

**LAW AND PENALTY ENDLESS, IN AN
ENDLESS UNIVERSE: SHOWING THE
PROBABLE ORIGIN
OF SIN, AND THE REASONABLENESS OF
ENDLESS PUNISHMENT FROM THE LIGHT
OF NATURE**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649626090

Law and Penalty Endless, in an Endless Universe: Showing the Probable Origin of Sin, and the Reasonableness of Endless Punishment from the Light of Nature by John P. Gulliver

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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JOHN P. GULLIVER

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SHOWING THE PROBABLE

ORIGIN OF SIN,

—AND—

*THE REASONABLENESS OF ENDLESS PUNISHMENT
FROM THE LIGHT OF NATURE.*

By E. W. Cook

WITH

AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY,

BY

REV. JOHN P. GULLIVER, D. D.



1878.

Godfrey & Crandall, Publishers and Printers,
Milwaukee, Wis.
Fairbanks & Co., Chicago.

Request of
Prof. J. H. Hayes
March 20, 1902
(977)

Entered according to Act of Congress in the year of our Lord 1873,
BY GODFREY & CRANDALL,
in the office of the Librarian of Congress, at Washington.

To the Reader.

This book is an attempt to grapple with the most difficult problems of Evangelical Theology, the principal one of which is indicated by the title. It is the condensed result of many years of independent thinking, by one who has felt these difficulties in their full force, and discloses the process by which his own mind has found satisfaction. It contains, moreover, the outline of a complete theological system—a plan of the universe, claiming to comprehend within itself the main facts both of reason and revelation in harmonious combination; and will be found especially attractive to all who are interested in theological investigation. As such it is commended to your careful perusal.

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Preface.

Multitudes, in the church and out of it, regard the doctrine of Endless Punishment as intrinsically absurd, and hence conclude that the Bible does not teach it. With such the Scripture argument is powerless; the matter being wholly prejudged and decided before the Bible is reached.

To meet the case of such, it seems desirable that an argument be constructed outside of the Bible, showing the possibility at least, and even the reasonableness, of Endless Punishment from the light of nature; for if the doctrine be shown to be *possible*, its unreasonableness cannot be demonstrated; and if shown to be *reasonable*, then the way will be cleared, in Christian minds at least, for accepting without question the plain declarations of the Inspired Word.

But more often, perhaps, the difficulty with the doctrine in question in Christian minds, is the impossibility they find of reconciling it with certain unfounded assumptions.

For example—They assume with Chalmers a universe peopled with holy intelligences; and then reason that if the multitude of worlds have been kept in allegiance, ours might have been; and hence its rebellion has been permitted, or not prevented, for wise and benevolent purposes; and therefore, that the punishment of such rebellion cannot be remediless.

Or they assume that all sin might have been prevented by the exertion of Omnipotent Power; and therefore, that endless punishment for it is absurd.

Or that sin originates from the connection of the soul with a physical body; or from temptation by malignant beings; or from the connection of the human race with a depraved ancestor; of all

which arrangements God is the author; so that the occasion of sin might have been prevented; and therefore, that endless punishment for it is absurd.

Or, it is assumed that men have not, in this world, a fair probation.

Therefore, another, and the main design of the work has been, to meet and remove these objections in the minds of *Christians*; the question in its preparation having ever been—Can the doctrine of Endless Punishment be so reconciled with all the facts both of Reason and Revelation, as to become a harmonious element in the Divine administration?

The importance of an unquestioning acceptance of this doctrine on the part of Christian men, cannot be over-estimated. For one thing—If sin against God be not deserving of unlimited penalty, it does not require an infinite atonement; and no reason appears why the Lord Jesus Christ *should* be any more than a created being, or his mission to the world be for any other object than to set men an example of holy living. The doctrines of an Endless Penalty and Vicarious Atonement, must stand or fall together.

Moreover, there can be no proper and sufficient foundation of love to the Redeemer, and no such adoring thoughts of his goodness and mercy as he desires, except as the soul sees and feels the dreadful depth of ruin from which He saves it; so that superficial ideas of the proper penalty of sin are likely to be accompanied with superficial affection, and an imperfect and partial consecration.

Also, with such ideas, it is to be feared there will be no proper and sufficient conviction of the nature and enormity of sin; and no such hatred and loathing of it as corresponds with its true character; and no such effort to be delivered from its contamination as will result in the holiness God desires and commands.

There is danger, too, that the work of the Holy Spirit, in its greatness and preciousness, will be correspondingly undervalued; and the general result be a superficial style of Christian character—if indeed it be Christian at all—unsuited to the wants of the church, and insufficient for the salvation of a perishing world.

If the views advanced respecting the *origin of sin* shall appear novel or even unsatisfactory, let it be remembered, before indulging in severe criticism, that no explanation hitherto given, has commanded the general assent of evangelical men. In these circumstances, it appears that every honest and earnest thinker, who has undertaken to grapple with the dark problem of Moral Evil—that "riddle of the universe," or as Dr. Bushnell graphically terms it, "the night side of the creation," should bring forward whatever apparent solution of this difficulty may have occurred to him, in the hope that ere long *some* position may be found on which all good men may harmonize. There is truth respecting the origin of sin, and men will not despair of finding it till the possibilities of human thought have been exhausted.

We bespeak for the doctrinal peculiarities of the work, a generous and manly criticism; hoping that the admirable principle of Prof. Shedd will be remembered and acted upon "Towards the opinions and theories of the present, so far as they vary from those of the past, the historical mind is inquisitive and critical and skeptical, not for the purpose, be it remembered, of proving them to be false, but with the generous hope of evincing them to be true."

Should this general view of Christian doctrine be accepted, the hope is indulged that it will help to harmonize conflicting theological sentiment, and lead to a more hearty union of feeling and effort among all evangelical men. May the Great Head of the Church bless it to the advancement of his Kingdom.