

THE WILMINGTON POST.

W. P. CANADAY, Editor and Proprietor.

WILMINGTON, N. C., FRIDAY MORNING MARCH 22, 1878.

The revival of the United States... at Charlotte and New Orleans...

The Democratic State Executive Committee is called to meet at Raleigh on the 27th day of this month.

Steven McCorkle of North Carolina, a leader among the colored men, advocates the establishment of the whipping post...

We do not know just where "Steven" hangs out, but if he is not a myth or the statement a fabrication, we have no objection, when "Steven" is convicted, to his compromising with the court...

JUSTICE AGAIN.

The Thugs, at New Orleans, have received a decided setback by the decision of the Supreme Court of Louisiana, in the case of Gen. Anderson.

Men who would sacrifice to their own ends the fairest reputations for political success have been rampant quite long enough in the south for its best interests. Let them give way to honest views, instead of malignity, and recognize that there is a heritage to transmit to posterity, other than the evilization of Sitting Bull, and the country cannot fail to be better for it.

SENATOR BLAINE AND THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR.

Senator Blaine has expressed his views of the civil service reform inaugurated in the Interior Department, in the following forcible manner:

"Upon the conclusion of the reading Mr. Blaine, of Maine, said:—During the early part of the winter he received several private letters from friends in Montana complaining of the unjust action of the Secretary of the Interior. Subsequently, in conversation with the Delegate from Montana, a gentleman he had known for years, he found that the Secretary of the Interior had been rather unjust in regard to his timber regulations in that territory. Mr. Blaine then referred to the memoranda prepared by the Delegate from Montana, which he read in the Senate a few days ago, when the Mississippi timber cases were being discussed, and said he read that memoranda, not for the purpose of making any attacks upon the Secretary of the Interior, but for the purpose of relieving the people of Montana of the charges made against them. The people of that territory had been visited by a secret spy, who inspected their woodpiles and prohibited them from building a fire until they agreed to pay \$1 per cord stumpage for the wood cut. It had been charged that the people of Montana had been stealing wood, which was not the case. They agreed to pay a fair, generous price, and a commission decided that fifteen cents per cord, stumpage was just; yet the Secretary of the Interior exacted \$1 per cord. He (Mr. Blaine) arraigned the action of the Secretary of the Interior as being that of an un-intelligent man. It was not the work of a practical man.

AN EXTRAVAGANT PRICE.

"The Secretary might go on top of the Patent Office building and see thousands of acres of timber land in Maryland and Virginia within easy reach of the city which would not bring fifty cents per cord stumpage.—There was woodland within sight of the spire of Trinity Church, New York city, which would not sell for what the Secretary of the Interior exacted from those people of Montana. There was no part of the country so thickly settled as to warrant such prices for woodland. The Secretary forgot the magnitude of our country, although he was charged with the administration of that department which should study it care-

fully. The Secretary did not happen to be a native of this country, but that was not his fault, and he (Mr. Blaine) did not mention it as a reproach. He was from the kingdom of Prussia, which was 150,000 square miles in extent less than the territory of Montana. He then spoke of the dimensions of Montana, and of the people, and said that such was their enterprise that within the last fifteen years they had contributed to the wealth of the country \$150,000,000 worth of gold and silver bullion. The Secretary of the Interior, perhaps from his boyhood instinct, applied to the territory of Montana the land laws of Prussia, and not the land laws which had been used in the settlement of the United States. There were other Secretaries of the Interior—Browning, of Illinois; Cox, of Ohio; Chandler, of Michigan—but he challenged any man to show him where any one of them had asked a settler to pay stumpage on cord wood. It was a thing conceded by the government that the hardy pioneer who went forward and bore the flag should have the air, the water, and the wood, that they should breathe, drink and be warm—with the air of heaven, the water which trickled down the mountain side, and the wood which grew on the mountain.

"But the Secretary of the Interior said there was a wood 'ring' in Montana. He was always afflicted with the idea that there was a ring. He supposed the 25,000 settlers of Montana sat quietly and permitted 'rings' to be formed when the forests were in plain sight. There was a vast difference between cutting and selling timber for profit and that which had been done in Montana. He argued that the wood was cut simply for use in the territory, and the report of the Secretary of the Interior read to-day justified, item by item, every assertion made in the memorandum of the Delegate from that territory, which he (Mr. Blaine) read a few days ago.

"HELL AND PERDITION."

A Rabbi's View of the Future.

SUBSTANCE OF THREE LECTURES DELIVERED BY REV. S. MENDELSSOHN.

[CONTINUED FROM OUR LAST.]

Whatever the future punishment be, after all what we have seen in the course of our dissertations on the Hell question, we may unhesitatingly announce to the world our convictions. 1st. That the original idea of a place of future retribution is not Biblical but Pagan. 2d. That while, in our material state, we cannot form an adequate opinion of the future destiny of the deceased, nature, reason and revelation alike point out a retribution not of physical enjoyments or torments, but of spiritual delights and sufferings. "Dust returns to dust as it was; and the spirit returns to God who gave it." The body moulders in the grave, decomposes and commingles with its mother earth; but the inner part of man, that which makes immortal rational and accountable beings and which alone is immortal, lives after its departure from the mortal coil, and receives its due share of reward or punishment, according to the verdict of the just Judge, and since the receiver is spiritual, the retribution, too, must be spiritual. It now remains for us to inquire whether future punishment is eternal or only temporal.

Were we hearty advocates of the infallibility dogma we should have nothing to do in matters of faith but to believe, and believe in the enunciation of the Athanasian creed that they who have done good shall go into life ever lasting, but they who have done evil shall go into everlasting fire, without end. And strange to say, even many of those, who are not prone, as that misery woman, on their death bed to blow out an inch of candle because they can see to die in the dark, but prefer to live in light, who make ample use of the light of reason, still insist that the wicked are to be punished in the world to come "not for one minute, not for one day, not for one age, not for millions of ages, one after the other, but forever and ever, without any end at all, and never, never be delivered." And all this, they assert, is in consonance with reason and revelation. But let us see whether there be any truth in this statement. In the first place it is averred that scripture teaches interminable retribution. The question therefore arises, do the terms eternal, everlasting and forever convey such an idea? The first instance where we meet one of these terms is in Gen. 13: 15, "All this land which thou seest, will I give to thee and to thy seed forever." Now were this term forever, synonymous with the word endless, even the strict believer in the Bible should be forced to admit that this promise was not fulfilled. The land, in this passage, conveyed to Abraham and his seed forever, has been for a long time alienated from Israel. Hence, then, it must be allowed that forever means for a long space of time.

In the 18th chapter of the same book we read a similar promise. "I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou sojournest, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession." For the reason just given with reference to the meaning of the term, forever, everlasting must be classed

along with it, as expressing long, but not interminable duration.

The same meaning should be ascribed to the term eternal. Except when applied to God, all these three terms convey an idea of indefinite, long periods which, however, have an end as well as they had a beginning. If these terms, in general, imply that there will be an end, when applied to the punishment of the wicked, they must express the same idea, unless explicitly stated otherwise, or reasons given for considering them in a broader sense,—we must therefore examine the exegetical side of the question.

All believers in the immortality of the soul must admit that the departure of the spirit from the body, is a step towards a higher, a better sphere; but, some say, the soul of the wicked is to endure endless punishment—that is it will never reach a more perfect state than which it has held during its earthly career. We are therefore naturally led to inquire, why? Is God able to perfect that soul, but unwilling; or is He willing, but unable? There is no believer in revealed religion who does not ascribe to God the attribute of omnipotence. All professors of religion attribute to God unlimited power. Consequently we must believe that God is able to save the soul of the wicked; but as some insist that the sinner is to suffer endlessly, they must necessarily admit that God has no desire to save the wicked from perdition, then it follows that there is no actual mercy shown to the strayed ones. Wherefore, we ask, wherein is, in such a procedure, manifested the endless mercy of God, in which all profess to believe? Imagine the sick man approaching the hour of dissolution. The minister is sent for. He comes, and kneeling at the bedside invokes the merciful Father of mankind to send heavenly balm to the wretched sufferer. By this act both the priest and the patient manifest their belief in the great attribute of mercy and omnipotence of God. But hardly does the last "amen" die away from the supplicant's lips, and the doomed spirit leaves its tenement of clay, and all mercy is denied. God has set his face against the departed spirit, and ordered it to hell forever, "never, never to be released." Is God merciful only to the material body, but stern in a different relation to the liberated soul which is formed of his own essence? Why should this immortal hope for mercy die with the death of the body? But it may be objected, the eminent judge on the bench would not sentence the remorseful criminal to imprisonment for life or to the gallows, were he not guided by justice. To this it may fairly be answered that the sentence of interminable punishment is not in accordance with the sense of human justice. The lecturer emphasized human justice, for there is no expressed declaration that the terms used in connection with future retribution mean actual endlessness, and we are constrained to seek its true meaning in reason, and reason tells us that there is no justice in endless punishment for a span of sinful existence. "The days of our years in this life are seventy years, and by uncommon vigor they are eighty years." From this number deduct the period of innocent childhood and unconscious sleep, and all that remains will be, say, 40 years. Now, suppose that during these 40 years a man commits no meritorious deed, but is incessantly engaged in following the evil inclinations of his corrupt heart—an hypothesis as groundless as it is revolting to the human mind—he steals and murders and commits all the heinous crimes imaginable; in short, for a continual course of 40 years a man is a moral and religious apostate, a true and unmitigated rebel against the laws of God and humanity—still it is not compatible with the sense of human justice to subject him to ceaseless torments, as Edwards says, "forever and ever, without any end at all." Not a thousand times no! If God is indeed omnipotent, just and merciful as we believe him to be, he can and will save the soul of the wicked. Justice tempered with mercy will impel omnipotence to release the sinful spirit from the torments of consciousness, shame and remorse, will gather in the strayed ones, heal the desecrated, and direct them all to their final destiny, perfection.

HELL AND PERDITION.

A Rabbi's View of the Future.

SUBSTANCE OF THREE LECTURES DELIVERED BY REV. S. MENDELSSOHN.

[CONTINUED FROM OUR LAST.]

But here steps in the bigot and interrupts our progress. Hold! there, hold! cries he. You have carried us far enough, and I can let you go no farther. I admit, says he, that I believe as little in a material hell as yourself. But in order to impress the mind of the illiterate masses, I, not being able to picture a spiritual hell, am constrained to draw dark and dismal portraits of a material one. Indocinate the belief that the world to come has no fire in store, and that even your hell of love is only a temporary abode for the wicked, and the immeasurable space of the universe will not suffice to accommodate all evil. Break down our institutions of justice, remove the equitable judge from the bench, discharge our police force from the streets, shut up the jails, destroy the penitentiaries, overthrow the gallows, and, O, what an unsafe place this earth would be, at least for the good and the upright! Sin and iniquity will flourish, while piety and justice will wither. It is true, I frankly admit, that a "lake of fire and brimstone" for the future habitation of

departed sinners, is not to be discovered either in nature, or in revelation, or in reason; but I am forced to adopt this manner of preaching, tending as it does to restrain, at least in a measure, the evil inclinations of men. The doctrine of a fiery hell terrifies the ignorant, and keeps him in check. Thus argues the bigot.

The semi-philosopher believes that, although to impute the doctrine of a lake of fire and brimstone is inexpedient, and perhaps unwise, he must nevertheless proclaim eternal punishment. And this is his argument: "There are a great many miseries which nothing but death can give relief to. This puts an end to the sorrows of the afflicted and oppressed; it sets the prisoners at liberty; it dries up the tears of the widows and the fatherless; it eases the complaint of the hungry and the naked; it tames the proudest tyrant; and puts an end to all our labors. And the contemplation of death supports men under their present adversities, especially when they have a prospect of a better life after this." Should we now make all people believe, as we do, that the punishment in the hereafter is not eternal, but temporal; that the spiritual sufferings of the wicked last but for a certain time, at the expiration of which the banished soul is recalled to the presence of its merciful Master and to the enjoyment of eternal bliss,—people will say, well, why lead a life of sorrow and woe within the narrow limits circumscribed by the stringent laws of religion and morality, all for the doubtful chances of deserving a direct passage from earth to heaven, if after all we are not to suffer the torments of the future eternally? A bird in the cage is worth two in the bush! We prefer enjoying life here, and run the risk of a few months' punishment.

The lecturer thought that if the arguments were offered merely as an apology for the endeavor to promulgate the above views, he would not interfere, but constantly think of the following anecdote: The Duke Ormond, a model of politeness, feeling himself dying, turned to a German Baron, also an exceedingly polite gentleman, and said, "Excuse me, sir, if I should make some grimaces in your presence, for my physicians tell me that I am on the point of death." "Ah, my Lord Duke," replied the Baron, "I beg you will not put yourself under any restraint on my account." But the argument is quoted in order to induce others to preach what they themselves do not believe, but which, in their opinion, is restraining the evil inclinations of human nature; he therefore would furnish a reply. Nor would he coin separate answers.—Both reason on the same principle, that the doctrine of eternal hell is a necessary evil, and this he does not believe. As future events can be fully prejudged by observing the past, so the government of the spiritual world might be pictured in that of the material one, he would with the statesman, legislator and educator of the youth, inquire, are men in the state of society kept in better order by severity and fear than by mildness and indulgence?

Here the speaker quoted some historical facts upon which ethnologists base their opinion that severity is a better reformer than indulgence, but which, in his opinion were extraordinary in almost all their circumstances, and therefore considered as exceptions to the general rule. In all cases death and dishonor stared the might be culprit in the face. A general survey, however, of the characteristics of the passions leads to an entirely different conclusion. He thinks that under constant severity people become hardened, and nature rebels. As an instance he gave the circumstances of the first great division of the ancient Israelitish monarchy. After the death of King Solomon, a delegation of Israelites waited on the heir apparent and besought him to be gentler than his father. They proposed that he should make lighter the yoke which his predecessor had put upon them; for which boon they would be better affected to him, and serve under his moderate government out of love rather than fear. Rehoboam did not at once furnish his ultimatum to the delegates, but requested three days' time for consideration. A council of his father's friends advised him to accede to the modest request of the people. "If thou wilt this day—argued his veteran counsellors—be a servant unto this people, and wilt serve them, and be attentive to them, and speak to them good words: then will they be servants unto thee for all time." But the ambitious Prince rejected this good and wholesome advice; and when the delegation returned for an answer, he addressed them harshly, saying, "That his little finger should be thicker than his father's loins; that if they had met with hard treatment from his father, they should meet rougher usage from him; and that if his father had chastised them with whips, they must expect that he would do it with scorpions." This address so incensed the people that they foresook their lawful prince and raised a late exile to the throne.

On the other hand what made Alexander's followers so obedient to him: was it fear or was it indulgence? His history answers emphatically: It was his indulgent spirit which fastened to him all his subjects. Rollin says, "Alexander was dear to others, because they were sensible he was beforehand

with them in affection. This circumstance made the soldiers strongly desirous to please him, and fired them with intrepidity; hence they were always ready to execute his orders, though attended with the greatest difficulties and dangers; this made them submit patiently to the greatest hardships and threw them into the deepest affliction, whenever they happened to give him any room for discontent."

Judging from this standard we must arrive at the conclusion that fear will not effect the good which indulgence might; and that severity will animate people to rise in rebellion, while mildness will bring man to reason and submission. And if we apply this conclusion to the question at issue, it must be perceived that from natural events, from infallible history it cannot be inferred that preaching of eternal hell would restrain the free exercise of the evil inclinations of the human heart; hence it follows that the pious fraud, the doctrine of interminable torments in the future is not a necessary evil.—Dr. Mendelssohn thinks that, while the hell question is unduly one of the most terrific themes for the preacher, it is for the pulpit something like Ireland, in Moore's opinion "it is the fairest country in the world—to live out of"—And reason supports this conclusion. In the first place, such a doctrine is apt to create bad opinions of human nature. It may lead us to believe that there is no actual piety in the world. Since the man who does not commit crime, simply because he is afraid of being detected and severely punished, is certainly no honest man; if we were taught to believe that all men are restrained from executing their criminal designs by the fear of being detected, we should also believe every man to be dishonest at heart. And so also may we be induced to respect the motives of the truly godly man: we may imagine that one is not an infidel, simply because his minister told him that there is a lake of fire and brimstone awaiting the unbeliever; that one is charitable, simply because the priest told him that the uncharitable will go to eternal perdition. Such a belief would lead to serious consequences. Men would lose confidence in each others integrity, and the wheel of society would stop. Virtue would no longer be viewed as virtue, since it would, accordingly be thought that each virtuous act is prompted by the expectation of reward, or the desire to avert punishment; and make us believe that all good is actuated by selfishness. And if we suspect the motive we condone the act. And to judge in this manner is to judge falsely. The Indian, for instance, believes in a future state to be one of rewards and punishments, and not of punishment. Yet no one can assert that the Indian is not virtuous in his way. He avoids crime because he believes it crime, and not because he fears the torments of eternal hell. The Hindoo's idea, again, of the future is the counter part of the Indian's. He views the idea of immortality with terror, and the most cherished wish of the Brahmin was to cease to exist as an individual being. Still the Hindoo is undoubtedly virtuous in his way.

In the next place, the doctrine of eternal punishment appears rather as an incentive to the thoughtful to avail themselves of every opportunity for purchasing pleasure, even at the expense of virtue. We well know that there is no human being infallible or impeccable. Now, if one were to believe that for the sins he had committed in the past, or for those he may commit in the future, small or great, numerous or not, (since we are not told how much a man may sin and not be doomed to eternal perdition) despite his earnest desire to do good, he shall be punished eternally,—he might doff the mantle of reserve and commit sin "with a high hand." But the generality of men are trying to do good for the sake of the good, and avoid the evil because it is evil. Simply because he considers virtue its own reward, and vice its own avenger, he chooses the good and avoids the evil.

The Rabbi concluded by summing up all the points discussed in the entire series, which are, first, that the original idea of a hell is pagan; 2d, that the punishment of the wicked is not eternal, but temporal; and 4th and finally, that the doctrine of an eternal hell is not only not a necessary evil, but rather a dangerous doctrine. That the pulpit ought not to terrify us with phantoms of its own creation; but teach the masses to despise crime because it is crime, and love virtue for its own sake. That it is the duty of the religious teacher to indoctrinate, not the belief in the torments of the devil, which make us fear the last moment of our earthly existence; but teach of a God of mercy and justice, so that the ignorant as well as the philosopher might look forward to the close of his pilgrimage on this planet without a shudder, and be "Taught half by reason, half by decay. To welcome death, and calmly pass away."

The Jewish burial ground at Berlin, fifty years ago, and which it was supposed would be sufficient for one hundred and fifty years, has to be closed, it being quite full. Fifty years ago the Jewish population amounted to about 4,000 souls. It now numbers 45,564 souls. Ground for a new cemetery will have to be purchased, which will entail a very heavy outlay, as ground in the neighborhood of Berlin is exceedingly dear.

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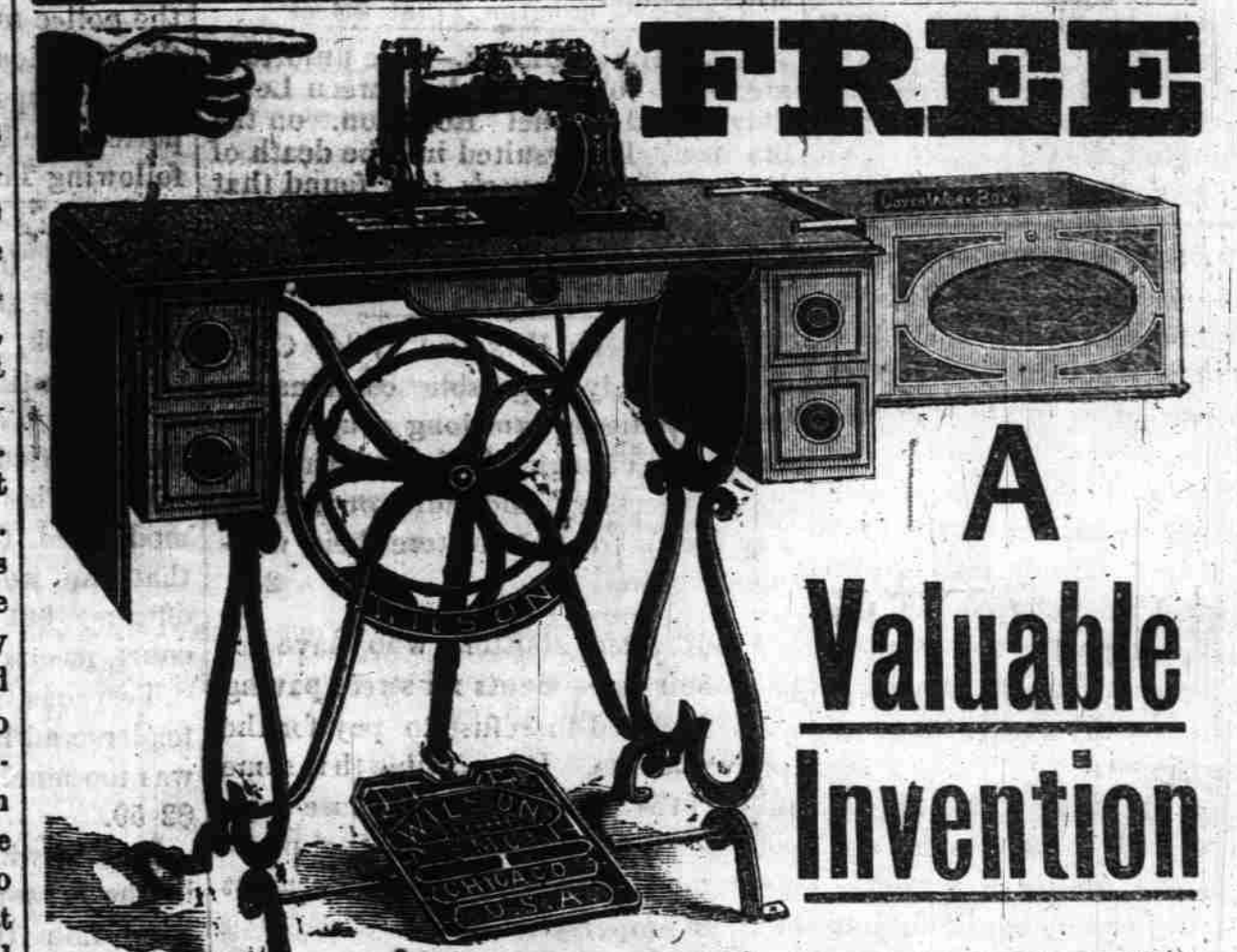
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