

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

[PayPal](#)

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_bib-sacra\\_01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php)

## ARTICLE IX.

### NOTES ON THE NEW DEPARTURE.

#### THE PROPOSED "DOGMA" OF PROBATION AFTER DEATH.<sup>1</sup>

There is candor, and some help towards a critical conclusion, in the admission, made by Professor Smyth, that the idea of future probation is a mere human tenet,—confessedly, not a "doctrine" of Scripture, not "explicit divine teaching," not "an article of faith." But to call it a "dogma," on the other hand, is to carry an implication of its having been already imposed by some human authority upon men's minds—for this belongs to the meaning of "dogma"—and certainly it is not yet so imposed upon any one. Nor is the after assertion that it "falls within the acknowledged limits of *the Christian faith*," either warranted by the facts, or consistent with the admission that it is not an article of faith, etc. The few who advocate it do indeed assert that probation after death is an inference from something else which is claimed to fall within those limits, and to belong to "explicit divine teaching."

That something else, is what is termed "the absoluteness and universality of Christianity." From this the proposed dogma is claimed to be "deducible."

Now "Christianity" has some four or five current meanings: (1) What Christ himself and his apostles taught. (2) This teaching as received in men's minds, or believed. (3) An historical institution growing out of this belief or reception of inspired teaching. (4) The systematized whole of accepted doctrine, equivalent, generally, to Christian theology. (5) The experience, spirit, character—one, or all—of an individual, a people, or an age: as, the Christianity of Paul or of Luther,—German, English, or American Christianity,—that of the sixteenth century, or that of the nineteenth. It is the first sense alone, of these five, that approximates absoluteness or universality. This is the faith once for all delivered to the saints. But this of itself does not save at all, not to say universally or absolutely—it actually saves no one. Christ alone saves men. It is indeed quite true that if we substitute Christianity for Christ, a body of divine truth for a personal Saviour, and as truth benefits no one any way unless known, and so far only as known, it may be inferred that Christianity must some time be known by all men. But restore Christ to his place, instead of his doctrine, and the inference fails evidently. For a personal Saviour is so much more than truth or doctrine, that he can benefit men to whom he is not known,—even to the extent of personally atoning for their sins. At any

<sup>1</sup> A criticism upon the article of Professor Egbert C. Smyth in the *Homiletic Review* for April, 1886; read before the General Association of Iowa, June 3, 1886, by request.

rate Christianity cannot do for men what he does. The class of divines who are pressing their new-old ideas of probation upon us, claim specially to exalt his person above his doctrine. This open substitution of Christianity as absolute and universal, for the Person, whom alone Scripture sets forth as such, cannot be adduced as justifying such a claim. The efficacy which belongs to our Divine Lord alone cannot be transferred to the faith delivered to the saints. Our human knowledge of his merits is no part of his merits; they avail without dependence (in moral government) on our historic or theologic views of them. His is the only name given under heaven among men which will avail, and for all; but absoluteness and universality cannot be, either scripturally or logically, transferred from him to the knowledge of his work. Men can forsake sin without knowing how they will be forgiven, and are perfectly bound to do so. It is *repentance*, as a subjective precedent, that makes his atonement available for a sinner, and this may be available though unknown. Justification by faith is not to be over exalted so as to belittle and displace justification by Christ alone. Substituting Christianity for Christ really, though unobservedly, begs the question at issue, by laying an unauthorized basis for the inference (if it is such) whose validity is to be decided. It is perhaps really a theory, or hypothesis, proposed to relieve certain minds, like Dr. E. Beecher's hypothesis of pre-existence—honor and right in God being supported in the latter by locating part of our moral existence in the unknown period *before birth*; in the former, by locating part of it in the period unknown *after death*.

Much of Professor Smyth's defence of the new dogma, inference, or hypothesis, is on account of the tendency of some minds to hope that it is true. This is making a feeling, which is itself to be judged of by the truth, a judge of the truth which judges it! Moreover, this feeling tends to universal salvation, rather than to any approximation of it, more or less, by probation hereafter.<sup>3</sup>

This inconsequent feeling and this unauthorized substitution of Christianity for Christ being set aside, the new dogma is seen to *rest on three assumptions*:

I. That human probation is—now, at least—"a gracious and *not* a legal state," excluding God's moral law as the characteristic element of it. The divine building and testing of character dispenses with his law. Professor Smyth is here—as in respect to dogma and faith—inconsistent with himself, for he describes it, again, as "not of moral law exclusively," and then makes the still further change, "*including* a relation to moral law and personal character."

Now, whatever probation essentially is, or ever was, it always is. A is

<sup>3</sup> This is an appeal to that vague and delusive misnomer, "Christian consciousness." It helps detect error to have this appeal made more specific than usual, viz., to a movement of the sensibility. Professor Smyth calls it "a testimony to the virtual acceptance of this dogma by minds whose judgments are formed under the influence of the Christian revelation." But it cannot be shown that this feeling or hope is "chiefly known to Christian minds."

always A. It is now and must be what it was before known Christianity. If it ever was a testing of character distinct from redemption of character, redemption is not, and never was, part of it. Christ did not make probation what it is, any more than, by his coming, he made sin a previous necessity of his coming. We have no reason to imagine that he has altered or infringed upon its essential nature; or that to do so would do us or the moral universe aught but harm. If grace comes to any race of beings after it has morally failed under law, it must be (1) as a substitute for law, or (2) as an addition, a supplement, to it. (1) If as a substitute, it excuses us from the requirement of being holy. This is antinomianism.<sup>3</sup> When Paul says, "not under the law, but under grace," does he deny his being "not without law to God, but under law to Christ," or that all of us will be judged "by the law," written or unwritten? Evangelical religion holds to no change in the supremacy of moral law, or in obligation to it. But grace, (2) if added to law *within probation*, changes its nature: added to law, it leaves probation unchanged under law, as it was from the beginning. While salvation is by grace alone, *salvation is not probation*. Is probation, then, as to the formation and testing of character, still under moral law? or is it now under grace instead?

(a) Analogy forbids any essential change. We use no analogies but those of our Lord. The remedy for the disease never becomes part of the physiological system under which the disease occurred, any more than a part of the disease itself. A is always A. A man's chance to obtain and apply a remedy, after catching a disease, is additional to his previous opportunity to avoid catching it at all. To be provided with a physician is over and above provisions for preserving the health he is called in to restore. The latter in each case is implied, but distinct from the former. Grace, in like manner, implies probation under perfect eternal moral law, and therefore is no part of it.<sup>4</sup>

(b) There is no sin or condemnation save under moral law, even for those to whom grace has come. Then if all are sinners, all are under moral law. It is not grace or indignity to grace that makes wrong-doing sin; it is not grace that condemns men or is ground of condemnation—it is moral law: and by moral law alone can the misimprovement of grace even be a sin. So men are not condemned only for rejecting Christ: God sent not his Son to condemn the world. There is no sin in rejecting Christ, save as this is made such by moral law. Unbelief offends God in all points, because it offends *his law* in one. Our destiny turns still on moral action alone. The universal, absolute law *includes duty to Christ* and to the Spirit. Then our relation to law is not included in Christianity, as a scheme of grace, but exists distinct from it, as it did from the creation before Christ came.

(c) Even if it were otherwise, and law had ceased to be essential to pro-

<sup>3</sup> This is openly avowed in Rev. E. White's address to Cong. Union of Eng. and Wales.

<sup>4</sup> Redemption is *supplementary* to sin; mercy to justice; gospel to law. Grace is simply an adjunct to probation, an aid to that which alone is characteristic and essential in probation. Men are morally ruined antecedent to grace.

bation, human recovery, as purely of grace, could be only *one* of the objects of probation. It would be no such object at all to unfallen men or angels. Then probation is complete to them without recovery from sin, or grace offering pardon. And to decline so great a blessing as a recovery could not further harm a moral agent, at least, unless it involved moral wrong under law. But those who reject Christ incur "sorer punishment:" therefore, to reject him is more than mere declining of grace, or foolishly missing a blessing; viz., an offence against moral law. It is increasing sins; it is rejecting a Lord and King; it is preferring moral rebellion, essentially, whatever follows about losing a Saviour and eternal happiness.

(d) There can be no salvation in any world, except in probation under law. If there is to be another (chronologically a second one) after death, it will be just such a probation as before, continuing under law, with supposed advantages of gospel and grace for a successful result. No moral law after death, then no sin, no salvation. Heaven itself is under eternal law, with all its vaster advantages.

(e) If we all are to be judged by the law, written or unwritten, as Paul assures us, then law must have been *the* element (so far as relation to a holy God is concerned) of that probation necessary to the formation of the character by which we are to be judged. "We do not say that men are to be judged," says Professor Smyth, "*simply* by their personal relation to Christ, if by this be meant an exclusion of their relation to moral law and of character; but we claim that this relation to Christ—the Revealer of God, the Son of Man, the only sacrifice for sin, the giver of the Spirit—is, *for all men alike* [italics in the *Review*], the ultimate and decisive test, and that includes a relation to moral law and personal character." On the contrary, the evangelical position is, with Paul, that man's relation to moral law is the ultimate and decisive test, and this whether the judgment process convicts of unfaithfulness to him, as in one portion of Matt. xxv., or of inhumanity and unutility to the least of his human brethren, as in another portion of it. God and holiness are supreme ends. Grace is means. He who provided for our return to right, will decide accordingly concerning us, *under law*, before he delivers up the kingdom to God, even the Father, and the Son also becomes subject that God may be all in all.<sup>5</sup> As we protested at the outset against exalting Christianity above Christ, so here we protest against exalting him above the law of his Father, which he ever held supreme. The distinction may seem to some trivial: to us, seeing how much else is at stake besides probation after death, it cannot seem so.<sup>6</sup> The new dogma

<sup>5</sup> The inconsistent view here held probably amounts to this, that moral law is not the integral, essential element of probation which we understand God's word to show that it is.

<sup>6</sup> The most severely contested and fundamental issue of the future is to be at this point. The supremely ethical character of Christ's salvation is here at stake, and the question of a divine government over men. It carries with it all that is moral in religion. Since this paper was written, the Chairman of the Congregational Union of England and Wales has gone further, perhaps, than our advocates of probation as of grace in place of law, in declaring, as to principles of right, that "no single appearance in the New Testament of enforcing them as normal laws of morality on individuals who are not believers;" they are

will never stand, unless it can overthrow what has here been maintained as to essential probation being under moral law alone,—all else associated with it, advantages of providence or grace (which Butler calls moral providence) being additional, and not permanent and essential. "No man is condemned to eternal punishment by Christ," says Professor Smyth, "who has not had an opportunity to be saved by Christ." To this all will heartily assent. It is old-time accepted truth. But every man who has had an opportunity to choose right towards God, and repent of wrong, *has had* his opportunity to be saved by Christ; for his atoning blood answers for every one in every nation who feareth God and worketh righteousness. He exercises his almighty divine power for some in Christian lands even, who deny that he is almighty or divine. Men are forgiven any way, not for the sake of an accurate dogmatic Christianity—not to say an exhaustive one—nor for their knowledge of a personal Christ even, but *for his own sake*, for the sake of his sacrifice for the sins they renounce. Every personal test, then if such are applied in judgment, must be more than personal, viz., ethical; therefore the ethical test (the moral law test) of character, is the decisive, essential one.

II. Another assumption on which the new dogma rests, is, that, over and above the essentials of probation—a moral nature and a divine moral law—we are competent to decide what is a full, fair, and equitable condition for men, individually and relatively, under grace. We are able to say what grace should be.

Essential probation consists in what man is in himself, and in his necessary relation to a holy God. Grace is matter of condition, additional thereto,—it is supplement and adjunct. It is an aid to probation. The law is perfect, says David. It is, in its nature and in its own proper strength, fitted to convert the soul. It is successful, says Paul, in convicting of moral wrong as sin. God sends his Son to do what else the law could not do through the weakness of the flesh. But what measure of this additional and advantageous, this extra-probational, agency shall be granted, it is beyond men or even angels to know. No intuition concerning it is written on the heart. Reasoning avails nothing. It is high, we cannot attain unto it. We know well that, as fact, since the first sin, grace has been exercised by an offended Lawgiver. But how to apply equity to grace we know not. Those who are dealt with in legal justice are not wronged if others are munificently rewarded in grace. So teaches our Lord in the parable of the laborers in the vineyard. Those who are dealt with in what appears to be

"largely of the nature of the counsels of perfection, not of ordinary moral laws." That is, Christ merely advises men as to doing right, utters no commandment, speaks not with authority, but as the scribes! So thorough a formal renunciation of Christ's kingship by a Congregational minister has perhaps never been seen. On the contrary, Bishop Butler declared (Analogy, Part II., chap. i.) that in the teachings of Christ and his apostles, "other obligations of duty, unknown before, to the Son and the Holy Ghost are revealed. We are *commanded* to be baptized in the name of" both. From the relations revealed "arise the obligations of duty to them." And virtue, in his account of probation, is obedience to commands.

one measure of grace—over and above what law would award—are not to complain of him if he awards what appears to be a larger measure of grace to others. "Friend, I do thee no wrong. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own?" A human tribunal or standard of equity, by which the God of grace is to be tried, is inadmissible.

In the loose way in which we commonly use the word "probation"—including a variety of concomitants, as well as what properly belongs to it—it may be maintained that it differs with different people. But the difference is altogether in the concomitants, not in probation itself. Whatever essential probation may be—of whatever elements it is properly and really composed—this is obvious. That it is an equal probation in this, that we all have a moral nature, constituted like that of our fellow men, and all have the moral law, at least written on the heart, is just as obvious. That any thing more—any increase of instruction, experience, opportunity, advantage—is needful to make it equitable for any one, is more than we can determine. Whatever assumption we may make is liable to prove a fallacy. If any thing bearing on the subject has been revealed, this forestalls all our assumptions, of course. Sodom and Capernaum alike perished: if Sodom would have escaped and survived, had the exhibition of Christ been made there which was made at Capernaum, we might be tempted to judge that Sodom had not a fair or equitable chance. What our Saviour has said forbids us to thus judge, or to intimate that Sodom was unjustly overthrown, because it seems to us it did not have one, as to the adjuncts of probation. On the reasoning of the advocates of second probation, it may be said that Tyre and Sidon should have seen our Lord's mighty works, as Chorazin and Bethsaida did, if they would have repented in sackcloth and ashes. He assures us that *they would*, and who art thou, O man, that repliest against God? He declares only this, that it would be more tolerable for the two unevangelized cities in the day of judgment than for the two evangelized ones; but not one word about Tyrians and Sidonians not having had a fair relative probation, though it was simply and only under moral law. Does not this imply that Christianity, or a knowledge of Christ, was not essential to probation at all at Tyre or Sidon? or even at Sodom? or anywhere else? These declarations of Christ, then, forbid this third assumption, that we are competent to decide what is a fair and equitable probation for any one, beyond essentials.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Since this paper went to the press, a sermon preached in the chapel at Andover Seminary by Professor John P. Gulliver, D.D., on the amount of light which men have by nature, has been published in the *Golden Rule*, weekly, Boston, June 10, 1886. Dr. Gulliver maintains that "light (not the historic Jesus of Nazareth) is come into (the whole world), and by it the heathen know (1) That this world was made for a moral conflict, in which the right and the wrong are offered to every man: (2) That they have taken the wrong side, and punishment is to be expected; (3) That forgiveness and propitiation are possible; (4) What the terms of forgiveness are, repentance, atonement, faith. He intimates that a world created by Christ must needs "reveal Christ," (though "not the historic Jesus of Nazareth,") "whether He be visible or hidden, whether his human personality be familiar or unknown." He therefore concludes that the responsibility for each man's salvation or condemnation is fastened "upon himself, be he where he may or what he may." He asks:

III. There is a third assumption on which the dogma of future probation rests, viz., that the influences of a future probation would save more souls than will be saved if probation is confined to this life.

Infants who die before any moral action are held by evangelical Christians, so far as I know, to be saved by Christ without probation, not through a better one after death. So Christ teaches. We have, then, only older ones to consider, who—it is assumed without warrant—have had no sufficient moral probation. They are under the moral law, i. e., have had essential probation, but have not had the benefits additional (or not all the benefits) of the gospel. Will the future world save more of them, if probation is continued there? Who is competent to say this? Here, again, if any thing bearing on the subject fell from the lips of Christ, it forestalls and precludes our assumptions, and shows them to be fallacious. Now, He put into the lips of Abraham the language, in respect to the brothers of Dives: "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if one rise from the dead." Such an one would bring with him from the world of the disembodied dead just what one whose probation in life is deemed insufficient would learn by going to the dead—the very influences of a future probation. Our Lord says it would be of no avail, if the sinner refused to listen—not to him and his apostles, gospel teachers, whom they never had heard—but to Moses and the prophets, teachers of moral law. A messenger from the scene of their proposed future probation could have told the rich man's brothers a great deal not known on earth in their day,—and, among other things, why not, that an absolute and universal Saviour had appeared in the world they had left? But their probation under law, without these or any advantages of the gospel,—if, in Hades, they would be advantages,—was enough, as our Lord gives us to know. A disclosure like this, fitted to govern the assumptions with which we approach the "dogma," is especially damaging to it, because it closes up that "widening of hope,"—that expectation or hypothesis of many being willing to repent hereafter who clearly are not here,—which we should all be glad to cherish, if there were any grounds for it. These grounds lacking, the hope itself is relied upon, instead, to float the proposed dogma into wide acceptance. This decision as to the rich man's brothers forbids any judgment whatever of ours beforehand as to probable issues of such an imagined probation among the dead who sinned here—"neither would they be persuaded"—though it is for the logical advantage of such a judgment that they would be, that the assumption of our being competent to form it is entertained.

If these three assumptions are fallacious, what can support the dogma against the trend of Scripture and the inherent reasonableness of our life here

"Who can know on what principles infinite benevolence and infinite wisdom should apportion to each nation the degree and the form of the light, some degree and some form of which surely 'enlightens every man that cometh into the world.'" Professor Gulliver declared at the outset against the proposed dogma of future probation; and this argument of his would go to show that it is unnecessary, if the light of nature teaches so much more than the moral law, which it confessedly teaches. Conceiving probation to include so much more, the argument would seem to be necessary, whether conclusive or not.



being the one and only probation for all? Christ being restored to his place as the only absolute and universal Saviour, instead of a substituted Christianity, what datum or premise for the inference, hypothesis, or proposed dogma can be found? What but some explicit declaration of our Lord that some sinners will have a better probation hereafter will save it from the fate of the hypothesis of pre-existence? Confessedly there is no such declaration, no "doctrine" to this effect, and no basis for a speculative hypothesis, even, as we see. "To the Law and to the Testimony."

But if any single soul in all the ages ever repented under moral law, and was saved by Christ, not having heard of him, this one fact decides the fate of the dogma. It is not necessary that many should be thus saved. One is enough.<sup>8</sup> His fearing God and working righteousness; his repenting of sin so that he "might believe," as Christ said, on hearing of Him,—(for without repentance, as the divinely required "condition precedent," hearing or believing would do no man any good),—would prove that for him probation beyond this life was altogether unnecessary, over and above all other objections to it, moral, theological, and biblical. But if needless for him, then for others. When its advocates admit that Christ has ever saved even one penitent without doctrinal knowledge of an "absolute and universal Christianity, or (better and more correctly), of Himself personally as the one living, absolute, universal Saviour," they surrender their whole case, as Hume surrendered his against miracles when he admitted that one might be wrought and proved, if for some other object than to support a religion. And, plainly, clear thinking, and thinking according to Christianity, require them to do so. But they do admit this, and that more than one has been thus saved by what Christ has done for all who repent, though comparatively few, as we all believe.

The faith of our churches, then, with all its solemn and tender relations to "them that perish," and to those who hold forth the word of life, stands unshaken.

GEO. F. MAGOUN.

## "PROGRESSIVE ORTHODOXY" AND MISSIONS.

### I.

Perhaps the most noticeable chapter in Progressive Orthodoxy is the elaborate discussion entitled Christianity and Missions. This chapter is the application of the new Andover-Dornerian views to Foreign Missions.

<sup>8</sup> "There are, I say, such examples here; not a great many, as compared to the whole population, but enough so that we may hope that among these millions there are at least hundreds, if not thousands, who are saved without a knowledge of the historic Christ in this world; enough to show that the heathen can be saved without such knowledge in this life. Men and women who have been mourning over their sins and seeking deliverance from them for months or years," etc., etc.—Rev. Jerome D. Davis, D.D., *Future Probation in The Light of Asia*, pp. 9, 10.

Apparent contradictions of this testimony (cf. Dr. Gulliver's sermon) are not real ones, since what is denied is that such heathen have conscious justification by faith in "the historic Christ," not that they never repent, "mourning over their sins and seeking deliverance from them." And, according to the New Testament, as well as the Old, the latter is the prime essential to forgiveness for all men.

It proposes a change in the basis of missions of a revolutionary character. This proposition is not a mere suggestion. It is the firm outline of a policy which is already being urged with pressure upon at least one great Mission Board. It is definitely proposed, we understand, to make up an Andover band to transport this new theory into Japan, and practically reorganize the Mission of the American Board on the lines of the "New Departure." Let us attempt to get definitely before us the views and assumptions of the chapter, and estimate the probable results if they should shape the missionary policy of the future. The views are clearly stated in the following passages :

"The question of the salvation of the heathen is simply one aspect of the fundamental religious question of our time: the claim of Christianity to be the one perfect and final religion for mankind. Involved in this issue are inquiries such as these: Is the final judgment universal? Do the ultimate destinies of men turn on their personal relation to Christ? Is Christianity essentially ethical and spiritual? Is its salvation mediated by motives, including personal influence, addressed to and operative in the human reason, affections, and will? Is there one system of salvation for Jew and Gentile, as one final judgment? Is God's purpose of creation and redemption fulfilled, except as He manifests himself to every human being as Redeemer as well as Judge? What inference upon this question is legitimate from the universality of Christ's Person in its constitution, the universality of Christ's atonement, and the universality of Christ's judgment? How and why is He the Son of Man, the second Adam, the Creator, Mediator, and Ruler of the universe?

"We cannot but think that the interests of missions to the heathen require a readjustment of pleas in their behalf in the light of the Scriptural and rational answers which must be given to such questions. If this is not done there is danger not merely of the loss of a particular motive to missions, but of a loss of faith in the principles which underlie the whole missionary movement" (pp. 178, 179).

"But a universal atonement limited in its operation by the being who made it was a contradiction too palpable and violent to remain concealed. The great forces of progress which had helped to bring in a new missionary age worked against such limitations. The sentiment of humanity, itself a child of gospel, protested against them. More thorough acquaintance with the Scriptures under improved methods of interpretation, the heightened influence of the gospel, bringing men's minds into larger knowledge of the mind of Christ and deeper sympathy with his love to men, clearer and higher consequent conceptions of the true character of God, gradually changed the tone of Christian thought about the heathen. Their moral degradation was even better understood than before. Their need of the gospel was no less clear. But God's purpose concerning them was less and less dogmatically affirmed" (p. 174).

"We believe, and we think there is need of asserting the principle, that the author of Christianity will give it in time, as in all other respects, a fitting opportunity for its operation" (p. 182).

"The cause of missions hitherto has rested, as we have said, on the postulates of universal sinfulness, universal atonement, and the indispensableness of faith. It rests ultimately on the divine command (Matt. xxvii. 18-20), which implies the universality and absoluteness of Christianity. The dogma of the damnation of the heathen is not one of these postulates, nor is it a biblical teaching, but a corollary which now depends upon a dogma which is no part or presupposition of the gospel—that of the limitation of probation for all men to the present life. This dogma is now working, as do all untruthful exaggerations, with a disturbing and injurious effect" (p. 179).

These statements are certainly intelligible. They are fortified by assumptions of whose foundation the reader must judge.

"For ourselves we accept the doctrine of the fathers of modern missions that men everywhere need for recovery the means of grace, but the conclusion that all are lost who do not receive them in this life is another matter. Even when such a dogma is theoretically held it is no longer pressed in pleas for missions. The secretaries of our missionary societies, so far as we are aware, with possibly here and there an exception, do not now touch this chord" (p. 175).

"The intelligence and heart of the Christian church not merely decline to accept the old dogma of the universal perdition of the heathen,—they repudiate it" (p. 176).

"And if the present movement, in certain orthodox circles, to relieve the demand from a larger and more Christian view of the character of God for a wide extension of hope for the heathen, is not freed from the limitations of this inferential dogma about their probation, it will in our judgment become more and more difficult to maintain in effectiveness the principle which experience testifies lies at the very heart of Christian missions—the indispensableness of the gospel" (pp. 181, 182).

"What of the unnumbered generations, the innumerable millions, that have died without the gospel? Once, the advocates of missions had a definite answer. They will not repeat it" (p. 187).

It is assumed, it will here be seen, that such a change has taken place in the convictions of Christians in the direction of such a larger hope for the heathen as requires the adoption of the views previously stated to make our missionary enterprise self-consistent. It is also assumed that without this change the work of missions has to encounter an insuperable obstacle. After following the Andover writer so far we are not unprepared for his conclusion:—

"We would send out missionaries who can ask men to renounce all other systems because they are persuaded that Christianity, and this alone, fulfils all that is good in every other, and meets the deficiencies of every other; missionaries who in the light of all of God's revelations of himself, whether by human reason or human history or special inspiration of prophets and apostles, or by Incarnation, with clear intelligence and perfect assurance of faith will present Christ as the rightful and the only Saviour and Lord;

and we would not weaken their message by loading it with a dogma of the doom of the ancestors of the men to whom they preach, a dogma contradictory [*sic*] to the name they proclaim and into which they baptize, or by accompanying it with an apology for Christianity which lowers it in principle to the level of other religions, or makes it essentially a system operative in some occult way and not the truth as it is in Jesus" (pp. 182, 183).

"It is a noteworthy and auspicious fact that the platforms of the older and the more important missionary societies are pledged by their history to all that is catholic in Christian belief and fellowship. We believe that missions should always be conducted in this large-minded and large-hearted spirit; that young men should be attracted to such service by the grandeur of its aim, and welcomed without scrutiny as to their theological opinions beyond what is necessary to ascertain their full acceptance of fundamental Christianity in their beliefs and in their consecration of purpose. We would raise, as a dividing question, no issue upon the mode in which God will administer his one system of redeeming grace in its application to those of his children who are born in the darkness of heathenism. But all the more are we strenuous that right opinions should prevail as to what the gospel is in its universality and completeness, and that no positions be taken which in the end will inevitably diminish men's convictions of its supreme authority and absolute necessity. And we believe that it is by the prevalence of truer conceptions of its universal character and relations, in connection with the providential opening of the world to its mission and the promised gift of the Spirit, that the coming century—may we not hope and expect, the next quarter of a century?—will show a progress in its extension beyond anything as yet realized" (pp. 188, 189).

Such sanguine expectations are expressed of the result from the adoption of this policy of an extension of missions. Let us attempt calmly to estimate its probable results from another point of view.

1. *Its probable effect upon the minds of heathen.*

We may conceive the following dialogue to take place between the new Andover missionary and an ignorant heathen:

HEATHEN. Why do you come to us?—MISSIONARY. To teach you of Christ as the only way of salvation.

H. Was it God's duty to give me this gospel?—M. Yes; a satisfactory theodicy requires that the proclamation of the atonement, as well as its provision, be universal.

H. What have you to say of my fathers who died before the missionaries came?—M. The historic Christ will be presented to them in the next world.

H. If you had not come would he be presented to me in the next world?—M. Yes.

H. Will a heathen who knows of Christ for the first time in the next world have as good a chance to receive him and be saved as I have in this world?—M. Yes; God is just.

H. If I make the most of the opportunity you bring me, will it be as good an opportunity as you have had who were born and trained in a Chris-

tian home with the Christian church and all its privileges?—M. (The honest missionary must give this answer.) No; I suppose not.

H. But ought not God, our common Father, to treat his children just alike, and so to give me as good a chance as he gives you?—M. (Reviewing his theodicy.) Yes; that is fair.

H. If I should not repent under your efforts, will it not be necessary, then, for me to have a chance in the next world in order to make my opportunity equal to yours?

The missionary will probably reflect before answering a question so wide reaching in its scope, and of such great suggestion in its application, not to heathendom alone, but to Christendom. He will be apt to reconsider the scriptural warrant he has for involving the justice of God in the doctrine that to be just God must give the heathen the gospel. He will be apt also to consider anew whether the opportunity to repent given to all men by God's grace must be an *equal* opportunity, and not rather simply an *adequate* opportunity, which may consist, and must consist, with great inequalities, as is seen in contrasting the opportunity of Mary of Bethany with that of the thief on the cross. What inequality! But each had an *adequate* opportunity, and that not of debt but of grace. While the missionary, in agitation of mind, and trying to recall teachings of his professors which may aid him in his deliverance, still reflects, the heathen resumes his inquiries.

H. If it is settled that I am to have as good an opportunity as you, I have been asking myself, Why should you be at the trouble and expense and sacrifice of coming to me at all? I understand you that I shall receive the gospel in a short time any way.—M. We come to you because the Saviour commanded us to come. Such was his last command.

H. Why did he give you this command?—M. Because of the blessing it would give you in this world to become a Christian.

H. Did he say so? Haven't you said something about being sent to seek and to save that which was lost?

The missionary is silent, and with inward distress tries to recall what was taught at Andover applicable to this difficulty.

H. (Resuming with much impatience.) So far as I can see, all your coming has done for us, if we do not repent, is to reduce our opportunity of hearing of Christ in the next world (though the probability is that we shall hear the gospel there and have another opportunity for repentance, on account of the imperfection of your presentation), and to make sure that we shall have in the judgment a severer sentence if we do not finally repent and accept eternal life.

The ignorant heathen retires. An intelligent heathen takes his place, one who has the Bible in his hands with which to verify the new views. He has been studying it with care. He comes to communicate his results.

(a) The Bible teaches him that he is condemned "already." This is not a dogma, but a doctrine that runs through the Scriptures. He has found in the Epistle to the Romans (which he understands to be a statement of fundamental principles given to and laid down by the great missionary apostle)

that he is without excuse, that he is under the wrath of God, that when he (and his fathers) knew God he worshipped him not as God. They were not willing to retain him in their knowledge. Their doom was put in the forefront of the message sent to them. This doom was not for their treatment of the historic Christ or of the Scriptures if they did not possess them, but of God in the light of the knowledge of his attributes and character given to every man, and sufficient (it was declared) to be the ground of his final judgment. This treatment of the heathen by God (so he further learned) was righteous. The day of wrath was also the day of the revelation of the righteous judgment of God. This teaching in Romans and the other missionary epistles commends itself to the heathen. A priest in Japan asked a missionary what Christianity taught about sin. These teachings in the opening chapters of the Epistle to the Romans were read to him. "That is right," he said; "that is what we believe;" viz., the guilt and condemnation of every man who holds ("holdeth down," Revision) the truth in unrighteousness. "What is your authority," the educated heathen would naturally ask the Andover missionary, "for throwing doubt upon the doom of such men as I and my fathers have been? Is it in this book?" If the man were not conscientious, what heed would he be apt to give to that religious teaching which he knew was as contrary to the current thought of the Scripture as it was contrary even to the light of Asia?

(b) Again, the instructed heathen would be apt to ask concerning the doom of men in the Old Testament judgments, in particular judgments, and notably in the deluge, Had the Canaanites heard of the historic Christ? or the Egyptians? Were not these judgments declared (or assumed) to be righteous notwithstanding? Were they not made use of to suggest the inference that all men who sin against light (whatever the light they enjoyed) and did not repent, were lost? The judgment doom had actually fallen upon these. The use of the instances of judgment by our Saviour carried his authority for the conclusion that the antediluvians, the Sodomites, the men of Tyre and Sidon then living, were, without the knowledge of the gospel narratives, condemned for their sins, their hardness and impenitency of heart.

(c) Again, the heathen, when told of the indispensableness of the gospel, would most likely be stumbled by such instances as that of Abraham saved before he saw Christ in the vision of faith, and of the Gentiles saved also without the knowledge of the historic Christ by faith in God, by penitence, made availing through the sacrifice on the cross, which was purposed from the beginning and in due time accomplished. If these were thus saved, why might not his fathers be saved on the same conditions?

(d) The intelligent heathen would also be stumbled by the discovery of such teachings of the Saviour as that judgment would be according to knowledge of the Lord's will—few stripes for the ignorant (the comparatively ignorant), many stripes for the man who knew his Lord's will and did it not.

These are suggestions of the probable results of the teaching of the new views upon the heathen.

2. *What are the probable results of the new views upon the missionary spirit of the churches?*

It will not be denied that the mainspring of Christian missions has heretofore been that the heathen are lost, as the mainspring of Christian activity in Christendom has been that all men unsaved are lost. Whenever this motive has been lacking the efforts to save men have slackened. The apostles believed that men were lost. The Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost. The Andover writers say that Paul's motive in his labors and sacrifices is found in his own words, "The love of Christ constraineth us." That passage, however, must not be separated from its context. Just before, he wrote, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men;" and just after, "Because we thus judge that if one died for all then were all dead." Paul was impelled to his self-sacrifice by thought of the doom of the heathen. He had received the Spirit of Christ, whose teachings were weighty with the warning of doom, freighted heavy with the message of judgment. He did not hesitate to tell men that their fathers were lost if they had died impenitent, and that they themselves were lost if they should die without accepting Christ. There were embarrassing questions which could have been asked our Saviour, and which could have been asked Paul and his companions. Probably they were asked with all Grecian acuteness and Roman persistency of logic. But he would not go beyond his message. When he did not know, he would say, "I do not know," and not confuse his message with speculations; but he lifted up Christ and cried, "God now calleth upon all men everywhere to repent."

And his message is our message. His limitation limits us. We are not responsible for what we do not know of the mode by which the atonement is made of universal extent. His motive is our motive. If we modify this motive of the doom of the heathen what will be the result? What if the view is generally adopted, that the long-accepted doctrine of the doom of the heathen is exaggerated; and that the heathen who does not receive the biography of Christ in this world will have it communicated to him in the next world with the influence of the Holy Spirit to convict him and to lead him to repentance; and that to reveal the truth to him here, practically, in the case of a great number, will be to increase the severity of their final judgment. What will a young man or woman say? Would not one be apt to reason thus: The Lord has indeed commanded the church to go into all the world to preach the gospel to every creature. But I must choose my field. The most needy field is my own country, where the people already know so much of Christ, and will have no opportunity to hear of him beyond this life, and have in prospect a severer judgment than the heathen because of their greater light. If the doom of the heathen is not to be urged, if I have not to think of them as going in millions down to death, but to probation under the light of the gospel supernaturally given, I will not throw away my life upon an enterprise so dubious. Precisely so men do reason.

We have the recent eloquent testimony, to this effect, of Dr. J. D. Davis, of Japan; and also of another missionary of sixteen years' experience, who tells us that he was once a Universalist, and that then he felt no concern for the heathen; but when he was converted he saw their doom and went to China to seek to save the lost. And these men are moved to effort, as all our earnest missionaries have ever been, by the doom of the heathen world. If, now, that motive be taken away, or weakened by *whatever* specious line of reasoning concatenated with the professed aim of constructing a theodicy which men will approve, the working motive of missions will be weakened and then lost. The mission band which yields to the present pressure will lose the sympathy of the best part of the churches, which are still, we believe, content to rest with the revelation and the omissions of the Scriptures. Upon such a departure from scriptural principles, the missions and the churches will be divided into factions; the spirit of missions will decline. But the end will not be here. A blight will come upon our work at home. For the motive of our work abroad and at home is one. It is the double motive of Paul, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men," "The love of Christ constraineth us." Or, if we make it a single word, then it is LOVE like that of Christ made urgent by the view of impending doom.

It is *possible* that the churches are largely abandoning the old views. But the claim that they are *may* be simply the bold assumption which, unfortunately for candor, has not been wanting on one side in this protracted discussion. But if they are thus departing, it is safe to predict that, whatever be the transient prosperity under present excitement and careful mustering of adherents, the result will be spiritual dearth and blight, and the transference of spiritual power and faithfulness to those who are more careful to follow the Scriptures than to construct a new theodicy. G. R. LEAVITT.

## II.

Since the question is being forced upon us concerning the policy of sending to the heathen missionaries who believe in the doctrine of "continued probation," we cannot avoid discussing the question from a practical point of view; for with a missionary church the doctrines of grace are both the mainspring of missionary activity and the divinely elaborated product which is to be exported to heathen lands and planted as seed corn for the spiritual harvests of the future. Underlying and giving character to all great evangelistic and missionary movements there are profound convictions of truth. The church first *believes*, then *acts*.

The gravity of the interests at stake in such a discussion permits us to be deeply in earnest without impugning the motives of those who take a different view from ours. The honesty of the builders is not the chief thing at stake. Those who build wood, hay, and stubble into the temple may be sincere, and may themselves be saved, but their work shall be burned with fire and while it stands will greatly increase the painful toil of those who are erecting the true temple of gold, silver, and precious stones.



In their relations to church fellowship and organic church action, the doctrines of grace have to be considered in two aspects: first, there is the question of the truth of each particular doctrine and secondly, there is the question of its relative importance. The doctrines of the church, like the church itself, form a body, consisting of many members compactly joined together. In fixing upon a body of doctrines which shall serve as a working basis of action for a large constituency, we are compelled to give special attention to the *relative* importance of the various elements which go to make up the whole. As in choosing and equipping soldiers we need not insist that each one shall have every perfection of body, and every attainment of mind, and skill in the use of every class of armor, but should only insist on those qualifications which are specially related to their particular responsibilities, so in selecting missionaries, only those qualifications need be insisted upon which bear directly on the work to which they are assigned. But, if those specific qualities are lacking, no other attainments will suffice to make them successful as missionaries.

The fundamental questions, then, facing those who take it upon themselves to send the gospel to the heathen, are, What things are true? and, How central are specific doctrines to the system of truth which it is our duty to propagate? As to the *truth* of the doctrine that to such as attain years of moral accountability in this life the awards of the judgment day are to be according to the deeds done in the body, we need say nothing at this time. It is sufficient to refer to the discussions of that question by various contributors in previous numbers of the *Bibliotheca Sacra*.<sup>1</sup>

We will therefore limit ourselves to a discussion of the central and organic importance of this doctrine in the system of evangelical truth. Upon this question, then, we remark:

FIRST, *that the denial of the doctrine that the probation of those who reach years of moral accountability here is limited to this life, most seriously endangers the doctrine of the sufficiency, the authority, and the intelligibility of the Bible.* A gospel thus severed from connection with its inspired source, cannot long abide. If missionaries take the liberty to eliminate so plain a doctrine from the Scriptures, the heathen will have little respect for what remains. Upon this point one of the most eminent scientific men in America unburdens his heart thus in a private letter. "I wonder at the Andover theologians. They are knocking out their foundations. If I had to shift around the Bible to make it teach probation beyond the grave, I am afraid I should do a little more and shove it overboard; and I think that is a natural feeling with any scientific mind, except that of a foregone Catholic. Believing that God is just, we may be sure that there will be no injustice in his dealings with us, and rest our faith there. Nature's laws, which are God's laws, are all of the inflexible kind, and give little encouragement to the idea of making

<sup>1</sup> See vol. xl. pp. 604-713, by Professor G. F. Wright; also vol. xliii. pp. 33-56, by Professor I. E. Dwinell; also vol. xliii. pp. 423-442 by President J. H. Fairchild. Professor G. F. Wright has also discussed the whole subject briefly in his *Death and Probation*, Cong. Pub. Soc. Boston, 1882.

up for lost time and lost character after death. As regards the future, trust in Christ while here is the only doctrine a theologian ought to dare to teach, whatever may be his hopes, or his difficulties with the divine government."

SECONDLY, *the denial of this doctrine, in face of the scriptural support of it, magnifies the prerogatives of the human reason beyond all warrant and brings us to the verge of most dangerous presumption.* The practical administration of the divine government is a matter not of reason but of reasoning, and it is the height of presumption respecting such a subject for man to set up his conclusions as the measure of divine wisdom. It is also out of place and an undue strain of fellowship for any body of theorizers to force upon their brethren their own particular plan for justifying the ways of God with man. To attempt to compel the great mass of Christian believers to accept the statement that the ways of God with the human race *cannot be justified* except on the theory that the gospel is to be preached after death to those who have not been made familiar with the biography of Christ in this life, is for these writers to set up their own speculations as infallible. They have no right to demand such consideration for their theories. In due time God will justify his own ways. Of necessity his thoughts are above our thoughts and his ways above our ways. The plan of salvation spans the ages, and is infinite in its comprehension. It is man's business to accept as the guide of his action such light as God has seen fit to reveal. We believe that a segment of God's plan is revealed in the Scriptures; and that he has there unfolded, not only the bare lines of duty, but the overwhelming urgency of the motives leading to its performance. The simple command to preach the gospel to the heathen depends for its urgency upon our conception of the relative hazard of heathen nations as compared with those already having the gospel. What is the present urgency of preaching the gospel to the heathen when so many in our own land are unevangelized? *When shall we preach the gospel to the heathen?* Shall we wait until we have more highly cultivated the fields already partially occupied? Or shall we maintain a foreign missionary society at the same time that the demands of the home work are so pressing? If it be said by the advocates of continued probation that we are to be moved by the apparent greatness of the need of the heathen world, it will be readily replied that if the system of divine government is such that all sinners have a right to demand of God that the gospel be preached to them before they are judged, (*Progressive Orthodoxy* p. 139) and that they have a right to all the privileges of the most favored class, it is difficult to see how there can be any pressing need of our hastening their evangelization during this life. The pressing need would seem to be that we redouble our efforts to save those in Christian lands who, upon this theory, are to have no offered grace in the world to come.

THIRDLY, *to insist that the heathen must have a probation in another world, proceeds upon a false and mischievous conception of their natural powers and their acquired character.* Underlying this doctrine of a future probation for the heathen is the doctrine either that the heathen have not sufficient light to condemn them, or that they have no natural power to discern that light which lighteth

every man who cometh into the world. This strikes a fatal blow at the doctrine of man's native dignity as described in the Scriptures and as revealed in man's own conscience, and this leaves us without proper basis for our doctrine of sin.

When God made man he pronounced him very good ; for he was made in his own image. It stands to reason that a missionary can have no strong hope of success in preaching the gospel to the heathen if he has an inordinately low conception of the native capacities of the human mind. If the missionary brings himself to believe that the heathen have little or no capacity for perceiving the revelation made in nature, he can not be animated with any inspiring hope of getting them to appreciate the written revelation which he brings. The strength of one's expectation of arousing ideas in another mind by the use of language cannot be much out of proportion to his conception of the natural powers of the mind addressed. It would be useless to address the language of the moral law to an animal; for the animal mind is not responsive to such appeals. So, if the heathen are regarded as having such feeble powers that their experience under the light of nature has evoked no deep sense of sin one will have little heart to address them with the lofty moral conceptions of the Bible. The views of the missionaries and of their constituency upon these points cannot but affect and that most seriously, the whole spirit and animus of the missionary work. An essential element of successful work is that we know the nature of the material upon which we bestow our labor. What is man that God should be so mindful of him as to redeem him with the precious blood of Christ? The answer is that man even in his lowest estate, is, as to capacity, most highly exalted. But alas he is sinful. Though God made man upright and in his own image, we can recognize in him now only that image in ruins.

Much mischief is sure to be done by confusing the popular mind with the use of phrases and arguments which assume that the heathen are more unfortunate than wicked. When a writer or speaker complains of the gross injustice which would ensue if God should condemn one to eternal punishment just because he is a heathen, it would be well to explain the full meaning of that word heathen. From much that is said one would suppose that a heathen was an imbecile with no sense of responsibility to God and no knowledge of God. Such however is neither the testimony of missionaries nor of the Scripture—and especially not that of Paul, the great apostle to the heathen.

The heathen as described by Paul are literally steeped in sin of a most revolting and disgusting character. They have given themselves up to vile passions, are full of all unrighteousness, wickedness, covetousness, malice, envy, murder, strife, deceit and malignity. They are insolent, haughty, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, covenant-breakers, unmerciful and though "knowing the ordinance of God, that they which practise such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but also consent with them that practise them" (Rom. i, 32.) The evil which those do who are to be visited with "indignation, tribulation, and anguish," is expressly said to

be factiousness, disobedience to the truth and obedience to unrighteousness. Again in the third chapter of Romans both Jew and Greek are declared to be under sin, and that not in any passive sense, but as active agents. "Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit: The poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood; destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way of peace have they not known: there is no fear of God before their eyes." (Rom. iii. 13-18.) Such is the language of the great apostle to the heathen. But how different from that of "Progressive Orthodoxy." It requires no gift of prophecy to see that those who go to the heathen as Christian missionaries without an adequate sense of the sins of the heathen world can never succeed in adequately presenting the Christian doctrines of grace which are to be set over against these sins. We need not repeat the testimony going to show that the heart of the heathen nations responds to this indictment of the great missionary apostle. This testimony conclusively shows that the heathen themselves are not slow to acknowledge their guilt and condemnation. What they need is the doctrines and motives of grace freely offered to the undeserving.

BUT FOURTHLY, *the arguments by which the theory of continued probation must be sustained deny the doctrine of "grace."* The authors of "Progressive Orthodoxy" speak of the "rights" which sinners have in the gospel, meaning by this the right a sinner has to demand of God a stay of judgment until he has had the historic Christ presented to him. Such a demand as this completely overturns the gospel scheme, whose fundamental principle is that God, in the exercise of the lawful prerogative of his wisdom, freely bestows the gifts of grace upon the undeserving. In the exercise of his benevolent wisdom he has a *right* to do what he will with his own. The infrequency with which the authors of "Progressive Orthodoxy" refer to the prerogatives of divine wisdom is painfully significant.

FIFTHLY, *to force this doctrine upon the Board will produce a division both at home and abroad.* In so serious a matter as that of fulfilling the Saviour's last command it scarcely seems proper to speak of policy, yet when properly considered even matters of policy are not to be wholly overlooked. It seems too evident to need statement that missionary ground is not the appropriate arena on which to contend for such a doctrine as that of future probation. Nothing could be more unfortunate than to force a number of young *missionaries* to live together in such close contact as those are in who are associated in the same missionary field, with widely divergent views as to such fundamental doctrines.

Nothing, we repeat, could be more unfortunate than such disagreement among missionaries, except perhaps agreement in a system of theology incorporating the doctrine of future probation as one of its essential tenets. If experience has shown, as it has, that it is not wise to compel missionaries to work together in foreign fields who differ in the minor matters which separate evangelical denominations from each other, how much greater the un wisdom of putting into the same mission for their life's work those who

differ on so fundamental a matter as the very mainspring of the missionary movement itself. If we would not compel a Baptist and a Methodist, or a Congregationalist and an Episcopalian, to march in the same regiment on mission ground, but would allow them to move under separate captains and to wear their own uniforms, how much more is it important not to compel an orthodox missionary to be yoked for his life's work with a semi-universalist, or to compel a follower of the apostle Paul to lay his brick in the untempered mortar of those who say there can be no justification of the ways of God unless there is a future probation for the heathen.

FINALLY, *What is the object of Christian missions if it be not to give to the heathen nations, so far as it can be done, the gospel in its entirety?* Why do we need an expurgated gospel for the heathen any more than our fathers needed it? The doctrine of future probation for those who have not in our opinion had the gospel properly presented to them would, if generally accepted, take away the source of strength which has characterized evangelical Protestantism in its work at home. For if God in his providence does not give adequate light to every man so that all ground for excuse is taken away, no man will ever be able to tell when such adequate light is furnished. Will any one contend that the mere repetition of the words of Christ's biography are all-sufficient? or that the representation of Christ in connection with the superstitious practices of the Romish, the Greek, or the Abyssinian churches is such an addition to the light of nature that it can close probation where that light was not sufficient to do it? Surely not; but with Dorner the advocates of the new departure views will have to maintain that the heathen are to be found in all our unchurched masses, and very likely, too, in all our Christian congregations. Thus at the outset we shall carry to the heathen this paralyzing and poisonous error, that sinners are not condemned by the light of nature, but only when our stammering accents have made the gospel sufficiently plain to them.

Of course those who believe in the so-called "Progressive Orthodoxy" have a personal right to try the experiment of enlisting missionaries and converting the heathen by preaching their doctrines. But others have a right to expostulate against their forcing themselves upon the existing societies with a view to compel these societies to try hazardous experiments not only at the risk of compromising the rest of the constituency, but at the risk of vitiating the whole work which has been built up with such toil and expense upon the present foundations. True wisdom leads to extreme caution in all great revolutionary movements. Pre-eminently is this the case when it is proposed, to repudiate the beliefs of a great missionary constituency, and to revolutionize their whole conception of the condition of heathen nations before the bar of God's justice. It cannot be wise in such a matter to exchange a "thus saith the Lord" for the utterances of any human oracle.

Such is the gravity of the interests at stake that, were this policy to be adopted, without doubt a large part of the contributions of the churches that now go to the American Board would soon be diverted to those societies

that adhere to the scriptural representations concerning the grounds of future judgment. The effect of forcing such a controversy upon the home constituents of the Board would be ruinous to its financial future. The great body of those who sustain missions is not, and is not going to be, among those who believe that the heathen have rights to the gospel which they can press before the bar of divine justice ; though they do believe that the heathen have claims to the gospel which can be pressed home with imperious force upon a church which is derelict in its duty, and is not moved upon compassion for the lost as Christ was moved. These will ever insist upon having their gifts directed as near as is practicable to the dissemination of the gospel, the whole gospel, and nothing but the gospel. They themselves do not wish to be the active agents of sowing tares with the wheat. If the advocates of continued probation can prove beyond peradventure that man in his natural state has not sufficient light to serve as a basis for his eternal condemnation in case he neglects or perverts it, or if they can prove beyond a reasonable doubt that God cannot so adjust the awards of the eternal world as to do no injustice to the heathen even though consigning them to eternal and irrevocable punishment for their sins in this life—then we must revise with them our interpretation of the Bible, or throw it aside altogether. But until we are driven to that necessity, we cannot quietly suffer them to force upon the churches the experiment which is involved in the adoption by the Board of such rationalistic and revolutionary theories. For the officers of the Board to abandon the foundations upon which the structure of modern missions is building, would be treason to the churches they represent and treason to the whole church militant.