

THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY.

15734

VOL. XII.

JANUARY, 1908.

No. 1.

CORDATUS' CONTROVERSY WITH MELANCHTHON.

(Continued.)

The letter announcing Cordatus' intention to come to Wittenberg for a personal interview had barely reached Cruciger when Cordatus himself made his appearance (September 18th). He had arrived the day before and wasted no time by delay. It was still early in the morning—seven o'clock—when he knocked at Cruciger's door. The two men remained closeted in strict privacy for quite a while. There is no record of their discussion. The ancient chronicler sums up the affair with the summary statement: *diu litigatum est*. However, the interview yielded one result that is of almost dramatic effect, and this the chronicler has recorded, because it gave a new turn to the controversy. It appears that Cruciger, also in this personal interview, denied having spoken or dictated the words which Cordatus claimed he had. But Cordatus was able to place before him the exact statements as they had been taken down by the students in Cruciger's lecture on July 24th. The evidence was conclusive, and was met by Cruciger in a manner that is anything rather than manly. He replied that *the statements which he had dictated were the product of Dr. Philip*, that he had been Philip's pupil in this matter and had been misled by Philip, in a way that he could not explain. (C. R. 3, 161.) Thus Cruciger took shelter behind his greater colleague and left the latter to face the issue of Cordatus alone.

From this juncture Cruciger disappears as public actor in the controversy. Cruciger's startling revelation had been a vir-

CHRIST'S DESCENT INTO HELL AND THE POSSIBILITY OF CONVERSION AFTER DEATH.¹⁾

I.

The following rescript signed by seventeen clergymen of Bergen and vicinity was submitted to the Church Council (Kirkedepartment) of Norway in 1899:

“It ought to be generally admitted that the words ‘nedfar til helvede’ [descended into hell], officially prescribed for the Second Article of the Apostles’ Creed, are an incorrect and

1) *Aaben Erklaering* til mine Medchristen om min Anskuelse og Bekjendelse angaaende Christi Nedfart til Helvede og Muligheden af en Omvendelse efter Doeden, af *W. A. Wexels*. Andet Oplag. Christiania, Groen-dahl, 1847.—*Livet efter Doeden* og Gudsrigets Fremtid, af *Pastor L. Dahle*, det Norske Missionsselskabs Sekretær. Stavanger 1893. Kulland.—“*Nedfar til Helvede*,” a paper by *Dr. H. G. Stub*. Teologisk Tidsskrift, vol. II, 3, p. 164 sqq.; 4, p. 219 sqq. Decorah, Iowa, 1900.

misleading translation of the Greek and Latin texts. We therefore respectfully suggest that the correct rendition, 'nedfar til doedsriget' [descended into the domain of death] be made the officially prescribed reading."

In its reply the Church Council reported that the matter had been placed before the bishops of the church and the theological faculty at Christiania, who had unanimously decided against the change. The theological faculty held that the present wording of the Norwegian text should be left undisturbed as it correctly teaches "the victory of Christ over the powers of Darkness," and that as such it must be permitted to stand in spite of the fact that the Greek and Latin terms (*inferna*, *inferi*, τὰ κατώτατα, Ἅδης) possess a wider meaning than the Norwegian "helvede."

The following individual expressions of opinion have appeared in print. Bishop *Hilles* admits that the term "helvede" is an incomplete, though not incorrect, rendition of "ad inferna," but insists that the change suggested by the Bergen conference would be generally misinterpreted as a concession to modern unbelief.²⁾ He then enters into an etymological discussion of the word "helvede" and cites authorities for his contention that the old-Norsk "Helviti" originally stood for the place of punishment of the damned, and the punishment itself. As for Ἅδης, Matt. 11, 23; 16, 18; Luke 16, 23, and other texts are quoted in support of the equation: "helvede" = Ἅδης = hell (= place of punishment), and the conclusion is reached that the Catechism text should be left unchanged as it correctly states the doctrine of Scripture that Christ indeed "descended into hell."

Bishop *Hench* fears that any change in the wording of the Creed would give grave offense to the laity, and in evidence refers to an edition of Luther's Catechism which was rejected

2) Bishop *Hilles* quotes from a Christiania daily paper which had welcomed the proposed change as a sign that the Lutheran doctrine of eternal punishment was given up by many clergymen in the church of Norway.

Greek original of the Creed.”⁴⁾ These be hard words! Even the Bergen ministers did not go to such lengths, but merely insisted on a disassociation of 1 Pet. 3 and the phrase in question. The essence of the matter is, that Rev. Dahle in this treatise seeks to establish *the possibility of conversion after death* and can find Scriptural warrant (or the semblance of it) for his contention only in 1 Pet. 3, 18 and 4, 6. We shall endeavor to make clear the line of argument pursued in the 210 pages devoted to this, the main topic of Rev. Dahle’s book.

In order to arrive at a Possibility of Conversion after Death, Rev. Dahle naturally seeks to establish, first of all, an *interim* between the death of the individual and Judgment Day. This he terms “doedsriget”—“abode” or “kingdom of the dead.” The condition of the soul during this interim he calls “Mellemtilstand”—“the middle state.” The author denies that any word for Hell occurs in the Old Testament writings (p. 97). “Sheol” means neither “hell” nor “grave,” but is the “common gathering place for all the dead” (p. 103). The Old Testament knows of no difference between the condition of the good and the condition of the wicked after death. Their common abode is dark (Job 10, 21), deep (Gen. 37, 35), silent (Ps. 94, 17). Their life a life without power (Job 26, 5), almost = non-existence (Is. 38, 11). There is no knowledge of, or communion with, God (p. 101). Yet Sheol “lies open” before God; indeed, His grace may be revealed to its inhabitants, Ps. 139, 7. 8(??). Rev. Dahle admits that this is “a rather dark picture;” but hastens to relieve the situation by suggesting that such was not the actual condition of the faithful Israelites after death, but merely an incomplete revelation of a future state that really may have been much brighter (p. 109—113).

The New Testament doctrine is stated as follows: The souls of believers *at once* are blessed and united with God. Those who have resisted the call of the Gospel in this life are

4) p. 197.

lost, without hope of any reversal of judgment. *All* the dead are in a state of incomplete soul-development. This is the *Mittelzustand*—a stage of waiting. The temporary abode of the wicked (during this time of waiting) is Hades.⁵⁾ All who do not after death immediately enter heaven, enter Hades (p. 145. 149). No soul goes to hell at once. Hell (Gehenna, Tartarus) does not exist before Judgment Day. In the middle state, the blessed (in heaven) may grow in virtue, the wicked (in Hades) may advance in depravity (p. 163 sqq.). For the blessed there is no danger of relapse; for the souls in Hades, that have not rejected Christ in this life, there is *a hope of conversion*.

Now, Rev. Dahle does not aver that the doctrine of a possible conversion *of such as in this life never heard the Gospel* is a clear doctrine of Scripture. Yet he maintains that if we “go back to the fundamental principles of the scriptural teachings” (p. 171), we are forced to some such conclusion. Since God earnestly desires the salvation of all men; since Christ has been a ransom for all; and since the Gospel-call is general, universal—therefore the probability grows strong that all who have died in ignorance of the Gospel will be given an opportunity to accept Christ in Hades (p. 172. 178. 180).⁶⁾ Christ went to the souls in prison and preached to them, 1 Pet. 3. The souls referred to are the souls of all men who died in ignorance of the New Testament Gospel. Christ preached to them this Gospel (p. 199), the effect of which preaching, Rev. Dahle admits, is not stated by Peter, but *may be regarded as self-evident*.⁷⁾ The souls that accept Christ now go to Paradise, those who reject Him are no longer unbelievers, but infidels, are lost.

5) According to Rev. Dahle, Hades is not the abode of the damned *and* the blessed (= Sheol), nor is it simply the condition of death (Todeszustand). He would leave the word untranslated wherever it occurs in the New Testament (p. 150—154).

6) “To believe that all heathen are lost would compel us to accept the Calvinistic doctrine of reprobation.” (p. 183.) Somehow this has a familiar ring!

7) “Synes at ligge i sagens natur” (!). (p. 204.)

All of which explains pretty well how Rev. Dahle has been led to disassociate 1 Pet. 3 and the words of the Creed: "descendit ad inferos," and why he insists upon a distinction between Hades and Hell.

Nor is this the first time that a Norwegian theologian has made the passage in 1 Pet. 3 yield the comforting thought that, after all, the heathen are not necessarily and eternally lost. In 1843 a revised edition of Pontoppidan's *Explanation of the Catechism* was published under the supervision of W. A. Wexels, Prof. Keyser, and Prof. Kaurin, who held an appointment from the king. The paragraph dealing with Christ's Descent contained the unequivocal statement: "He preached the Gospel to the souls in prison" (§ 329). Both among clergy and laity this and other changes in Pontoppidan's text met with general disapproval. The members of the royal commission were severely taken to task in the periodicals of the day and in several anonymous pamphlets. Prof. Kaurin then came out with a statement of his views in *Nogle Ord til den Norske Kirke*, and W. A. Wexels replied in a pamphlet, the full title of which we have given at the head of this article.

From Matt. 12, 32 Wexels concludes that there must be sins that can be forgiven in the next life (p. 44). He holds that "conversion after death is not absolutely impossible in the case of any human being" (p. 50). Christ preached the Gospel to the souls in captivity, and offered the fruits of His redemption "to all who had not sinned against the Holy Ghost" (p. 52 sqq.). "I am inclined to believe that also many heathen, by their earnest seeking after the truth [?], by their humble striving after righteousness [?], have in this manner been prepared to accept, after death, the Gospel of Christ" (p. 59).⁸⁾ He quotes from a sermon of Grundtvig (!)⁹⁾ on the Descent of Christ to Hell: "Nothing prevents us from supposing that the martyrs continue the preaching of Christ in Hades" for the purpose of converting those who were not witnesses of Christ's

8) Similarly Dahle, *op. cit.*, p. 182; note.

9) Grundtvig is cited four times in *Aaben Erklaering*.

descent (p. 63). All who do not accept this final call will be cast into hell on Judgment Day (p. 65 sq.).

In order to defend himself against the accusation that in his "reviderede Forklaring" he had sought to introduce new teachings, Wexels next devotes 80 pages to the testimony of the Fathers of the church — among them Justinus, Athenagoras, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Hippolyte, Lactantius, Ambrose, Chrysostom, Jerome, and Augustine — to establish the early belief in a middle state after death, and Justinus, Irenaeus, Hippolytus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Athanasius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Ambrose, and others, in support of his conception of Christ's Descent into Hades.

It should be added that a royal edict of the year 1848, enjoining the exclusive use of this revised text of Pontoppidan throughout Norway, was very generally ignored by people and clergy alike. In 1852 a "Resolution" was wrung from the king which made optional the use of the old or new edition, and this had been the status of the controversy when it was reopened by Rev. Dahle's *Livet efter Doeden* and the Bergen memorial to the Church Council.

II.

"You want my opinion," says Seneca in one of his letters, "on a matter discussed in our circles: whether justice, bravery, forethought, and other virtues are living beings (*animalia*). *Hac subtilitate*," he replies, "*efficimus, Lucili charissime, ut exercere ingenium inter irrita videamur, et disputationibus nihil profuturis ingenium terere.*" The question propounded by Lucilius is not so inept when compared with the problems that some have set themselves to solve, in time past, in regard to the Descent to Hell. If Lucilius desired an opinion whether the virtues are "*animalia*," Hugo de S. Victore gravely ruminated upon the question: "*An infernus sit animal?*" Jerome encountered the same vagary, for in his *Commentary on Isaiah* he finds it necessary to remark: "*Infernus animam habere dicitur, non quod animal sit, sed . . . quod insatiabilis sit etc.*"

Likewise Andreas Caesariensis: "Mors et infernus non sunt viva animalia."¹⁰) Compare this conception with that other of Clement of Alexandria, who saw nothing absurd in the thought that not Christ, but His apostles descended into Hades, or that of Damascenus Studita, who fancied Christ preaching in limbo for thirty-three hours, or that of Epiphanius, who taught that Christ on that occasion preached to Adam and Eve, and the danger of attaching exaggerated importance to patristic opinion on this matter is apparent. Not all of the Fathers were sound dogmaticians, and they sometimes erred in exegesis. As everyone knows, the very earliest of the Fathers had not always the clearest conception of apostolic doctrine. Hence we are not surprised to meet, as early as the second century, in the *Similitudes* of Hermas, the idea that the apostles continued their work of evangelization in limbo. Eustathius and Hippolytus argued, as did Rev. Brun and the Bergen conference in 1900, that Christ went to Hades to round out the circle of human life,¹¹) and Tertullian refers to the Paradise of the blessed as located in the precincts of Hades.¹²) But neither Hermas, nor Eustathius, nor Hippolytus, nor Tertullian can be regarded as wardens of orthodox faith.

1) As concerns the citations adduced from the Fathers by Wexels and Koenig (*Die Lehre v. d. Hoellenf.*), that appear unequivocally to declare a belief in the possibility of conversion in Hades, it should be borne in mind:

a) That it is by no means an easy task to distinguish whether the "descensus" spoken of has reference to the *κατάβασις* of Rom. 10, 7 and Eph. 4, 9; or to the *πορευθεῖς* of 1 Pet. 3. The Fathers frequently speak of the State of Humiliation in terms that are easily misunderstood for the Descent to Hell, and it is often quite impossible to tell whether the "destruction of the works of darkness" or the triumphant entry of Christ in Hades was in the author's mind.

10) Meisnerus, *Tract. de Desc. Christi ad Inf.* Wittenb., 1670, p. 25 sq.

11) Dorner, *Christologie*, I, p. 622. 967.

12) Koenig, *Die Lehre von der Hoellenfahrt*, 1842, p. 67 sq.

b) After sifting out a great number of ambiguous passages, it is true that others remain which clearly presume a belief in some sort of soteric activity of Christ in Hades. But in many cases this was a corollary from certain opinions held by the Fathers, or at least uttered by them as a mild concession to the heathen they sought to convert. Thus Justin the Martyr declared that Socrates and Heraclitus were Christians "because they lived according to the Logos."¹³ Clement of Alexandria maintained that the Greeks were led by their philosophy to Christ.¹⁴ St. Augustine has a similar passage in the sixth book *Contra Donatistas* (ch. 44). It is worthy of note that only in rare instances do the Fathers speak of a *continued* activity of Christ in the abode of the dead; He preached to those who had died *before* the Gospel-age. In this way a hope was held out to the heathen that their ancestors were after all included in the dispensation, and a difficulty was overcome that missionaries have at all times had to contend with.—Furthermore,

c) Consistency was not a patristic virtue. Hippolytus, Origen, Epiphanius, Firm. Maternus, Jerome, and Augustine may each be quoted for and against the Formula of Concord *in loc.*¹⁵ So that Koenig¹⁶ is constrained to admit that "the Fathers are not explicit and consistent enough on those points to yield satisfactory answers to the questions that arise."

d) After all, it is not surprising to note that the thought of millions of Gentiles being lost who never had an opportunity to hear the Gospel seemed as inconsistent with God's justice to men in the third and fourth as it did to men in the nineteenth century—to the detriment of hermeneutical science in both cases.

13) μετὰ λόγον βιώσαντες. *Apol.* 1, 46.

14) *Stromata* 1, 5, 28. No doubt the Fathers thought they had warrant for such belief in Paul's speech at Athens, Acts 17, 28.

15) As when Augustine in *De Civ. Dei* designates Christ as the conqueror of Hades, but in his *Commentary on Genesis* speaks of a liberation of souls from torture.

16) *Op. cit.*, p. 147.

e) The allegation that the ancient church did not connect "descendit ad inferos" with 1 Pet. 3, 18 (Rev. Brun) is taken up by Dr. Stub, who demonstrates by copious citations that Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Eusebius, Pamphilus, Hilarius, and the Peshito distinctly refer to this passage when discussing the Descent.¹⁷⁾ In other words, the idea of Christ's entering Hades before His resurrection *has not been translated* INTO the Norwegian, German, and English form of the Creed.

2) As to Sheol-Hades.

The reader may decide for himself whether Rev. Dahle's contention, that there is no word for Hell in the Old Testament, and Wexels', that both Sheol and Hades are the temporary abode of all departed souls, are based on good scriptural evidence by turning back to the article on Sheol in vol. X, p. 22 sqq., of the THEOLOGICAL QUARTERLY. Even Wexels admits (p. 20) that in Numb. 16, 30, 33, Deut. 32, 22, and Ps. 86, 13, Sheol = eternal perdition.¹⁸⁾ Rev. Dahle's statement, so often reiterated, that *Ἅδης* never means Hell, but always the *temporary* abode of the wicked (p. 151), does not agree with Matt. 11, 23 (which loses all significance if Capernaum "will be thrust down" into—a place where conversion is yet possible) and Matt. 16, 18: "The gates of *Ἅδης* shall not prevail" against the Church.¹⁹⁾

17) *Teol. Tidsskr.* II, pp. 220—226.

18) Fritz Hommel, in his *Geschichte des alten Morgenlandes*, makes the interesting remark that among the Babylonians the Demon of Fire, Nalsu — Nusku — Gishdubar, was lord of Sheol.

19) As to "Helvede," the case of the Bergen pastors is not strengthened by the etymological dictionaries. "Helvede" is derived from the Indo-European "halja" = Hell, Unterwelt (Old Norsk "hel"), and "vitja" = punishment, Old Norsk "viti." Hel — viti, Helvede, then, *originally* stood for the punishment after death, and it is worthy of note that the simple Old Saxon "witi," Old High German "wizi" (from vizan, to punish, "Verweis"), meant punishment of the damned even without the prefix hel, Hoelle. (Fick, *Indo-Germ. Woerterbuch*, vol. III, pp. 99, 304.) Hence it is a fair assumption that the term "Helvede" when it was employed by the Norwegian translators of the Creed, stood as an exact equivalent for Hades = Hell.

The equation "Hades" = "Paradise" is neatly despatched by Dr. Stub by the tentative substitution of Paradise for Hades in every New Testament passage in which the latter occurs (e. g., "Matt. 16, 18: 'The gates of hell shall not,' etc., will anyone affirm that we might as well say: 'The gates of Paradise shall not prevail against thee?'"). The distinction of "Gehenna," "Sea of Fire," "Abyss," on the one hand and "Hades," on the other, that figures so largely in Rev. Dahle's *Livet efter Doeden*,²⁰ is then looked into, and the twelve passages in which *ῥεέννα* occurs are cited to show that the term is used interchangeably with Hades. If the souls of the wicked are *ἐν φυλακῇ*, 1 Pet. 3, so is Satan and his host *ἐν φυλακῇ*, Rev. 20, 7; yet no one will say that the fate of the latter will only be decided on Judgment Day. "Gehenna, the Sea of Fire, refers to the more intense punishment, when also the bodies of the guilty will suffer torment" after the judgment.²¹

3) The Possibility of Conversion after Death.

a) Rev. Dahle is ever careful to emphasize the *hypothetic* character of his main Thesis.²² He sees no proof for his assumption in such passages as Ezek. 16, 53; Matt. 12, 31; Luke 12, 10; Matt. 5, 26; 18, 34 (p. 176), and admits the absence of a *Schriftbeweis* in the strict sense of the term (p. 186). On the other hand, he knows of no Scriptural evidence *against* the possibility of a *μετάνοια* of disembodied spirits, and claims the benefit of the doubt by urging the universality of Grace. Yet it seems that there are texts which plainly exclude any extension of the *terminus gratiae peremptorius* into the abode of death. According to 2 Cor. 5, 10 "the things done *in his body*" will decide the eternal lot of all (*πάντες, ἕκαστος*) who appear before the judgment seat. After death—the judgment, Hebr. 9, 27. The works of faith *in this life* will be the criterion, Matt.

20) As also in Wexels' *Aaben Erklaering*, p. 36 sq.

21) *Teol. Tidsskr.*, l. c., p. 242.

22) Wexels, on the other hand, is willing to believe in the conversion of departed souls, even if there were no evidence in Scripture, *op. cit.*, pp. 45. 61.

25, 41 sqq. "He that believeth not is condemned already," John 3, 18; cf. v. 36. A "middle state" is never so much as hinted at. After death—the judgment; after death—"the house not made with hands, *eternal* in the heavens," 2 Cor. 5. When the Apostle departs, he is "with Christ," Phil. 1, 23. When his "departure is at hand," at that day (ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ), he receives the crown *from the Judge*, 2 Tim. 4, 8. As regards the ethnic world, Rom. 1—3 is very explicit in stating that the wrath of God is revealed upon it, because, though natural man knows God, he worships Him not, possesses the law, yet keeps it not, and hence is ἀναπολογητός, without excuse. Nor is there any distinction made between pagan and Jewish unrighteousness. The Jew sins against better knowledge, the Gentile sins against better knowledge, "there is no difference; all have sinned," 3, 22. "As many as have sinned without law [the Gentiles] shall also *perish* without law; and as many as have sinned in the law [Israel] shall be judged by the law," 2, 22.²³⁾

b) Metaphysical basis for the speculations here rehearsed is the alleged continuance, after the soul has departed bodily life, of Space and Time as modes of existence.²⁴⁾ Rather let us say—lest the problem be marred in the stating of it—as modes of thought. Subjective existence is the most that can,

23) Rev. Dahle's exegesis of Rom. 1 (p. 181) is about as ingenious as his deduction from Ps. 139, 7. 8 and Amos 9, 2, that God's grace extends into Sheol. We may add that Rev. Dahle believes there is "nothing in Scripture" against the assumption that the Word is preached in Hades and the sacraments administered until Judgment Day (pp. 206. 207). From Rom. 11 he concludes that the general conversion of Israel may be expected to precede the end (pp. 276—317). He denies that the Roman pontiff is *the* Antichrist, and in this connection has something to say about Martin Luther and certain "untenable ideas that were based on dogmatic traditions from the infant-age of exegetical science." He pleads for a mild and attenuated sort of Chiliasm: the Church will "flourish as never before" during the thousand years preceding the last judgment. On p. 414 he asks, reverting to conditions in the "middle state": "How do we know whether infant souls will not develop to full man's estate" in the interval between death and eternity?—*Facilis descensus Averni!*

24) Dahle, *op. cit.*, pp. 119 sq. 147—150.

on purely metaphysical grounds, be predicated of Time and Space. Our mind conceives all things, so far as it is able to conceive them at all in this temporal life, in terms of Time, Space, and Causality. Whether the soul, disembodied in death, will continue so to move in a thought-world limited by Space and Time—who shall tell? Where a thousand years are as a day, can there be Time in our sense of the term? When our bodies are transformed into a state “*like unto Christ’s glorified body,*” can they be such and yet feel the dimensional limits that now hedge in mortal thought and circumscribe our ideas of mortal activity?²⁵⁾ “But there is Duration in the interval that lies between death and judgment—,” duration, indeed, to us who yet live in the body, but are we sure that the souls of the departed are *conscious* of this duration? If they are not, *i. e.*, if Time to them possesses no subjective existence, it lacks the only existence that can by us be predicated of it. Without Space and Time—Rev. Dahle admits—no Change is possible, nor Conversion, which is a change. “We have no knowledge,” it is safest to say, with Thomasius, “of the souls’ mode of existence; their *ποῦ* is not in dimensional space.”²⁶⁾ “The dead are outside of all Time, Hour, Year, and Space; whatever is outside of bodily life is not limited by Time or Space,” says Luther.²⁷⁾ Likewise: “We pass away, we return on Judgment Day before we know it, nor shall we know how long we have departed.”²⁸⁾ Elsewhere: “Heaven is not a Place, but is wherever God is.”²⁹⁾ And in his *Commentary on Genesis* (24): “*Nihil est aliud iste descensus piorum, quam mutatio hujus vitæ in alium statum.*”

e) The difficulty that has from the days of Hermas and Ignatius to our own given rise to speculations upon the possibility of conversion after death, is readily stated: it is the

25) Cf. John 20, 19. 26.

26) *Christologic*, vol. II, p. 236.

27) Walch V, 2304.

28) Cited by Thomasius, *op. cit.*, vol. III b, p. 443.

29) Walch XX, 1192. Dr. Stub quotes Quenstedt (*i. e.*, p. 239): “*Quocumque enim abeunt et ubicumque degunt daemones, suum inferum circumferunt, ut ait Beda. . . . Carcerem suum secum semper trahunt.*”

apparent injustice involved in the doom pronounced upon paganism by the Law. Pity for the heathen that perish has prompted men to seek evidence to show that a Chance awaits them after death, the Chance "that was denied them in this life" (Wexels). More than that: both Wexels and Rev. Dahle represent the heathen as trying his best to transcend the bounds of his natural religion—and this view is absolutely without basis in fact. The reverse is true: the heathen mind has at all times tried to rid itself of the terrible Presence it felt, and has "changed the truth of God into a lie," Rom. 1. While it can be shown³⁰⁾ that pagans have been endowed with most remarkable moral and religious insight, it is likewise true that there is not a single authenticated instance of a pagan abandoning the worship of idols (or a rationalistic Weltanschauung) to serve the God he so clearly recognized in nature. When has there been a repentant heathen? (Cf. Rom. 2, 4.) Plato—than whom no man has attained greater heights in natural religion—maintained that no man sins willingly—*πᾶς ἄδικος οὐχ ἔχων ἄδικος*; sin is ignorance.³¹⁾ The fearful guilt of paganism—the indescribable obscenity of their religious cults, the hideousness of their warfare, their inhuman treatment of the vanquished—that even now, pictured on Assyrian bas-relief and Roman triumphal arch, fills the beholder with mingled anguish and horror—above all: the terrible egotism of their private and public life,—are not taken into account. The result is a most one-sided and partial view of ethnic life.

What need, after all, of such laborious theodicees? Do we not know that the punishment will be most accurately fitted to the crime? "It shall be *more tolerable* for Tyre and Sidon" than for Chorazin and Bethsaida; "*more tolerable* for Sodom in the day of judgment" than for Capernaum, Matt. 11. And

30) THEOL. QUARTERLY X, p. 14 ff. 80 ff.; XI, p. 78. 155.

31) Laws V, 731 C. Cf. 734 B: *πᾶς ἐξ ἀνάγκης ἄκων ἐστὶν ἀκόλαστος*. Timaios 86 E: *κακὸς μὲν γὰρ ἐκὼν οὐδεὶς, διὰ δὲ πορευρὰν ἔστιν τινὰ (some evil trait) τοῦ σώματος καὶ ἀπαιδευτον τροφήν (faulty training) ὁ κακὸς γίγνεται κακός, παντὶ δὲ ταῦτα ἐχθρὰ καὶ ἄκοντι προσγίγνεται*. Just so 87 B. Also Menon, 77 C.

so with the individual.³²⁾ There will be infinite gradations of punishment, even as there are infinite degrees of guilt.

Once admit a one-sided "sympathy" into doctrinal discussions on these matters, and it will be just as easy to make out a case diametrically opposed to Rev. Dahle's. For let us ask, What was the guilt of Bethsaida and Chorazin? They refused to recognize Jesus as the Messiah. What was the guilt of Tyre and Sidon, whose lot will be more tolerable? The cremation of living infants, for one thing! And what of the Sodomites, whose unspeakable crime has made them a byword for all time? Will unenlightened reason admit that their lot shall be more tolerable than that of Capernaum? Would it not plead leniency for Capernaum, that "sinned through ignorance," as against Sodom's open violation of a simple natural law? Yet: "it will be more tolerable with Sodom"! "*Hac subtilitate effecimus, ut exercere ingenium inter irrita videamur, et disputationibus nihil profuturis otium terere*" may be applied to every attempt to give Reason (even under the guise of Charity) a voice in matters upon which Scripture has clearly and authoritatively spoken.