but what we need!

Not cursed; but nigh unto cursing, a sad condition, indeed, but not a hopeless one. There is one process left, the kindling of the fires for the burning of these thorns and briers. For though the phraseology is that the earth, the land, the field, is to be burned; it must be taken as an agricultural idiom; and no one ever meant the consuming of the field itself, by such a phrase; and only the consuming by fire of what the farmer calls "the filth" upon its surface. So, the providential fires are kindled, and the thorns, briers, and such like burn in the crackling flames; leaving the field blackened and ashy; and ready to be broken up by the plough of repentance, that the precious promises and assurances of the gospel may again be sown, in the hope of renewed harvesting of product fit for the farmer's use.

These persons, to be sure, had "crucified to themselves the Son of God afresh." Like the Jews, they had cast him out of their heart, hurried him to Calvary, and put him to an open shame as a malefactor. But, when we stood amid the scene of the first crucifixion, at the very moment when he was hanging, bleeding, dying upon the cross, and they were shouting their insults into his ear; we heard a voice whose pleading rose above their cruel shouts, "Father, forgive them, they know not what they do!" And "Jesus Christ is the same, yesterday, to-day, forever;" and "if any man sin (the extent is not mentioned) we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."

In addition to this reasoning, we have the history of a very distinguished and shameful apostate in the case of Manasseh, the son of the pious and excellent Hezekiah. In despite of his training and position, this inexcusably wicked and ungrateful king apostatized from Jehovah, "— reared up altars to Baalim, and made groves, and worshipped all the host of heaven, and served them. \* \* \* And he built altars for ~~all the~~ hosts of heaven in the two courts of ~~the~~ house of the Lord. \* \* \* So Manasseh made Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem to err, and to do worse than the heathen, whom the Lord had destroyed before the children of Israel. \* \* \* Wherefore the Lord brought upon them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, which took Manasseh among the thorns, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon. And when he was in affliction (the fire had now been kindled in this field, which had covered itself with the thorns and briars, that were now crackling in the flames), he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers (ploughed deeply and thoroughly, in repentance), and prayed unto him: and he was entreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought

him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom." The field was restored; the farmer having turned from his evil ways, and thereafter attending to his husbandry: or, as Jude expresses it, "— building up himself on his most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keeping himself in the love of God," etc. Verses 20, 21.

So then, we have the fact of the possibility of the utter apostasy of a truly regenerate man; which should urge us to constant diligence and care; hearkening to the needed warning, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." *Heb.* iii. 12. But if we be so wicked and ungrateful as to allow ourselves to be possessed of such an evil heart, and depart from the living God; let us not drown ourselves in continued sin and despair, but from our wretched condition of guilt and worthlessness cry to him, who heard the prayer of Manasseh ascending from the fires of his affliction, forgave him, and restored him to the kingdom he had so wickedly and foolishly forfeited. "His mercy endureth forever."

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