

**EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT:  
LECTURES DELIVERED AT ST.  
JAMES'S CHURCH, PICCADILLY,  
ON THE SIX FIRST SUNDAYS  
AFTER TRINITY, IN THE YEAR 1880**

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Everlasting Punishment: Lectures Delivered at St. James's Church, Piccadilly, on the Six First Sundays After Trinity, in the Year 1880 by Edward Meyrick Goulburn

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**EDWARD MEYRICK GOULBURN**

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**EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT.**

# Everlasting Punishment

## LECTURES

DELIVERED AT ST. JAMES'S CHURCH, PICCADILLY,  
ON THE SIX FIRST SUNDAYS AFTER TRINITY,  
IN THE YEAR 1880.

BY

EDWARD MEYRICK GOULBURN, D.D.

DEAN OF NORWICH.

"Ye have . . . strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life."—Ezek. xiii. 22.

Τίλος δὲ τῆς ἀσελευτήτου καλίσματος ἐφαλέθησαν, ἀλλὰ τοῦτο παράληψτε πρὸς ἁμαρτίαν πάντων καὶ ἀνάγκη. "And they" [Origen and other heretics] "determined that there would be an end to the punishment which endeth not, this being another incitement to every kind of sin and ruin."—(From the account given by Photius of the Acts of the Fifth General Council, held under Justinian, 553.)

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## PREFACE.



IN making my very humble contribution to a great controversy (which I have done, not from any sort of attraction to the subject, but simply in the interests of what I conceive to be divine truth, and truth which, whether *de fide* or not, has certainly a very momentous practical bearing), I wish to define the exact position which I attempt, as best I can, to defend in these Sermons. It is simply that there is nothing in God's attributes or purpose (so far as it is given us to know them), which is irreconcilable with the everlasting punishment of the wicked and ungodly, and that the true relief from difficulties on the subject is to be found, not in calling in question either the eternity of the punishment, or the immortality of the subjects of it, but in other notices

of Holy Scripture respecting its different degrees, its exact pursuance of a moral law, and so forth. With no collateral topic have I sought to deal, except in the way of occasionally glancing at it. Thus, I have not entered into the question whether, after death, those who have died in the faith of Christ and fear of God may not be the subjects of moral progress and enlightenment. To me it appears almost certain that they will and must, and it is here that I seem to see an escape from the difficulty which arises, when we think of that vast number of persons who, while we cannot deny to them genuine religious principle, yet manifest faults of temper and conduct, which seem to make them unmeet for Heaven. *They are not taken to Heaven at once, but to Paradise*, where we may well conceive that, in a far closer communion with the Saviour and His saints than it was possible for them to enjoy here below, "delivered from the burden of the flesh," and from the manifold temptations which are involved in a sojourn in the flesh, the spirit is gradually purified, trained, disciplined,



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illuminated, and so made far meeter than it was, at the moment of its exit from the body, for that "inheritance of the saints in light," which the solemn sentence of the last day, "Come, ye blessed," is eventually to call it into. I entirely share the feeling, which is now so commonly avowed, that Protestants have not given that prominence to the doctrine of the intermediate, as distinct from the ultimate, state, which Scripture so clearly asserts, and the assertion of which is quite necessary to exhibit in full symmetry and significance the orthodox Catholic doctrine of the Last Things. At the same time, I entirely fail to see how, compatibly with the ideas called up in the mind by the word "Paradise," purgatorial suffering can be supposed to be an ingredient in the illumination and sanctification, which are characteristic of the intermediate state of the righteous; and if I am asked my interpretation of "the fire" which "shall try every man's work, of what sort it is," and of the being "saved so as by fire,"<sup>1</sup> I can only answer that

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. iii. 13, 15.

I suppose the fire to be the searching judgment of God, which, at the last great day, will be applied to each man's character, and make manifest whether it had in it, or not, the faith in God, which is a principle of permanence, and which connects the soul with God and the unseen world, or whether the things, which are seen and are temporal, exhausted its interests and ambitions ; whether, in short, it was "gold, silver, precious stone," on the one hand, or "wood, hay, stubble," on the other.<sup>1</sup> But, while the idea of moral progress in the intermediate state, *for*

<sup>1</sup> See 1 Cor. iii. 12, 15.—After careful consideration of this difficult passage, I have come to the conclusion of Dean Alford upon it, that "what is said does not refer, except by accommodation, to the religious life of believers in general ; but to the DUTY AND REWARD OF TEACHERS." Only, I would propose to add to this, that the "gold, silver, hay, stubble," etc., are, in the first instance, not so much "the matter of the ministers' teaching," as real and nominal Christians themselves. St. Paul had "laid the foundation" at Corinth, by preaching Christ there before any other had done so. Succeeding teachers built on to the foundation which he had laid. And what he seems to say to them is ; "Do not glory in the number of the adherents you have won to Christ. What is their quality? Are they of true sterling worth? Will they stand the searching judgment of God (which is as fire) at the last day? Will that fire show them to be solid or perishable material?"

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*those who have gone out of life penitent and believing, entirely approves itself to me, I am unable to see in Holy Scripture any traces of such a thing as a second probation beyond the grave for those who have passed away without penitence and faith, while they have enjoyed life-long opportunities for the exercise of those graces. The difficult passage in St. Peter's first Epistle, respecting the preaching of Christ to the spirits in prison,<sup>1</sup> is often appealed to as holding out, at all events, a prospect and a possibility of renewed offers of grace and mercy to those who have been in this life disobedient. But when it is considered that great divines like Bishop Pearson<sup>2</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> 1 Pet. iii. 18-20.

<sup>2</sup> Pearson even alleges this text (1 Peter iii. 18, 19, 20), as one proof of Christ's pre-existence before His birth of the Virgin. "Christ was really before the flood, for he preached to them that lived before it; and at the creation of the world, for he created it. That he preached to those before the flood is evident by the words of St. Peter, who saith, that *Christ was put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit; by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing.* From which words it appeareth that Christ preached by the same spirit by the virtue of which he