

**THE DOCTRINE OF LAST THINGS
CONTAINED IN THE NEW
TESTAMENT COMPARED WITH THE
NOTIONS OF THE JEWS AND THE
STATEMENTS OF CHURCH CREEDS**

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The Doctrine of Last Things Contained in the New Testament Compared with the Notions of the Jews and the Statements of Church Creeds by Samuel Davidson

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SAMUEL DAVIDSON

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THE
DOCTRINE OF LAST THINGS

CONTAINED

IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

COMPARED WITH

*THE NOTIONS OF THE JEWS AND THE
STATEMENTS OF CHURCH CREEDS*

BY

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LONDON

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1882

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"As religion implies a future state, any presumption against this is a presumption against religion."—BUTLER.

"God created man to be immortal, and made him to be an image of his own eternity."—*Wisdom*.

"Be thou not curious how the ungodly shall be punished, and when; but inquire how the righteous shall be saved."—*a Esdras*.

"Hope humbly, then; with trembling pinions soar;
Wait the great teacher, Death; and God adore.
What future bliss he gives not thee to know,
But gives that hope to be thy blessing now.
Hope springs eternal in the human breast;
Man never is, but always to be, blest.
The soul uneasy, and confined at home,
Rests and expatiates in a world to come."

POPE.

"Kein Verzug und keine Unbegreiflichkeit der allgemeinen Weltvollendung darf die Hoffnungs-Seligkeit des Christen stören. Denn nicht allein wird jedem, dem in Tode die Welt vergehet, seine Persönlichkeit erhalten, wofür der heilige Geist die volle Bürgschaft leistet, sondern auch jeder, der in dem Herrn stirbt (Offenb. xiv. 13), tritt mit ihm sofort in eine nähere und freiere Gemeinschaft (Phil. i. 23; Offenb. xiv. 1), und wird überhaupt zu einem neuen und zu einem vollkommeneren Dasein erhoben, nur dass sich dieser Zustand zu dem, den das Ende der Welt erst gewähren kann, wie ein Zwischenzustand verhält, und selbst eine grosse Mannichfaltigkeit von Wo und Wie des Daseins in sich schliesst."—NITZSCH.

"Eine Wiederbringung aller Dinge kann für uns nur die Vorstellung enthalten, dass auch die, welche sich im irdischem Leben vom Ziele ihrer Bestimmung weit verirrt, doch unter den Leiden der künftigen Vergeltung den Rückweg zur Vollkommenheit finden sollen."—BRETSCHNEIDER.

"Keiner, auch der grösste Bösewicht, ist rein böse und der Gnade Gottes unfähig; die Herrschaft des Bösen soll ewig vernichtet werden, aber keine menschliche Seele kann, weil sie Gott geschaffen, ewig untergehen."—DE WETTE.

PREFACE.

THE present treatise is the expansion of an essay written a few years ago. The author, however, has still aimed at brevity, without neglecting anything of moment connected with eschatology. Little is known of man's future, and little can be known now. We may draw imaginary pictures of it; but that is of little use. Our practical life is in the present, and the present shapes the future. Church creeds have been too dogmatic and definite about future things, on the ground of scattered passages in the Bible which refuse to be pressed within the bands of a system. If the sacred writers pro-

jected their ideas into the future in different ways, all implying deficient knowledge, the understanding should not be exercised in constructing a harmonious view out of elements that disagree. It is important to remember, that our condition in the next world depends upon character in this. Destiny is determined by the unison of our moral nature with the Divine will or the reverse. Happiness is the necessary consequence of goodness. If violence be done to the conscience, unhappiness follows. Moral is as immutable as physical law.

It is hoped that this endeavour of the author's to bring together the ideas which the Biblical writers express respecting man's future and to estimate their value, as also his comparison of them with the creeds of Churches, may be of interest to inquirers. He has not thought it necessary to give the opinions of the fathers at length, because of their small value and the differences among them. The theologians who make