

THE ATONEMENT OF CHRIST AND THE FINAL DESTINY OF MAN.

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CHAPTER I.

THE MISSION OF CHRIST. ITS OBJECT, DURATION, AND FINAL RESULTS.

The Bible comes to us purporting to contain a revelation of God's will to man, and the first words which God spake, as recorded in that book, are:

Let there be light.—Genesis 1:3.

This harmonizes beautifully with the nature of our Creator, as described by the Apostle John:

God is light and in him is no darkness at all.—1 John 1:5.

Our Savior said, in speaking of himself:

I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.—John 8:12.

Light, then, physical and spiritual, comes from God, the source of all light, as a blessing to man. This being true, the nearer we approach unto this divine light, "the true light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world," the more like God we become; and if we ever attain to a fullness of this light, then "we shall be like him."

In this earthly life we can hardly hope to attain unto a fullness of this great light of God, in all its effulgence, for the inspired Paul has said:

O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!—Romans 11:33.

But while mortal man may not be able to comprehend *all* the light of God, it being "unsearchable" and "past finding out," yet our heavenly Father has been pleased to give unto us sufficient light to fill our hearts with "joy unspeakable and full of glory." From the rays of heavenly light which

the Lord has been pleased to turn upon our pathway, we have learned, with gratitude and delight, that God's love for erring humanity is as unbounded and as far beyond the comprehension of finite minds as God's wisdom and knowledge are.

In fact, the same apostle who tells us that "God is light," also tells us, "God is love."—1 John 4: 8. And the Apostle Paul, bowing "unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," and offering unto him a prayer in behalf of the Saints at Ephesus, "with all Saints," incidentally refers to the infinite love of the Christ, in these words:

That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which *passeth knowledge*,* that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God.—Ephesians 3: 17-19.

The wisdom, knowledge, judgments, and ways of the Lord are "past finding out"; his love for erring humanity is fully equal, in its breadth and length and depth and height, to his wisdom or his knowledge, as it "passeth understanding"; hence the plans and purposes of God, "which he hath purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Ephesians 3: 11) for the salvation of the human family, must be so grounded in, and so permeated and glorified by wisdom, knowledge, and love, as to confirm the truth of what I have just quoted: "God is light"; "God is love." Any system or theory regarding the atonement of Christ, which presents him in a different light from this, does not rightly represent God, as he is presented to us in the Bible; and that which does not rightly represent God, who is "the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him," could not have originated with him and, therefore, could not be his plan for the salvation of the human family. His plan for the salvation of the race must be the very best that infinite love could suggest; it must

*All italics and capitals in quotations in this work are put there by the author, for the purpose of calling special attention to the words so marked, but with no intention of changing the meaning of the author quoted.—I. M. S.

be the very best that infinite wisdom and knowledge could devise; and, besides this, its "author and finisher" must be endowed with infinite power: power to "put all enemies under his feet"; power to "destroy him that had the power of death"; power to "destroy the works of the Devil"; power to bring to pass all that was "purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord," "reconcile all things unto himself," and finally, "when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power," to deliver "up the kingdom to God, even the Father."

Has the Savior such power? Listen:

All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth.—Matthew 28:18.

I am he that liveth, and was dead, and, behold, I am alive for evermore, amen: and have the keys of hell and of death.—Revelation 1:18.

Yes, he has "all power," both "in heaven and on earth"; and he has "the keys," that is, he has the power or authority "of hell and of death." Could you ask anything more? Numerous texts might be quoted testifying of his power; but these are sufficient.

There are other attributes of our Savior, however, that must not be overlooked. Justice, mercy, goodness, grace, and truth, are essential elements of his character, and they should be so recognized in our search for light on this subject.

Of his truth, it is said:

I am . . . the truth.—John 14:6.

The spirit is truth.—1 John 5:6.

Thy word is truth.—John 17:17.

He is declared to be "the habitation of justice," the "father of mercies," and "full of grace"; and, as to his goodness, it is so peculiar to him, so exclusively his, that it is declared to be the special attribute in the Divine character which leads men "to repentance." (See Romans 2:4.) *Repent*

Hence in our search for light, on this and all other religious subjects we should keep in mind this thought: Justice, mercy, grace, truth, and goodness are essential elements in the divine character; and any system or plan which he has purposed or desired for the salvation of the

race, must reflect infinite justice, mercy, grace, truth, and goodness, as well as infinite love, wisdom, knowledge, and power.

Many theories have been advanced in regard to the final destiny of man; but, as a rule, those theories have been too narrow, and have limited either the power of God or his goodness. But for all that, they have done good, no doubt, by stimulating thought and causing people to read the Bible more closely than they had done before. Believing that free exchange of thought is calculated to help the masses reach correct conclusions, I contribute my mite towards this end.

The final destiny of man is so closely connected with, and so dependent upon, the atonement made by the Savior, that I find it necessary to discuss the two subjects together; or what is better, perhaps, consider them as one subject. And in the investigation of this subject I shall appeal to the scriptures, believing that they, if properly interpreted and rightly understood, will enlighten our minds in regard to the purposes of God, and enable us to reach correct conclusions in regard to the final destiny of the human family.

The Apostle Paul, one of the writers of the New Testament, says:

For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.—Romans 15:4.

And again he says:

If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.—1 Corinthians 15:19.

From the foregoing we learn that the scriptures were written "for our learning," in order to give us "hope," and that if this "hope" is confined exclusively to "this life," it would make us the "most miserable" of "all men." Jesus said:

Search the scriptures: for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.—John 5:39.

And searching those scriptures, both old and new, we learn that the mission of our Savior into this world is so comprehensive in its designs, so far-reaching in its final

results, as to warrant us in having "hope" for man, even after this earth life has ended.

This "hope" is not confined to the few who have had the privilege of hearing and obeying the gospel in this life, but it is extended unto the millions who have not been blessed, during this earth life, with an opportunity of hearing the "glad tidings of great joy."

It is generally conceded by Bible believers that all things connected with this world, including man, were in some way created by Christ; but that they were created expressly *for him* and for *his pleasure* is not so universally believed. Many entertain the idea, seemingly at least, that a goodly portion of the human family were created for the Devil, and that instead of contributing to the pleasure of their Creator, their agony and hopeless despair will amuse, entertain, and gratify the pleasure of his Satanic Majesty during the long and tedious ages of a never-ending eternity. The men who wrote the Bible, however, had a different understanding of this matter; and as we believe them to have been inspired by the Spirit that guides into all truth, the chosen instruments of the Almighty to declare his will unto man, we shall appeal to them for light on this subject. Paul, one of those inspired writers, tells us:

For by him were all things created, that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible, and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him.—Colossians 1 : 16.

Again he tells us:

For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things.—Hebrews 2 : 10.

These texts teach us that all things were created *for Christ*, and that they *are for him*; and they teach us this just as clearly and as positively as they teach us that all things were made *by him*. And if I am to believe that they were created *by him* then I must believe that they were created *for him*, and that they *are* "for him." The "all things" referred to here are evidently all created things, this heaven and this earth with all they contain; for we are told in another place:

All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.—John 1:3.

Some things, as the Father and the Holy Spirit, were not created at all, had no beginning, and therefore are not to be included in the all things that were created by him and for him; but all those things that “were made” are certainly included. Why he created all these things “for him,” is revealed to us, in part, in this outburst of praise, ascribed to the four and twenty elders:

Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.—Revelation 4:11.

They were created *for God's pleasure*. If we can learn from the inspired volume what his pleasure *is*, in regard to man, it will help us in our further investigation. We appeal to the Prophet Ezekiel this time, asking him to tell us what the Lord's pleasure is regarding the wicked; and he gives us an answer, in the Lord's own words:

Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord God: and not that he should return from his ways, and live? . . . For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God.—Ezekiel 18:23, 32.

As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live.—Ezekiel 33:11.

As sure as God lives, dear reader, just that sure he has no pleasure in the death of even the wicked; but he does take pleasure in seeing them turn from their wicked ways and live. That his pleasure will be done is proven by the following:

For I am God, and there is none else: I am God, and there is none like me, declaring the end from the beginning, . . . saying. My counsel shall stand, and I will do *all my pleasure*.—Isaiah 46:9, 10.

This tells us emphatically that he will do *all* his pleasure; and as his pleasure is in seeing the wicked turn from his way and live, and not in his death, we are certainly justified in believing that the time will come when all the wicked shall turn and do that which is right that they may live. There is great rejoicing in heaven, we are told, over the repentance of

even one sinner; and if the reformation of one sinner causes such great joy among the angels, what a grand shout will go up from the heavenly host when "all the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord."—Psalm 22:27. That this is his will, his "will" being the same as his "pleasure," we learn from the following texts:

The Lord is not slack concerning his promises, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that *all should come to repentance*.—2 Peter 3:9.

Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.—Matthew 18:14.

For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.—John 6:38, 39.

All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.—John 6:37.

Please remember now that "all things were created by him and for him," and that "for thy pleasure they are and were created," and that will help you to undersand why he is "not willing that any should perish." why he is not willing that "one of these little ones should perish." It will also help you to understand why he wills that "all should come to repentance," and that the Savior "should lose nothing" of all that had been given him. The last text quoted, however, tells us that "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me," and hence, to know how many "shall come" to him, we must know how many "the Father giveth" him; and of this the Savior says:

All things are delivered unto me of my Father.—Matthew 11:27.

The Father loveth the Son, and hath given *all things* into his hand.—John 3:35.

John says:

Jesus knowing that the Father had given *all things* into his hand.—John 13:3.

Paul says that God

Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed *heir of all things*, by whom also he made the worlds.—Hebrews 1:2.

"All things were created by him and for him"; he is

“appointed heir of all things”; “all things are delivered unto” him, given into his hands, by the Father; and, as “all that the Father giveth me shall come to me,” the time will surely come when

All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.—Psalm 22: 27.

All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord: and shall glorify thy name.—Psalm 86: 9.

It has been contended by some, however, that God’s will is not always done; and the proof for that position is something like this: “God wills that all men should be honest and truthful, all men are not honest and truthful, therefore God’s will is not always done.” Granted. God’s will is not always done, *now*. No one contends that it is, so far as I know. If the Lord’s will had always been done, the Savior would not have come down from heaven to “call sinners to repentance”; neither would there have been any necessity for the atonement of Christ, of which I am now writing. It was because God’s will is not always done, that it became necessary for our Savior to undertake to redeem man from his lost condition. But because men often fail to do the will of the Lord, *now*, does not prove that such will always be the case. The Savior told his disciples to pray, “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.” Believing that Jesus would not tell them to pray for that which is never to be realized, I am forced to believe that this prayer will sometime become a reality, and the testimony of Paul confirms me in this belief. Hear what he says:

Being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will.—Ephesians 1: 11.

This tells us that God *works all things after the counsel of his own will*; we are told to pray for his will to be done in the earth, and that he wills that all should come to repentance. Lest this should not be enough to convince some, I quote the following:

For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior;

who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.—1 Timothy 2:3, 4.

Not only will God have them saved (they are saved while in infancy), but they must “come to the knowledge of the truth”; and they can do that only by obedience, for the Savior says:

“If any man will do his will [the will of the Father], he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.—John 7:17.

And again:

If ye continue in my word, . . . ye shall know the truth.—John 8:31, 32.

It is plain, therefore, that he will have all men saved by obedience to the truth, the will of the Father; for they are to be saved and brought to “the knowledge of the truth,” and they can come to “the knowledge of the truth” only when they “do his will,” or when they “continue in my word.”

We are told further that his “eternal purpose” was “purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Ephesians 3:11), and that this same Christ Jesus “came down from heaven” to do “the will” of the Father (John 6:38), and that he did those things that “please him” (John 8:29). Having already learned what that “will” is, and what those things are that “please him,” as regards the human family, we shall expect to find that the mission of our Savior, as revealed to us in the Scriptures, is strictly in harmony with what we have already learned. Let us now turn and examine the mission of Christ into this world, remembering, as we do so, that the “purpose” of the Father is in him, and that the object of his mission is to bring about the “will” and “pleasure” of his Father in the earth. And, as his own testimony is of first importance, I shall introduce it first, and that of his apostles afterward. He says:

For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.—Matthew 18:11.

For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.—Luke 9:56.

I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.—Luke 5:32.

For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.—John 3:17.

For I came not to judge the world, but to save the world.—John 12:47.

The foregoing testimonies of the Savior tell us, first, what he came *not* to do, and then what he came *to do*. He came *not to destroy* men's lives, *not to judge* the world, *not to condemn* the world. He came *to save* men's lives, *to save* that which was lost, *to save* the world, to call *sinners* to repentance. How many? Just as many as the Father wills should come to repentance. Will he succeed?

"Yes," says one, "he will succeed in calling all, but he will not succeed in getting all to repent."

Query: If he came "to do the will" of his Father, and his Father wills that "all should come to repentance," can it truly be said that his work is a success, that he has fully succeeded in executing his Father's "will," until all are brought to the condition required in said "will"? And can it be said that the Father, whose "eternal purpose is in Christ Jesus," has succeeded in working "all things after the counsel of his own will," in the mission of Christ, if that mission fails to accomplish what was "purposed"? If so, I fail to see how. And there is nothing in the testimony of the apostles that will present this matter in a different light from the foregoing. They were inspired by the Spirit of God, and their testimony therefore is the same as that of the Master. Hear them:

In due time Christ died for the ungodly.—Romans 5:6.

This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.—1 Timothy 1:15.

And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.—1 John 2:2.

Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.—1 Timothy 2:6.

He came, then, according to their testimony, to save sinners, to be the propitiation for the sins of *the whole world*, to be a ransom *for all*; and the Prophet Isaiah tells us:

For as the rain cometh down, and the snow, from heaven, and

returneth not thither, . . . so shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it.—Isaiah 55:10, 11.

No, he will not consent to have his word return unto him void. He has said that "it shall accomplish that which I please," and that "it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it"; and the testimonies just quoted, concerning the mission of our Savior into this world, are no exception to the above decree. That mission will "prosper in the thing whereto" it was sent, and it will never end until it has accomplished "that which I please": until that which was "purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord" becomes an accomplished fact. Hence we may expect grand results from it in the "ages to come," ere the Son shall "deliver up the kingdom to God, even the Father." I hardly think we should be considered heretics even if we should believe that he will succeed to such an extent as to have his Father's will "done in earth" as it is now done in heaven.

God is infinite in wisdom, knowledge, power, love, mercy, and justice; and, being unlimited in his resources, he will not permit the Devil to wrench from his hand those things which he created for his own Son, for his own pleasure, and desecrate and set them apart to gratify the pleasure and hatred of his satanic majesty. Man may rebel against God after he is "saved" and brought to "the knowledge of the truth," but he must be brought to this condition, for the Lord hath so declared, and his word can not "return void."

Having briefly examined the mission of Christ concerning man, I shall now examine another part of his mission; that which relates to his enemies. His enemies? Are not the sinners, the wicked, the ungodly, his enemies? Yes, in a certain sense; but he came to reform them and make them his friends, to reconcile them to the will of his Father.

Our children sometimes fail to understand why we require or forbid certain things of them, and rise up in open rebellion against us. They are then, *apparently*, our enemies; but by proper instruction, and chastisement if necessary, they

are brought to see their error, repent of their sin, and become reconciled to obedience.

Just so with sinners. They fail to understand why their heavenly Father requires certain acts of obedience or sacrifice, rebel against his law, and become, *apparently*, his enemies; but they are no more the real enemies of God than the rebellious child is the real enemy of its parent. True, they are in rebellion against God, and will have to learn obedience before they can be saved; but their rebellion is the result of their ignorance of God's law and will concerning them.

It may be argued that as the earthly parent sometimes fails to bring his rebellious child to terms of reconciliation, so our heavenly Father may fail in bringing some of his children to obedience. My answer is this: The earthly parent fails because he is finite, limited as to time, wisdom, and resources, and not able, therefore, to have his will done at all times; but our heavenly Father is infinite in all his attributes,—love, mercy, wisdom, power, etc.,—unlimited in his resources, both as to time and means, and therefore able to work "all things after the counsel of his own will," and to do "all his pleasure." The wicked are in rebellion against God, but they are not his real enemies. His real enemies and their final doom are clearly set before us in his word. Christ did not come to save nor reconcile them. "For he must reign, until he hath put all enemies under his feet" (1 Corinthians 15: 25), is the testimony of the inspired Paul.

Reader; let us now turn to the Bible and look for the enemies of God, and their final condition or doom:

The enemy that sowed them [the tares] is the Devil.—Matthew 13: 39.

The Son of Man, in this parable, is the sower of the good seed, and the Devil is his enemy.

Again:

Because your adversary the Devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.—1 Peter 5: 8.

Not only is he an enemy to God, but he is an adversary to

God's people, and also to the whole human family, "seeking whom he may devour."

Is he one of the real enemies of God? The manner in which Christ's mission is to affect him will answer this question. Here it is:

Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil.—Hebrews 2:14.

Yes, he is a real enemy; for while the mission of Christ was intended to *save* the sinner, it was intended to have just the opposite effect upon the Devil, that is, *destroy* him. But Satan has already had a long time to work, and being very diligent, always on the alert, he has accomplished a great amount of work, which has been very effective in causing men to rebel against God and thus to bring upon themselves misery and death. Now that he is to be destroyed, as we have learned from God's word, we turn our attention to his works and ask the Bible what is to become of them? Will they abide all through eternity, thus defeating the efforts of Christ to save those who have been led captive by the Devil's treachery? Or will they have to share the same fate as their author? The Bible is very plain on this, so plain that there should be no misunderstanding. It says:

For this purpose the Son of God was manifested that he might destroy the works of the Devil.—1 John 3:8.

For what purpose? For the purpose of *destroying the works of the Devil*. What are his works?

Please read the whole verse, 1 John 3:8, and you will find this:

He that committeth sin is of the Devil; for *the Devil sinneth from the beginning*.

The Devil's work is to sin: this has been his work "from the beginning," too. And, as sin is defined as being "the transgression of the law," 1 John 3:4, he is, and has been from the beginning, a transgressor of heaven's law. But this is not all. If he were satisfied with committing sin himself, it would not be so bad; but, from the time he

commenced his work in the Garden of Eden, he has been constantly putting it into the minds and hearts of others to sin, too; hence we may say that his works are to sin and to lead others to sin. The manner in which Christ's mission is to affect sin is very clearly stated by the Apostle Paul:

But now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.—Hebrews 9 : 26.

Christ appeared, then, for the purpose of putting away sin. But sin, like its author, has been getting in its work for the past six thousand years, and has left its dreadful effects upon a goodly portion of the human family, in fact upon all, to some extent. Would you like to know what effect sin has had and is having upon the human family? Let the record answer:

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin.—Romans 5 : 12.

For the wages of sin is death.—Romans 6 : 23.

And sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.—James 1 : 15.

Death, then, is the result or effect of sin. Sin is to be "put away" and its author destroyed.

What is to be done with its effect? Let Paul answer:

The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.—1 Corinthians 15 : 26.

Now when sin is "put away," and its author (the Devil) and its effect (death) "destroyed," will the work be complete? No; there is something else, very closely connected with death, that must go, too. It is called "hell," by the inspired writers, and is associated with death as follows:

And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him.—Revelation 6 : 8.

Death and hell, according to this, go hand in hand, and we would therefore suppose that when the one (death) is destroyed the other could not survive. But we are not left to mere supposition, for the word of God informs us that they will go together. Here is what it says:

And death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire.—Revelation 20 : 13, 14.

Yes; they are to be destroyed together, but they must first deliver up their dead. There are at least two reasons for this: The first is that Christ was "manifest" to "deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."—Hebrews 2:14, 15. This deliverance is to take place about the same time that he is to destroy the Devil. It does not refer to those who have loved him and kept his commandments in this life, for Jesus says of them:

The truth shall make you free.—John 8:32.

John says:

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear.—1 John 4:18.

Those, therefore, who love God and keep his commandments in this life are not in "bondage through fear of death," for they are made free through obedience to the truth, and their perfect love for God has taken away that terrible dread or "fear of death." There are some, however, who are in bondage through fear of death, and that, too, "all their lifetime." They obey not the truth, but are dragged down to hell, where death shall reign over them until the time comes for death and hell to be destroyed, and then they are to be delivered from their bondage, as just quoted.

The second reason for death and hell delivering up their dead at this time is: Death can not be destroyed until it does deliver up its dead. So long as death holds in its icy embrace even one of Adam's posterity, so long it survives and reigns. Therefore, when you tell me that any portion of the human family will never be made free from the law of sin and death, you tell me that sin and death will never be destroyed, but that they will continue not only to exist but to reign all through eternity, and that the mission of Christ, so far as their destruction is concerned, is a failure. But it will not fail, for the Lord has said: "My word . . . shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." His word concerning the destruction of sin and death will be just as prosperous and successful as his word

concerning the salvation of those who believe and obey the gospel in this life.

I shall now bring together the things already learned, so as to have them fresh in mind, and shall then show that the so-called orthodox theory is just the opposite of that taught in the Bible, so far as relates to the work accomplished and the work to be accomplished by Christ for the human family. We have learned just what Christ came to save and just what he came to destroy. He came to "save that which was lost," to "save sinners," to "save men's lives," to "save the world," as a "ransom for all." He came to "destroy the Devil," to "destroy the works of the Devil," to "put away sin," to destroy death, and to cast "death and hell" "into the lake of fire." The orthodox creeds of the day not only make null and void the foregoing, but they reverse or transpose so as to make Christ destroy what he came to save, and save and perpetuate what he came to destroy. They teach us that all those who die in their sins, especially if they have had the gospel preached to them, will spend an endless eternity in hell, where they will be tortured and tormented continually by the Devil and his angels. One writer tells us that "by their repeated acts of sin in this life they get themselves in such a condition that they can never cease to sin." Others tell us there will be no end to their suffering, but that they will spend eternity cursing and blaspheming against God, and reproaching those who are sharing a like fate with themselves; that the Devil will be permitted to torture and torment them all that his wicked ingenuity can devise, and that they can not expire under his cruel torture, but must endure it, worlds without end. Now, if it be true that they can "never cease to sin," but must go on in sin and sinning all through eternity, then part of Christ's mission is a failure; for he came to "put away sin," and it would be impossible for any one to go on in sin if he succeeds in putting away or destroying sin. Sin must remain until all are made free from sin; and so long as it remains, so long Christ's work is unfinished. And if those individuals spend eternity cursing and blaspheming God, then it can not be true that

“all thy works shall praise thee.” (Psalm 145:10.) If the time ever comes that God’s works all praise him, it will be after all have ceased cursing and blaspheming—after they cease to sin, and learn to love and obey their Creator.

We take the murderer, whose hands are stained with the blood of his fellow man, whose coffers are well filled with ill-gotten wealth,—wealth obtained by oppression, falsehood, robbery, and murder; we look at this man in his sins, and pronounce him a hard case indeed. But if we should stop long enough to ask who made him, whose work he is, the answer is ready in that wonderful book, the Bible:

And we all are the work of thy hand.—Isaiah 64:8.

God that made the world and all things therein, . . . hath made of one blood all nations of men.—Acts 17:24-26.

If God made all things in the world, all nations of men, then this man whom we have just noticed was also made by him, and is, therefore, the work of God.

“But,” says the objector, “while it is true that God made this man, it is not true that God made him a sinner.” How then did he make him?

And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good.—Genesis 1:31.

Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright.—Ecclesiastes 7:29.

This man, then, with everything else that God made, was good and upright when he came from the hands of his Creator. But now his heart is filled with evil thoughts and unholy lusts, such as murder, oppression, robbery, hatred, and adultery; and his whole life and character are stained and polluted by acts of violence and cruelty, making him the sinner that he is.

Do you ask who is the author of this sinful disposition? The Bible answers:

The Devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon’s son, to betray him.—John 13:2.

And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the Devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.—2 Timothy 2:26.

But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost.—Acts 5:3.

This makes it clear that it is the Devil who puts it into

men's hearts to sin, and in this way leads them captive by his falsehoods and deceptive enticements. Now we have it clearly set before us that *the sinner, the man*, is the work of God; but *the sin* that now attaches to him, *his sinful disposition*, is the work of the Devil. Christ came to "save sinners" and to "put away sin." Hence, if he hopelessly destroys the sinner, keeping him alive in sin, cursing and blaspheming against God, he destroys the very thing he came to save, the sinner, the work of God, while he saves and perpetuates the very thing he came to destroy, the sin, the work of the Devil. Are you prepared to accept it?

And what is true of "sin" is just as true of "death" and "hell." For it, instead of destroying death, instead of robbing it of its victory, by delivering "them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage"; if the Savior, instead of doing this, should decide to allow death to remain all through eternity, reigning over part of the human family, then he saves and perpetuates "death," which he came to "destroy," while he destroys the victims of death, whom he came to "deliver"—saves death, the work of the Devil; and destroys its victims, the work of God. But he will never do it. "Sin," "death," and "hell," are enemies: they must be "destroyed."

And with this agrees the testimony of the prophet:

Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? he *retaineth not his anger for ever*, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt CAST ALL THEIR SINS INTO THE DEPTHS OF THE SEA.—Micah 7: 18, 19.

He will have compassion on the man; but *subdue his iniquities*; save the sinner; but *destroy his sins*, and also *destroy his sinful disposition*.

CHAPTER 2.

THE POSSIBILITY OF REPENTANCE IN THE WORLD TO COME. IS IT REASONABLE? IS IT SCRIPTURAL?

Having shown that the Devil and all his works; namely, sin, death, and hell, are to be actually destroyed, and that the

works of God, man included, are to be liberated from the grasp of Satan, and are to praise their Creator for that liberation, we are confronted with the popular doctrine that there is no repentance after death. The claim of Satan on the sinner is then established about as follows: Many do not repent and come to the knowledge of the truth in this life; there will be no opportunity or power to repent after this life; therefore there are thousands who never will repent. If this be correct, then the will of God will never be accomplished, and Christ will in the end fail to do what he came to do.

But let us examine this doctrine, or opinion, of no repentance after death; not at length, but only enough to show how unreasonable it is. Does the Bible say it is impossible to repent in the next world? Does the Bible inform us that God's love and mercy for man will cease as soon as man puts off or steps out of this mortal body? I think not. I have been quite a student of God's word for many years, and have given this subject some special attention, but I have never been able to find sufficient proof to satisfy my mind that man's probation is confined *solely* to this earth life. Believing that man is of a two-fold nature—body and spirit—I am fully satisfied that the spirit, the conscious, intelligent part of the man, survives the death of the body in a conscious condition, and that during what is known to us as the death state, opportunities of repentance and reformation will come to the spirits of men in "the pit" or "prison," in what we sometimes call the "spirit world."

I can not stop here to argue the dual nature of man at length, but shall digress sufficiently long to give a few brief proof-texts supporting this position, and shall then proceed with the main line of thought.

The Savior is represented as saying to the woman of Samaria: "God is a spirit."—John 4:24 (2 Corinthians 3:17). And Elihu is represented as saying: "There is a spirit in man."—Job 32:8 (1 Corinthians 2:11).

What is God? "A spirit."

What is it in man? "A spirit."

Now if God is indeed "a spirit," and if there is indeed within man "a spirit," then are they related the one to the other? And if so, how? The Bible answers:

Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the *Father of spirits*, and live?—Hebrews 12:9.

Notice here that our earthly fathers are called "fathers of our flesh," while God is represented as the "Father of spirits."

Moses and Aaron call upon the Lord thus:

O God, the *God of the spirits of all flesh*.—Numbers 16:22.

And at another time Moses speaks to the Lord in this way:

Let the Lord, the *God of the spirits of all flesh*, set a man over the congregation.—Numbers 27:16.

"Spirits," in all these texts, is used in the plural number. He is not simply the Father of spirit, or the God of the spirit of all flesh; but he is "the Father of *spirits*"—"the *spirits* of all flesh." And as further evidence that the "spirit in man" is a real entity, and not simply a substance, we quote from Zechariah:

The burden of the word of the Lord for Israel, saith the Lord, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth and *formeth the spirit of man within him*.—Zechariah 12:1.

God "formed man of the dust of the ground" (Genesis 2:7), and then "formeth the spirit of man within him"; and if forming the body gives to it an organization, forming the spirit (which is in the body) gives to it an organization, too. And while the spirit remains in the body, the spirit and the body *seem* to be but one; but when dissolution takes place, the wise man says:

Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.—Ecclesiastes 12:7.

Remember that the body and the spirit were both *formed* by the same God; remember that, when man dies, the body goes to one place, "to the earth," but the spirit goes to another place, "to God"; remember that the body goes back to dust and becomes "as it was," but that we are nowhere told that the spirit is to be disorganized and become "as it was"; and then remember that "the body without the spirit is

dead" (James 2: 26,) but we are nowhere told that the spirit without the body is dead. In fact Jesus says:

Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul.—Matthew 10: 28.

Hence the soul, or spirit, is something that came from God, and man can not kill it. John said that he "saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God," and they were conscious and praying, and that "white robes" (the "righteousness of saints," Revelation 19: 8) "were given unto every one of them" and they were told that "they should rest yet for a little season" (Revelation 6: 9-11). These were souls of those who had been "slain"; men had killed their bodies, but their souls or spirits had returned to God, and he placed them in a condition to "rest" from their labors until the time of the resurrection. But "there is no rest for the wicked," hence the Savior says:

Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell.—Luke 12: 5.

The spirits of all men, then, return to God after the bodies are killed, and their bodies return to the earth; but as there are "many mansions" "in my Father's house," it is not to be supposed that the spirits of the righteous and the wicked will all be put in the same place. Those who have been "slain for the word of God" are to be clothed in "white robes" and permitted to "rest," while those who die in rebellion against God are to be "cast into hell." Now, as the souls of those who are righteous are to be permitted to "rest" till the first resurrection, and are then to live and reign "with Christ" (Revelation 20: 4-6), they will not be subjects of repentance, at that time, for they will have no sin. But not so with the other class, the sinners; they are dead in sin, they return to God in that condition, and are then "cast into hell." Will God care for those spirits then? Will he desire their salvation then? Will he do anything for them then? Let us see.

God now loves the soul or spirit of the sinner to that extent that all heaven would rejoice if he should at this moment repent; but if, while the sinner is pondering the

matter in his heart, the assassin slips up and at one blow fells him lifeless to the earth, causing his spirit to step out of this house of clay and "return to God who gave it"—if this should occur, God's great love and mercy for this soul, according to the popular theory, suddenly turns to hatred and vengeance; and he now takes as much pleasure, apparently, in the misery and agony of this soul in hell as he would have taken in his conversion and eternal salvation one minute before the fatal blow was struck. Is it reasonable? If God is the Father of spirits, and he loves the spirit of man so dearly while in this body, why should we conclude that his love turns to hatred just as soon as the unconverted spirit leaves its earthly tabernacle? Why should he not then desire and labor for the salvation of that soul, for its redemption from the Devil, from sin, from death, and from hell, just as earnestly and with the same good will as when it was in the body? Does not the earthly parent love his erring son even after he is found guilty and shut up in prison? And is not God the Father of our spirits after they leave the body as much as while they are in the body? Is not he the "Father of spirits" even after they are shut up in prison—in hell? Is not his love for his children as strong and lasting as the love of an earthly parent? We are taught in the Bible that his love is much stronger and far more enduring than any earthly parent or earthly being is capable of exercising, and we therefore contend that his love will follow the erring spirit into the spirit world, and that his work for man will continue until the Devil and all his works are destroyed, and until all the works of God shall be brought to praise and glorify his high and exalted name; until the time comes which was shown to John while on the Isle of Patmos:

And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.—Revelation 5:13.

This, to my mind, is the same time and the same event to which the Psalmist David refers when he says:

All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee.—Psalm 22: 27.

The same also to which he refers in the following:

All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name.—Psalm 86: 9.

How many nations are to “come and worship” the Lord? “*All nations whom thou hast made.*” And how many nations did the Lord make? Paul says he “hath made of one blood all nations of men” (Acts 17: 26). “All nations of men,” then, with “all the kindreds of the nations,” and “all the ends of the world,” are to remember and “turn unto the Lord” and “come and worship thee.” Will it not be true, then, that “the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ” (Revelation 11: 15). And is it not then that “All thy works shall praise thee” (Psalm 145: 10)?

Reader, if you can not understand how all this is to be brought about, ask the Apostle Paul. He says:

And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.—Colossians 1: 20.

God, then, is to do this “by him” (the Christ) “through the blood of his cross.” The definition of the word *reconcile* is: “To conciliate anew; to restore to union and friendship; to bring back to harmony; to cause to be no longer at variance; to restore to friendship or favor after estrangement.” Man was “estranged” from God, “at variance” with him; but “through the blood of his cross” God has undertaken to “reconcile all things unto himself”; that is, “to restore to union and friendship,” and “to bring back to harmony” with himself, all things “in earth” and “in heaven.” And the next two verses show us that this is just the sense in which the Apostle uses the word reconcile here:

And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblamable and unreprouvable in his sight.—Colossians 1: 21, 22.

Notice, now, that they were “alienated” from God, and

had become "enemies"; but when they are "reconciled," restored "to friendship," and brought "back to harmony" with God, it makes them "holy and unblamable." Again, the same apostle says that God "hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ," and that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them" (see 2 Corinthians 5:18-21). When individuals are "reconciled to God," "their trespasses" are no longer imputed "unto them"; they are freed from sin. But will *all* men be "reconciled to God," and brought to this condition? The record says "all things," "whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven." And the same apostle, speaking again of the work of Christ, its glorious consummation and complete success, and the honor to be accorded him for the same, says:

Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.—Philippians 2:9-11.

And the Lord said, years before this, through the Prophet Isaiah:

Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear.—Isaiah 45:22, 23.

"Every knee" and "every tongue," evidently include, so far as man is concerned, the "all things" that "were created by him, and for him." These texts tell us that "every knee shall bow" to God, that "every tongue shall confess" him as Lord, and that "every tongue shall swear" to him—swear allegiance to him as their Savior and King. This confession, too, is to be "to the glory of God the Father," and if the glory of God is in the salvation of man, in saving those things which "were created by him, and for him," then we may expect this confession to be made when "all men" are "saved and come to the knowledge of the truth"; when he shall "reconcile all things unto himself," by bringing them back into "favor and friendship" with him; and not, by some,

when they shall be cast out into "outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Reader, do you believe that "all things," both in heaven and in earth, "were created by him, and for him"? Do you believe that for his "pleasure" they "are and were created"? Do you believe that God has "no pleasure in the death of the wicked"? Do you believe that God takes pleasure in seeing "the wicked turn from his way and live"? Do you believe God when he says, "I will do all my pleasure"? Do you believe that he "willeth not the death of any, but that all should come to repentance"? And do you believe the Savior came to do "the will of him that sent" him, "and to finish his work"? Do you believe that "God so loved the world" that he sent his Son "to save the world"? Do you believe he will "reconcile all things unto himself," after "having made peace through the blood of his cross"? And do you believe that all men, when they become "reconciled to God," will bow the knee to him and confess that he "is Lord"? Do you believe all this?

Well, we have been taught that millions of God's creatures—all who do not obey the gospel in this life—will be driven out into the shoreless regions of dark despair, where neither hope nor mercy can ever reach them, and there, in unspeakable woe, in unutterable misery, in inconceivable torment and hopeless despair, spend a never-ending existence. And that, in those dark regions of a never-ending doom, they will raise their hopeless cry to heaven for mercy, confess that Jesus is the Christ, confess that they were taken captive by the Devil "at his will," and also confess the justice of God in dooming them to never-ending torture; but that their misery can never, *never* end. This, we are told, is the confession referred to in the above texts. Do you believe it?

If you do, please tell me how such a confession could be in any sense "to the glory of God the Father"? You may say it demonstrates the strict justice of God. I do not believe it. But suppose it did? Does it also demonstrate the *love*, the *mercy*, and the *tender compassion* of "Our Father which art in heaven"? Can you discern in that "the

love of Christ which passeth knowledge"? "But," says one, "it is not God's fault that they are hopelessly lost. He wanted to save them, and did all he could to save them; but they would not be saved, nor could he bring them 'to repentance.'" This might be satisfactory to some, but not so to me. And in order to get this before your minds as I see it, I shall ask you to draw upon your imagination for a short time. Let us imagine ourselves in heaven, standing around the great white throne, and singing, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and *for thy pleasure they are and were created*"; and as we sing the last words the veil between us and this place of torment is suddenly removed, revealing millions upon millions of our fellow beings, created "*for thy pleasure*," writhing in unspeakable misery. They cower in abject fear at the sight of God, and agony and woe are depicted on every countenance. And with their bloodshot eyes raised pleadingly to heaven, and with sorrow and penitence blended with every sound they utter, their parched lips and swollen tongues shriek into the ears of God, the angels, and all the redeemed, this soul-harrowing confession:

O, God! unto thee do we bow. We confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. We confess thy justice in sending us to this place of torment. We confess that thy love is infinite, that it "passeth knowledge," and that thy goodness knows no bounds. Thou didst love all. Thou didst will "that all should come to repentance," and didst send thy Son to execute thy will, but he *could not do it*. He failed to bring "all to repentance." He wanted to bring "all to repentance," and tried to do so; but Satan blinded our minds and took us captive at *his* will, in spite of all that you, your Son, the angels, and thy people could do. Thy Son tried to destroy the Devil; but thou seest, O Lord, that the Devil still lives to torment us, the creatures whom thou didst create "*for thy pleasure*." The Savior tried to destroy the works of the Devil, our sinful nature, the sin which brought forth death in us; but thou seest, O Lord, that we are still the servants of sin, that sin still survives and reigns over us, and that we are still in "bondage through

fear of death." Yea, Lord, thou didst try to destroy death; but thou seest that death still survives and "feeds upon" us; that he holds us in his power, and still reigns victorious over us. Lord, thou didst also try to destroy hell; but it is "the strong man's palace," the place where he keeps his captives, and Satan has prevented its destruction too, and it must be our abode all through eternity. Thou didst send thy Son "to save that which was lost," "to save the world," and "to save sinners"; but he saved only a few of them during their earth life, and now he is powerless, so far as saving the others is concerned, for there is no repentance for man after his earth life ends. Many of us never heard the gospel during our earth life. Many of us were aiming to obey, but were cut down in youth, or in the prime of life, and failed to do so. And now, as there is no repentance after death, our final doom is to suffer a never-ending torment; and the mission of thy Son, so far as we are concerned, is a failure. Thou didst create us "for him," "for thy pleasure"; but Satan, thine "enemy," has thwarted thy purposes; and now, having wrenched from the hand of thy Son millions of thy creatures, reigns over us. O Lord, canst thou not even now destroy the "strong man" and deliver us from his power? Canst thou not deliver us from this terrible condition of suffering?

We pause and listen to the answer; it is something like this:

You failed to come to me during your earth life, and now you can not come. When billions of ages shall have come and gone, your suffering will be no nearer an end than it is now. I would be glad to save you, and would do so if it were in my power, but I *can not*.

Or suppose the answer should be: I could save you if I wished to do so; but I don't want to save you. I would rather see you suffer.

Reader, perhaps you can see how such a confession, with such an answer, would be "to the glory of God the Father"; but with my understanding of infinite love, mercy, justice, and power, I confess that I fail to see in the above confession

the proper vindication of God's eternal goodness and power. It looks dark to me; and the longer I look at it the darker it gets. Let me ask you to draw upon your imagination just a little further in reviewing this picture. Suppose, as you stand in the blazing sunlight of God's glory, gazing upon this writhing, surging, seething mass of lost and suffering humanity, you recognize one as your own dear mother, another as your kind and indulgent father, then a brother and a sister are recognized; and lastly you recognize another as your ever faithful companion, or your own darling child—an only son, or perhaps an only daughter. You look upon those loved ones, misery and woe depicted in every expression of their countenances; you hear their piteous appeals for mercy; your mind reverts back to the many acts of kindness they have done for you, and the love they have bestowed upon you; and then, clothed in the radiant livery of heaven, you sing:

“And not a wave of trouble roll
Across my peaceful breast.”

Could you do it? Would you feel like tuning your golden harp and to its heavenly music sing these words:

“God is love! God is love!
All things whisper, God is love”?

Would you?

“But,” says one, “when we get to heaven our happiness will be so perfect, so complete, our joy so unspeakably full; there will be such a fullness of the glory of God flood our souls, and we shall be so enwrapt with the glories of heaven that we can not feel any sorrow for those who are lost; nor will our minds be troubled in regard to the condemnation of our loved ones who have been so dear to us during this earth life. We shall never think anything about them.”

Am I to understand from this that the more of the Spirit of God we receive, the less sympathy we have for suffering humanity, and the less is our anxiety for their salvation? And am I to understand that when we receive a fullness of the Spirit of God it will so completely eradicate from our

hearts *all* sympathy for those less fortunate than ourselves, *all* anxiety for their welfare, that we shall not care whether our own father, our own mother, our own brothers and sisters, and our own children, are in heaven or in hell?

Reader, the rich man in hell had a better heart within him than that, for he prayed to Father Abraham that Lazarus might be sent to his five brethren "that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment." He had an anxiety for the welfare of his brethren, even though he was in torment. Yet I am asked to believe that those who get to heaven will be so extremely happy that they will not think nor care anything about the sufferings of their own children, should they happen to be among the lost. I do not believe it—I *can not* believe it. But I do believe this:

We know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him.—1. John 3:2.

And I also heartily indorse this:

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.—Philippians 2:5.

Did the Savior ever get so happy that he forgot all about suffering humanity? Was his glory ever so great that he thought only of self? If so, I never heard of it. But I have read:

For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.—Romans 5:6.

And I have read:

Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.—Luke 23:34.

And I have also read this:

And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it.—Luke 19:41.

The city of Jerusalem had rejected him; the Jews had killed the prophets, and had rejected the message of life sent unto them, and for this they must suffer. But the Savior, when he looked forward and beheld the suffering of the people of that city, because of their wickedness too, he "wept over it." "Let this mind be in you which was also in

Christ Jesus." "We shall be like him." Surely, then, when we are "able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge" (Ephesians 3:18, 19), we shall feel towards erring humanity as he did. And if we do, we could not be unspeakably happy, even in heaven, knowing that many of our loved ones were in never-ending torment.

"But," says one, "man can never be 'reconciled to God,' only by obedience, by accepting the terms of 'agreement' which God has given." Yes, that is true; and I believe it with all my heart. And as all men do not "remember and turn to the Lord" in this life, I am compelled to believe that many will repent and come to him in the world to come, if John's prediction ever comes true:

And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.—Revelation 5:13.

The Lord said to Abraham:

And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed. Genesis 22:18.

And this promise, in different forms, is repeated many times in the Bible. Paul, commenting upon it, says:

Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.—Galatians 3:16.

All nations, then, including the heathen, are to be blessed in Christ. But how?

And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen THROUGH FAITH.—Galatians 3:8.

It is to be done "through faith." Ignorance does not save any one who has intelligence enough to be held accountable.

The Savior said:

The truth shall make you free.—John 8:32.

And it is when "you shall know the truth," not while you are ignorant of it, that it "shall make you free"; and you

can know it "if ye continue in my word," said the Savior (John 8:31).

Even the heathen are to be justified "through faith." And there is no other way, for Paul has said:

Without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.—Hebrews 11:6.

Now, there is only "one faith" (Ephesians 4:5), and that is "the faith of the gospel" (Philippians 1:27), or "the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3); hence it is through the faith of the gospel, and no other way, that men can come to God. But the heathen nations have not this "one faith," here upon the earth, and how can they ever get it? There is only one way:

How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent? . . . So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.—Romans 10:14-17.

Now, "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord: and all the kindreds of the nations shall come and worship before thee." All are to "come"; he that cometh to God "*must believe*"; they can not believe *till they have "heard,"* and they can not hear "*without a preacher*"; so if the gospel is not preached to them in this life, it must be preached to them in the world to come, for the angel who brought to the shepherds the news of the Savior's birth, said:

For, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.—Luke 2:10, 11.

Mind you, the angel says this "good tidings" "*shall be to all people.*" Do you believe it? One thing is sure: It does not reach all people in this life. But Paul says:

For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified *in due time.*—1 Timothy 2:5, 6.

The "good tidings of great joy" may not reach some in this life, but Christ gave himself "a ransom for all," and it must be "testified in due time." If it is not "testified" to all in

this life, then it must be "testified" to some in the world to come, in the Lord's own "due time."

Perhaps the reader finds questions like the following arising in his mind: Does not the Bible say that "the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God" (Psalm 9: 17)? And does not the parable of Lazarus and the rich man teach us that when a man is once "turned into hell" he can never come out? Well, the Bible certainly teaches us that "the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God"; but I have never learned from the Bible that there is no possibility of their ever coming out. But as this parable of Lazarus and the rich man (found in Luke 16: 19-31) is one of the strong proof-texts of those who believe in the never-ending torment of those who do not come to Christ in this life, it will be best, perhaps, to examine it at some length. Those two men, when they died, went to different places. "The beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom" (v. 22). "The rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments" (vs. 22, 23). Then began this remarkable conversation between the rich man and Father Abraham. The rich man, in his agony, cried out: "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame" (v. 24). Abraham reminds him that "in thy lifetime" thou "receivedst thy good things," "but now"—notice the two different times: "*in thy lifetime*" and "*now*." He was not in his "lifetime" when this conversation took place, but was in the death state. His body had returned to the earth as it was, but "the spirit" had returned "to God who gave it," and He "after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell." Both Lazarus and the rich man were conscious after death, but they were in different conditions and in different places. And Father Abraham now proceeds to inform the rich man: "And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you can not; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence" (v. 26).

This verse is thought by some to settle the condition of those who are "turned into hell," and that too for all time to come. Others, to avoid the conclusions thus drawn, have taken the position that this parable, if it is a parable, is intended to represent the condition of the Jews and Gentiles. The Jews, before the kingdom of God was taken from them, being represented as "a rich man," faring "sumptuously every day"; but the Gentiles, before this transfer of the kingdom, being represented as "a certain beggar." After this transfer of God's favor the two nations change conditions: The Jews are now represented as lifting up their eyes "in hell," while the Gentiles recline peacefully in "Abraham's bosom." But if this interpretation be correct, then there was "a great gulf fixed" between the Jews and Gentiles, making it impossible for "*those who would*" to pass from the one to the other. Has there ever been a time when "those who would," whether Jew or Gentile, were not allowed to repent and turn to God, just the same after the transfer of the kingdom as before? And if the Jews, "who would," may repent and come to God, and be accepted of him, then is there any such gulf as is described here existing between those two nationalities? If there is, neither Peter nor Paul knew anything of it. Peter says:

And [hath] put no difference between us and them. . . . But we believe that through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.—Acts 15:9, 11.

Peter understood then that "we," the Jews, would be saved "even as *they*," and that there was "no difference between us and them," so far as the plan of salvation is concerned. Again he says:

Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but that in every nation [Jew or Gentile] he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him.—Acts 10:34, 35.

Paul says:

For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.—Romans 10:12, 13.

Again he says:

For he is our peace, who hath made both [Jews and Gentiles] one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us [the Jew and the Gentile]; . . . for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both [Jews and Gentiles] unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby. . . . For through him we both [Jew and Gentile] have access by one Spirit unto the Father.—Ephesians 2:14-18.

These texts are too plain to need any comment. They show, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that there is no "great gulf fixed" between the Jews and the Gentiles; but on the other hand that there is "no difference" between them, so far as being at liberty to come to God is concerned. The same gulf which exists between righteous Gentiles and wicked Jews exists between righteous Gentiles and wicked Gentiles; between righteous Jews and wicked Jews. Whatever "gulf is fixed" is "fixed" between the righteous and the wicked, without any regard to nationalities.

We are plainly told that both those men "died"; and they are therefore in the death state, at the time of this conversation between Father Abraham and the rich man, and are presented to us in this parable to represent the condition of the dead—the difference between the righteous and the wicked. That there will be a great difference between those who obey the gospel in this life and those who reject it, I verily believe. That they will be consigned to different places, and that those who reject the gospel here will not be permitted to come where the righteous dwell, in the world to come, I do not deny,—the Bible teaches that this will be the case. That this difference, and this being consigned to separate "mansions," may last to all eternity, I am not able to disprove—have no desire to disprove it. But that those who are "turned into hell with the nations that forget God" are so encircled by an impassable "gulf," so "fixed" and enduring that no one ever has been able, nor ever will be, to pass it and go to their relief, is certainly not in harmony with the teaching of God's word. It is true that, *at that time*, the inhabitants of those two places could not pass from one to the other. But we must keep in mind that this parable was spoken by the Savior *before his*

death and resurrection; and that it presents to us the utter inability of man, however righteous he may be, to save his fellow man. And we must also keep in mind that it is "through death" that the Savior is to "destroy him that had the power of death," in order to make it possible for him to "deliver" those who are in "bondage" "through fear of death"; and that, in doing this, he must, in some way, either pass this gulf or destroy it.

That the rich man was in hell, that Lazarus was in Abraham's bosom, that there was "a great gulf fixed" between them, and that they could not pass from the one place to the other, the Bible clearly teaches; and that the time is to come when "all the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the Lord," when "all thy works shall praise thee," when "all nations shall come and worship thee," and when "all things" shall be "reconciled" to him, the Bible also teaches. I believe it all. Will it harmonize? Yes, if we take it in its entirety; but if we set up a pet theory and cast aside part of the Bible, in order to establish our own theory, we shall soon find ourselves in the midst of difficulties innumerable.

Let us look, first, for the cause of those persons not being able to pass from the one place to the other.

While a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armor wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.—Luke 11 : 21, 22.

By reading the connection it is clearly seen that Satan is "the strong man." He is armed with sin and death. By sin he had slain his millions, and dragged many of them down to hell. They are "his spoils." He has "the power of death" and can, therefore, hold them in comparative peace, no *man* (not even Father Abraham) daring to invade his palace till he is disarmed. Who was able to do this? Was Lazarus or Father Abraham able to go into "the strong man's" palace, wrench from him his "armor," sin and death, and then administer relief to or set at liberty "his spoils," the captive spirits he had "taken captive at his will" and dragged down

to hell? No; they were not able to go. "They which would pass from us to you can not." It seems that some were *willing* to go—"would pass" if they could—but the "strong man" "keepeth his palace"; he is well armed, has "the power of death," and no one dares to venture into his realm on a mission of mercy unless it is some one who is "stronger than he," some one who has power over his own life to "lay it down," and also "power to take it again." Man did not possess this power, and man, therefore, could not do this work—not even Father Abraham. Who did possess this power? The Savior says:

Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.—John 10:17, 18.

He had the power to "lay down" his life and to "take it again," and he *did* "lay it down." But what for?

That *through death* he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil; and deliver them, who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.—Hebrews 2:14, 15.

The "strong man" had the "power of death," and it was "through death" that this power was to be taken from him; "through death" that he is to be disarmed, "overcome," and finally destroyed. But death alone is not all that is necessary; it must be the death of some one who is able to grapple with the "strong man" in the death state. It must be the death of some one who is "stronger" than "him that had the power of death": some one who, after he has lain down his life, has "power to take it again." Man might be willing to lay down his life for his fellow man, but as he has not the "power to take it again," his sacrifice would be in vain. Hence the statement: "they that would pass from us to you can not." But there is One who can pass within the dark regions of death itself, there "overcome" the "strong man," and then divide "his spoils." "Spoils" is "that which is taken from others by force"; hence the "strong man" has in his possession that which does not justly belong to him, that which he has "taken captive" "at his will"; this must all be divided.

Dividing "his spoils," after overcoming the "strong man," is the same as delivering "them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage," after having destroyed "him that had the power of death"; and it all points unmistakably to the glorious work of the Savior in the destruction of the Devil, and in the liberation of those things which "were created by him, and for him [Christ]," from the power of sin and death.

If the thought should enter your mind at this stage of the investigation that those whom Christ shall "deliver" at this time are perhaps the ones who obey the gospel and keep the commandments of God in this life, then please try to answer to your own satisfaction these two questions: Are those who obey God and serve him faithfully to the end of the race, "all their lifetime subject to bondage" "through fear of death"? Will they have to wait for deliverance from "bondage" until the destruction of Satan? Surely not. Anyway, the writers of the New Testament did not so understand. Paul says:

Giving thanks unto the Father, . . . who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.—Colossians 1:12, 13.

When they obeyed the gospel they were then "delivered" from "bondage," and were made free citizens in the "kingdom of his dear Son." Hence the Savior well says: "The truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

And Paul says again:

The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.—Romans 8:2.

And when they were made free, they then partook of the spirit of freedom:

For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear.—Romans 8:15.

They were not "subject to bondage" "through fear of death," for they were liberated from that feeling. John says:

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.—1 John 4:18.

Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.—Galatians 5:1.

To this we add the further testimony of Paul in regard to his own death:

For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ.—Philippians 1:23.

Was he “in bondage” “through fear of death”? No; “the truth” had made him free, had “delivered him,” even then; the “perfect love” of Christ within him had cast out all “fear of death,” and he was not only willing but *anxious to go*, just as soon as his work was done.

But there are *some* who are in bondage “all their lifetime.” Who are they? The Savior tells us who they are:

Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.—John 8:34.

Paul tells us who they are:

Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness.—Romans 6:16.

Peter also says:

While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought into bondage.—2 Peter 2:19.

Those, then, who yield themselves “servants to obey” “sin unto death,” and who are not “made free from the law of sin and death” by obedience to “the law of the Spirit of life,” are the ones who are “brought into bondage,” and are “all their lifetime subject to bondage,” “through fear of death.” Hence these are the ones whom Christ will deliver at the time he destroys “him that had the power of death.” Hence they are to be delivered in the world to come. Will they be delivered without repenting? No; for he has willed that “all should come to repentance,” and those referred to above are no exception to the rule.

But, in bringing man to repentance, either here or hereafter, the Lord will never coerce man’s will, neither will he compel man to be holy.

“He’ll call, persuade, direct him right,
Bless him with wisdom, love, and light;

In nameless ways be good and kind,
But never force the human mind."

No, he will "never force the human mind"; but he has undertaken to "reconcile all things unto himself," "through the blood of his cross," and thus repair the evil by which his perfect universe has been marred, and he will succeed. It may not be in my way, and it may not be in your way; but, in his own way, and in his own time, he will succeed. His resources are infinite; his persuasive influences are unlimited; hence *his love* and *his power* must triumph, *in every case*, over the power of sin and death. "For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet."

CHAPTER 3.

THE WORK OF CHRIST IN HADES.

For the Son of Man is come to save that which was lost. How think ye? if a man hath an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, He rejoiceth more over that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.—Matthew 18:11-14.

Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them. And he spake this parable unto them, saying, What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, That likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance.—Luke 15:1-7.

Considering the two quotations above as one, please note the following points:

First. The publicans and sinners were very anxious to hear the Savior's teaching.

Second. Those who were self-righteous criticised him for receiving and associating with sinners.

Third. He tells them that that was his mission, "to save that which was lost."

Fourth. He says that his Father, whose work he was here to do, was not willing that even "one of these little ones should perish."

Fifth. To show them to what extremities he would go to save "one of these little ones," he gave them the above parable, the main points of which are:

- a. A man has a hundred sheep.
- b. One of them goes astray.
- c. He leaves the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and "goeth after that which is lost."
- d. He goes "after" the lost sheep, "*until he find it.*"
- e. He puts it on his shoulders, "*rejoicing,*" when he finds it, and brings it home.
- f. He calls in his friends to rejoice with him, and rejoiceth more over that sheep than he does over all the others.

Sixth. The Savior then tells the Pharisees and scribes that there is more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner that repenteth than there is over ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance.

How long then, according to the above, will the Good Shepherd go after his sheep that has gone astray? He will go after it "UNTIL HE FIND IT."

And what will he do with it, when he finds it? He will bring it home, "rejoicing," and have his friends rejoice with him. But will he go after "that which was lost," beyond the limits of this earth life? Will he go after the "lost," after they have been "taken captive" by his enemy and shut up in prison? Will he follow the lost into the spirit world, destroy him who deceived them and caused them to go astray, and there proclaim liberty to them? Will he? If not, why not? If you tell me he can not, you limit his power; and if you tell me he does not wish to save them, you limit his love. But if the work of the Savior in man's behalf is to extend beyond this life, and beyond this world, the scriptures will certainly make it known to us; hence we again appeal to them for light.

Stephen informs us that the ancient prophets "showed before of the coming of the Just One" (Acts 7:52).

Peter says that "the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand of the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow" (1 Peter 1:11).

Paul, as already quoted, says that "whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning" (Romans 15:4).

And the Savior says: "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" (John 5:39).

You will notice the above texts all refer us to the writings of the prophets for evidence on the divinity of the Savior's mission, informing us that those scriptures "testify" of his "coming," his "sufferings," and of "the glory that should follow" the completion of his work.

Let us now search those scriptures—first the Old Testament and then the New—and see if we can find where the Spirit testified anything in regard to the deliverance of those who had gone down to hell, keeping in mind that "no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation" (2 Peter 1:20).

The Prophet Isaiah, speaking of the time when "the earth shall reel to and fro like a drunkard," and when "it shall fall and not rise again"; and of the time when "the Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously," says:

And it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall punish the host of the high ones that are on high, and the kings of the earth upon the earth. And they shall be gathered together as prisoners are gathered in the pit, and shall be shut up in prison, and after many days shall they be visited.—Isaiah 24:21, 22.

At the time, then, when the earth shall "reel to and fro like a drunkard," and shall "be removed like a cottage"; when the "moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed"; and when "the Lord of hosts shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem"; at this time the high and lofty ones of earth are to be judged, and being found wicked, are to be "gathered together as prisoners are gathered in a pit," and

are to be "shut up in the prison." The Psalmist, speaking of the same event no doubt, says: "The wicked shall be turned into hell, with all the nations that forget God." One says they shall be "turned into hell," and the other says "they shall be shut up in the prison." But Isaiah adds: "And after many days shall they be visited." "AFTER MANY DAYS." Paul tells us (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17) that the "dead in Christ" shall be raised from the dead when the Savior shall come, and that they shall "ever be with the Lord." We are also told by the Apostle John (Revelation 20:5) that when "the first resurrection" shall take place, "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished."

Hence we are certainly safe in concluding that the "*many days*" of Isaiah, and the "*thousand years*" of John, both refer to the length of time the wicked are to be "cast into hell," "shut up in prison"; but Isaiah says, "after many days shall they be visited"; and John says, "when the thousand years were expired," and Satan had been locked out of his prison for a short time: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God": and he says further, that they "were judged" "according to their works."

Now, has anything been done for those individuals, between the time they were "shut up in prison" and the time when they "stand before God" to be judged, that is to affect their salvation or condemnation? If we can learn from the inspired record *who* is to visit them, and *why* he is to visit them, we shall be better prepared to answer this question: "Search the Scriptures; . . . and they are they which testify of me." And as Isaiah has told us they are to be "visited," we shall ask him to tell us who is to visit them. Here is his answer:

I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house.—Isaiah 42:6, 7.

Again, the same prophet says:

And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldst be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of

Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth: . . . and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people; . . . that thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves.—Isaiah 49: 6-9.

They are to “be visited” then, by the one who is to be “a light of the Gentiles.” When the Savior was brought by his parents into the temple, Simeon, taking him into his arms, said by the Spirit:

For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.—Luke 2: 30-32. (See also Acts 13: 47; 28: 28.)

The Savior said, “I am the light of the world” (John 8: 12). There can be no doubt then that the Savior is the One who is to be “my salvation,” “a light to the Gentiles”; hence he is the one who is to visit “the prisoners” and bring them out of “the prison house”; the One who is to “say to the prisoners, Go forth, and to them that are in darkness, Show yourselves.” And the same prophet, referring to this subject again, said:

The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn.—Isaiah 61: 1, 2.

Our Savior read this Scripture, from “the book of the Prophet Esaias,” during his ministry here, and then offered this comment upon it: “This day is the scripture fulfilled in your ears.”—Luke 4: 21.

He thus applies the prophecy of Isaiah to himself and to his work: the work which he was to do for the “meek,” the “broken-hearted,” the “captives,” the “blind,” and “all that mourn.” He could not have meant, however, that all the work which the prophet said he should do was finished, completed on that day; for this was near the beginning of his work here upon the earth. But you will note that he says, “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me” to do all this work: He had been

“anointed,” the “Spirit of the Lord” was upon him to do the work, and he was just beginning to “be about my Father’s business.” Hence the Spirit of the Lord was upon him, “this day,” to do the work which he had been “anointed” and ordained to do. And, in doing this work, he is to “proclaim liberty to the captives” and “comfort all that mourn.” He does not “comfort all that mourn,” while they are in this world; for, of some, it is said that they are, “through fear of death, all their lifetime subject to bondage”; and if he ever comforts them, it must be after they quit this world: either in the death state or after their resurrection. Which will it be?

Again we appeal to those Scriptures which “testify” of the Savior and of his work for fallen man. The next witness is Ezekiel. He says, in chapter 31:10-18:

Therefore thus saith the Lord God; Because thou hast lifted up thyself in height, and he hath shot up his top among the thick boughs, and his heart is lifted up in his height; I have therefore delivered him into the hand of the mighty one of the heathen; he shall surely deal with him: I have driven him out for his wickedness.—Verses 10, 11.

Take notice that it is because of “his wickedness” in lifting up his heart and exalting himself that the Lord deals with him in this manner, and then read the fourteenth verse:

To the end that none of all the trees by the waters exalt themselves for their height, neither shoot up their top among the thick boughs, neither their trees stand up in their height, all that drink water: for they are all delivered unto death, to the nether parts of the earth, in the midst of the children of men, with them that go down to the pit.

Notice, they all are delivered “unto death,” and are gone “down to the pit.” That they are in the death state is further confirmed by the next verse:

Thus saith the Lord God; In the day when he went down to the grave I caused a mourning . . . for him.

The next two verses say:

I made the nations to shake at the sound of his fall, when I cast him DOWN TO HELL with them that *descend into the pit*: and all the trees of Eden, the choice and best of Lebanon, all that drink water, SHALL BE COMFORTED IN THE NETHER PARTS OF THE EARTH. They

also went DOWN INTO HELL with him unto them that be slain with the sword.—Verses 16, 17.

True, the Lord uses “great trees” with “thick boughs” to represent nations; but he is very careful to tell us whom those “trees” represent. Verse 2 says:

Son of man, speak unto *Pharaoh* king of Egypt, and to his multitude; Whom art thou like in thy greatness?—Ezekiel 31:2.

Then, of the Assyrian, he says:

Behold, the Assyrian was a cedar in Lebanon with fair branches, and with a shadowing shroud, and of an high stature; and his top was among the thick boughs.—Verse 3.

Please read in connection with this, a part of the tenth verse again: “And he hath shot up his top among the thick boughs.” This, then, is Assyria. Hence it was Assyria that was delivered unto death,” that went “down to the grave.” It was Assyria that was “cast down to hell,” that “went down into hell.” But Assyria is not alone, for in verse 16, he says: “When I cast him down to hell with them that descend into the pit,” while verse 17 says:

They also went down into hell with him, unto them that be slain with the sword; and they that were his arm, that dwelt under his shadow in the midst of the heathen.

It is clear that Assyria is represented here by “his” and “him,” but who is represented by “they” and “them”? “They” are the ones who “dwelt under his shadow”; so, if we can find who “dwelt under the shadow” of Assyria, we shall know who is represented by “they” and “them.” Here it is:

And under his shadow dwelt all great nations.—Verse 6.

The “great nations” then, who dwelt under the “shadow” of Assyria, are the ones who “went down into hell with him,” and they are the ones who are to be “comforted,” with him, “in the nether parts of the earth.” By reading the eighteenth verse we learn who one, at least, of those nations is.

To whom art thou thus like in glory and in greatness among the trees of Eden? yet shalt thou be brought down with the trees of Eden unto the nether parts of the earth thou shalt lie in the midst of the uncircumcised with them that be slain by the sword. THIS IS PHAROAH AND ALL HIS MULTITUDE, saith the Lord God.

Pharaoh and all his multitude are represented as being

“among the trees of Eden,” “with the trees of Eden,” and it is declared that they shall all be “brought down” to the “nether parts of the earth,” “with them that be slain by the sword”—in the death state. Assyria is represented as being “a cedar in Lebanon,” with his “top among the thick boughs,” and as being “exalted above all the trees of the field”; and he, too, is to be brought down “to the nether parts of the earth,” “to the pit,” “into hell,” and is “delivered unto death”—is in the death state.

Now keep in mind that Pharaoh and his multitude are classed “among the trees of Eden”; that the Assyrian is the tall “cedar in Lebanon,” towering “above all the trees of the field”; and then read again the latter part of verse 16: “All the trees of Eden, the choice and best of Lebanon, all that drink water, shall be comforted in the nether parts of the earth.” Surely then Assyria, Egypt, and all those heathen nations who, with them, were “cast down to hell,” are to be comforted in the “pit” or “prison”—not here *upon* the earth, but down *in* the earth’s “nether parts.” As to *how* this is to be done, we may get additional light by reading Ezekiel 32: 18-32.

In verse 18 he speaks of “the multitude of Egypt,” and “the daughters of the famous nations”; and says to “wail for them,” and to “cast them down” “unto the nether parts of the earth, with them that go down into the pit.” Then in verse 21 he says of them again:

The strong among the mighty shall speak to him out of the midst of hell with them that help him: they are gone down, they lie uncircumcised, *slain by the sword.*

Those people are all dead, and the Lord carefully shows the contrast between their present condition (“in the nether parts of the earth,” “in the pit”) and their condition while they were “in the land of the living”; thus proving, beyond all cavil, that they are not now “in the land of the living”; but that they are “slain by the sword,” among the dead, in the land of the dead, and in fact dead. For proof, please read carefully the following from the same chapter:

They lie uncircumcised, slain by the sword.—Verse 21.

All of them slain, fallen by the sword.—Verse 22.

All of them slain, fallen by the sword, which caused terror in the land of the living.—Verse 23.

All of them slain, fallen by the sword, . . . which caused their terror in the land of the living.—Verse 24.

All of them uncircumcised, slain by the sword: though their terror was caused in the land of the living.—Verse 25.

All of them uncircumcised, slain by the sword, though they caused their terror in the land of the living.—Verse 26.

But their iniquities shall be upon their bones, though they were the terror of the mighty in the land of the living.—Verse 27.

Pharaoh and all his army slain by the sword.—Verse 31.

For I have caused my terror in the land of the living.—Verse 32.

Seven times the prophet tells us, plainly too, that those people are dead—"slain by the sword"; and six times he refers, in contrast with their present condition, to what they had done while they were yet alive—"in the land of the living." Surely then they are in the death state. Are they absolutely unconscious? No; for he says:

With their terror they are *ashamed* of their might.—Verse 30.

If they were unconscious, they could not be ashamed. Then, too, he says:

Pharaoh shall *see* them, and shall be *comforted* over all his multitude, even Pharaoh and all his army *slain by the sword*, saith the Lord God.—Verse 31.

If people, who are "slain by the sword," can "*see*," can feel "*ashamed*," and can be "*comforted*," then we are certainly justified in taking the words of the Savior at their face value:

Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul.—Matthew 10:28.

And this, too:

Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell.—Luke 12:5.

Those people had been "killed," and then "cast into hell"; but they could still "see," still feel "ashamed," and be "comforted." Remember now that Isaiah says, "After many days shall they be visited"; and Ezekiel says, "The strong among the mighty shall speak to him out of the midst of hell," and that they "shall be comforted in the nether parts of the earth." But who is "the strong among the mighty"? The Psalmist says:

Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, The Lord mighty in battle.—Psalm 24: 8.

It is the "King of glory" who is "strong and mighty." It is he who is "stronger" than the "strong man." He alone has power to lay down his life, and "power to take it again," hence he alone is able to go into the "midst of hell," there "proclaim liberty to the captives," and "bring forth the prisoners out of the prison." Do you believe it? God has spoken: who can disbelieve? All this, too, is to be done "by the blood of thy covenant." Please read Zechariah 9: 9-11. In the ninth verse he says:

Behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass. (See Luke 19: 35-38, with Matthew 21: 4, 5.)

This makes it clear that he is speaking of the Savior.

In the tenth verse he says:

And he shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the end of the earth.

This is not all. It is consoling to know that his dominion shall be from sea to sea and extend to the end of the earth. But he will do even more than that. Listen:

As for thee also, *by the blood of thy covenant* I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water.—Verse 11.

Notice, now, that the Lord is to bring those prisoners out of the pit "by the blood of thy covenant," and then read again Hebrews 2: 14, 15:

That THROUGH DEATH he might destroy him that had power of death, that is, the Devil; and deliver them, who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

Read again, also, Colossians 1:20:

And, having made peace *through the blood of his cross*, by him to reconcile all things unto himself.

How is he to "reconcile all things unto himself"? Paul says it will be done "through the blood of his cross." How is he to deliver those who are in "bondage"? Paul says it will be done "through death." How is he to bring the prisoners "out of the pit wherein is no water"? Zechariah says it is to be done "through the blood of thy covenant."

There is only one way to come to God, and that is through Christ. "No man cometh unto the Father but by me," said the Savior. People can not "believe on him of whom they have not heard," hence it is that the "strong among the mighty" shall speak to those heathen nations "out of the midst of hell," and declare unto them the "good tidings of great joy" which the angel brought to the shepherds of Galilee, and "through the blood of thy covenant" bring them "out of the pit wherein is no water."

Now if those "prisoners" are in a pit "wherein is no water," they must be in the same place where the rich man was, "in hell"; for his prayer was: "Send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame." And as the mission of the Savior is to extend to that class of prisoners, and as he is to comfort and deliver them out of the pit, then I see no reason for supposing that even the "rich man" is beyond the cleansing power of the "blood of his cross."

Hence, when we "search the Scriptures," which "were written for our learning," we learn from them that the Savior was to do something, even for the dead; that he is to speak to them "out of the midst of hell," and is to "comfort" those heathen nations who have been "shut up in prison" for "many days." And when the Savior came in the flesh, and commenced his ministry among men, he said:

Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to *fulfill*.—Matthew 5:17.

And again he said, after his resurrection:

These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that *all things* must be fulfilled, which are written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, *concerning me*.—Luke 24:44.

Do you believe that *all* those prophecies concerning Christ's work for the dead, those "in the nether parts of the earth," are to be fulfilled? If I prove from the New Testament that the Savior *did fulfill* those prophecies *in part*, are you willing to trust him in regard to that part of them still pointing to the future? If so, please come with me and we will examine the testimony of those who were "eye witnesses of his

majesty." Paul, in speaking of the Savior's ascension into heaven, says:

Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended *first* into the *lower parts of the earth?*—Ephesians 4:9.

Where did the Savior go, before he "ascended up on high"? "Into the lower parts of the earth." But there is another class of people who go to the same place. David says:

But those that seek my soul, to destroy it, shall go into the lower parts of the earth.—Psalm 63:9.

According to this, it is the wicked who are sent down "into the lower parts of the earth." But the Savior went there too; and as he is righteous above all others, you would hardly be willing to take the position that he went there as a prisoner, the same as the wicked. And if he was not sent there as a prisoner, the same as those who seek to destroy the souls of God's people, why did he go there at all? Peter answers:

For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being 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.—1 Peter 3:18-20.

In the Revised Version of the New Testament it says, "which aforetime were disobedient," instead of "sometime."

He went down "into the lower parts of the earth" then to preach, "unto the spirits in prison." But why should he preach to them? Here is the answer from the same apostle:

For, for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they [the dead] might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the Spirit.—1 Peter 4:6.

The Revised Version renders this: "For unto this end was the gospel preached even to the dead."

The gospel then has been preached, by the Savior, too, "even to the dead," "unto the spirits in prison"; and those "spirits in prison" are to be "judged according to men in the flesh"; that is, according to their works. So in reading those things which are written "*concerning me,*" and concerning the work he should do, we learn that "the wicked shall be turned into hell with all the nations that forget God"; that

they are to go "into the lower parts of the earth," "into the pit," away down in "the nether parts of the earth."

We learn also that "the strong among the mighty" is to speak to them "out of the midst of hell," that he is to "comfort all that mourn," "proclaim liberty to the captives," open the prison doors and "bring out the prisoners from the prison"; that he is to comfort even those who "are delivered unto death," "slain by the sword," those who are gone down "in the nether parts of the earth"; and that, "by the blood of thy covenant," the prisoners are to be brought forth, even from that pit "wherein is no water."

The Savior says that those things must "*all be fulfilled.*" Then the writers of the New Testament tell us that he did shed his blood, that he went down "into the lower parts of the earth," that he preached the gospel "even to the dead," to "the spirits in prison," and that, too, "that they might be judged according to men in the flesh." Just what the prophets said he *would* do, the New Testament writers say he *did* do. Are you willing to believe it?

It is not so hard to believe the Bible, if you once get in the habit of doing so, and are willing to let the Bible speak for itself—allow the Lord to be "his own interpreter"; it is when men set up their own opinions of the Bible, and then insist upon bending and twisting the Scriptures, so as to make them harmonize with those opinions, that the Bible becomes an enigma.

And right here, while speaking of preaching the gospel to the spirits in prison, to those who had been "disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah," I wish to call the reader's attention to a statement of the Apostle Paul. One of the saints at Corinth had done wrong, and Paul tells the saints that when they should gather together, "with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ," they should deal with him as follows:

To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.—1 Corinthians 5:5.

Please note that they were commanded to deliver this man

“unto Satan”; he was to be delivered unto Satan *“for the destruction of the flesh”*; and all this was to be done *“that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.”* As it became necessary for the Lord to deliver one man over to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, *“that the spirit may be saved,”* it may be necessary for him to deal with others in the same way and for the same purpose. The Scriptures teach us that *“God is no respecter of persons”*; and hence, to suppose that he would have one man’s flesh destroyed *“that the spirit may be saved,”* and then destroy whole cities, whole nations, and even the whole world, as he did in the days of Noah, that their spirits may be consigned to endless torment, is unscriptural and unreasonable. But that the Lord destroyed the flesh of those people who lived in the days of Noah (because of their wickedness, of course) that their spirits may be saved, is proven by the fact that the Lord did go and preach the gospel to their spirits in prison, and he did this *“that they might be judged according to men in the flesh.”*

“But,” says one, “you have not shown us yet that the rich man is to ever get out of hell.”

Are you sure he was in there?

“Why, yes; he was in there, of course.”

But how do you know?

“Why, the Bible says he was there.”

Very well; then I shall let the Bible tell us whether he is to come out or not:

And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to his works.—Revelation 20:12, 13.

The same Bible which tells us that the “rich man” was in hell, also tells us that John saw the time when “death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them”; and, if you believe the one, then why should you refuse to believe the other? Yes, hell must deliver up its dead, its captives, the

spirits of those whose flesh had been destroyed, and then they must be judged.

Judged how? "According to their works," it says here. Peter says the "gospel was preached even to the dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh"; and as men in the flesh are to be "judged according to their works," we again find the Bible in harmony with itself. Hence we can see why "the strong among the mighty" was to speak to some "out of the midst of hell"; why he went and "preached to the spirits in prison," "even to the dead"; it was because hell must "deliver up the dead"; because they must be brought "out of prison," stand before God, and be "judged according to their works."

The gospel is "the power of God unto salvation"; and "the truth shall make you free," said the Savior; hence when "the strong among the mighty shall speak to" those heathen nations "out of the midst of hell," and shall "proclaim liberty to the captives," he simply proclaims to them the truth, the conditions upon which they are to be made free; and when he preaches the gospel "even to the dead," to "the spirits in prison," he teaches them "the power of God unto salvation" or, in other words, he teaches them of God's power to save. And the nations being "comforted in the nether parts of the earth," the "opening of the prison to them that are bound," the sending "forth the prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water," and "death and hell" delivering "up the dead which were in them," all refer to the same thing: all refer to the work of Christ for men, and the power of his gospel to save them, even after they have passed beyond this earth life into the spirit sphere; all referring to the reconciliation of all things unto God, the destruction of all his enemies, and his final triumph over Satan, sin, death, hell, and the grave.

And after the Savior had laid down his life, after he had gone down into the "lower parts of the earth" and preached the gospel to "them that are dead," and after he had risen triumphant over all, he appeared to John upon the Isle of Patmos and said:

I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, . . . and have the keys of hell and of death.—Revelation 1:18.

Notice he says, "I *was* dead." It was by laying down his life, going down into the death state, and then taking his life again, rising again from the dead, that he gained the "keys [the power or authority] of death." And now, having possession of "the keys of death," he can command the dead to arise, and death is powerless to hold them longer.

Just so, when he went down "into the lower parts of the earth" and spake to the captive spirits "out of the midst of hell," hell having no power to hold him, he gained the victory over the "strong man," and came back from the "lower parts of the earth" with "the keys of hell." And now, having "the keys" of the strong man's "palace," he can open the prison doors and command the captives to "go forth," and even hell itself must, obedient to his commands, deliver up its captive spirits.

It is sometimes claimed that this is a dangerous doctrine to preach; that it will cause men to go on in sin. But I turn to the Bible and there I read:

Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?—Romans 2:4.

Is it the fear of hell, the fear of endless punishment, the fear of never-ending torment, that scares men to repentance? If it is, then I should say, Preach that. But as it is "the goodness of God" that leads men to repentance, then there is more good to be done by preaching "the goodness of God" than by preaching the fear of torment. And, what is more, a religion that is born of fear is not to be compared with the religion of Christ, which is born of love. Love for God, and love for our fellow man, is one of the leading basic principles of the Christian religion; hence, presenting God to the people as a lovable being, instead of a cruel, merciless tyrant, is calculated to cause men to love God, because of his supreme goodness; and presenting him in a different light would have just the opposite effect, that is, drive men away from him. Looking at it in this light, I shall persist in preaching "the goodness of God," believing, with the apostle, that:

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.—2 Timothy 3:16.

If the scripture which says, "the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God," is "profitable for doctrine," then why is not the scripture which says that "All the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the Lord: and all the kindred of the nations shall worship before thee," also "profitable for doctrine"? And if the scripture which says of the rich man, "in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments," is "profitable . . . for instruction," then why is not the scripture which says, "and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them," also "profitable . . . for instruction"? Why should the scripture which says "the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" be considered more "profitable for doctrine" and "instruction" than the scripture which says "he went and preached unto the spirits in prison," preached the gospel "even to the dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh"? Why should the scripture which says, "the Son of man is come to save that which was lost" be considered more "profitable" than the scriptures which teach us that he will "*go after that which is lost, UNTIL HE FIND IT*"? Why?

CHAPTER 4.

THE UNPARDONABLE SIN, THE SIN AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST.

There is another text of scripture that *seems*, at first reading, to disagree from the leading thought of the preceding chapter, and it reads as follows:

And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.—Revelation 20:15.

And the cause of this *seeming* disagreement is: this occurs after "the thousand years are expired"; after Satan has been "loosed out of his prison"; after the last great battle, in which "the Devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone"; after the gospel has been preached "to them that are dead"; after "death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them"; and after "death

and hell were cast into the lake of fire." After all this has been accomplished, there will still be some whose names are "not found written in the book of life," and they are to be "cast into the lake of fire."

Who are they? and why are not their names found "in the book of life"?

The Savior in speaking to the saints in the church at

Sardis, says:

He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life.—Revelation 3:5.

Their names were yet *in* "the book of life," but there was danger of their being "blotted out." And no wonder; for in the first verse of the same chapter he says of them, "thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead"; and in the second verse he says again:

Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die.

Those saints had obeyed the gospel, had been saved, and their names recorded in the Lamb's "book of life"; but at the time the apostle was writing to them, some of them were already dead, and others were "ready to die." And should they become absolutely dead to God—dead to all righteousness, then their names would be blotted "out of the book of life," and they shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." (Revelation 21:8.)

They have been made alive from the first death: saved and brought "to the knowledge of the truth," made alive in Christ, and their names recorded "in the book of life"; but when they become spiritually dead the second time, when God blots their names "out of the book of life," after it has been recorded there, and they are "cast into the lake of fire," with the Devil and his angels, this "is the second death." And while we contend that God "will have all men to be saved" from the first death, we do not claim that he will save any, not even one, from "the second death." The Savior said:

Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost

shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.—Matthew 12:31, 32.

Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewithsoever they shall blaspheme: but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation.—Mark 3:28, 29.

And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven.—Luke 12:10.

There is one sin, and one only, that is absolutely unpardonable, and that is the sin against the Holy Ghost. All other sins *may* be forgiven unto the “sons of men”; but I should not like to take the position that all other sins may be forgiven unto “the sons of God,” for the Apostle Paul says:

For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?—Hebrews 10:26-29.

You will notice here that the apostle is speaking of those who have already “received the knowledge of the truth.” Now, how do men receive “the knowledge of the truth”? Jesus answers:

If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”—John 8:31, 32.

We *know the truth* then, if we continue in his word—obey the gospel. And when we “know the truth,” it makes us “free.” It also purifies us:

Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth.—1 Peter 1:22.

And it sanctifies us too:

Sanctify them through thy truth, . . . that they also might be sanctified through the truth.—John 17:17 19.

And in harmony with this is the statement of the Savior:

If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.—John 7:17.

To “know of the doctrine” would be to “know the truth,” and you can “know of the doctrine” if you “do his will,” while you can “know the truth,” he says, “if ye continue in my word.” And if a man is made “free,” “purified” and “sanctified,” and “shall know the truth,” he is saved, for the Savior says:

And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.—John 17:3.

And John says:

He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.—1 John 5:12.

And now after a man is “saved” and has “come unto the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:4), has “received the knowledge of the truth” (Hebrews 10:26), he “is passed from death unto life” (John 5:24), having been delivered “from the power of darkness” and translated into the kingdom of God’s dear Son (see Colossians 1:13). But after he has been “saved” and “received the knowledge of the truth,” and after he has been “sanctified” by “the blood of the covenant,” if he shall then “sin willfully,” count “the blood of the covenant” an “unholy thing,” and shall trample “under foot the Son of God”; then, the apostle says, “there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins.”

God has saved him once, and has given him “the knowledge of truth”; but, if he “willfully” rebels against God, after he “is passed from death unto life,” and counts the sacrifice which God has made for him “an unholy thing,” then I do not understand that the Savior is going to die for him again. Nor do I understand that he can receive *again* the benefits of the first atonement, for Paul says:

For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them AGAIN unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.—Hebrews 6:4-6.

They have been brought to repentance once, have been "reconciled to God" by the "blood of his cross," and have once "tasted of the heavenly gift" (and "the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."—Romans 6: 23), "were made partakers of the Holy Ghost" once, have once "tasted the good word of God," and also "the powers of the world to come." And now, "if they shall fall away," "sin willfully," after having received the full benefits of the atonement, it is "impossible to renew them *again* unto repentance," and "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." They then become like the Devil and his angels, and will, no doubt, share a similar fate. As proof that they become like the Devil, I wish to offer another thought on Hebrews 10: 29, latter part of the verse:

And hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace.

The meaning of the word *despite*, as used here, is "spite," "malice"; and it shows that the ones of whom Paul is speaking here not only "sin willfully," but that they do it spitefully and maliciously—to show their "spite" or "malice" against God, and against his "Spirit of grace," this, I understand, is why they can never be brought "again to repentance"; they "willfully" *rebel*, and spitefully, maliciously, *defy* God and his power?

You may think that man would never commit this sin, after being enlightened. Well, he certainly *could not* commit it before he is enlightened, so if there is no possibility of his committing it afterward, I see no use of referring to it at all. But in proof of the possibility of man's committing this sin, even after he has been saved, I ask you to read this:

For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.—2 Peter 2: 4.

And read this, too:

And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.—Jude 1: 6.

If the angels could sin against God, leave "their own habi-

tation," "fall from heaven" (Luke 10:18), and be cast "down to hell," then I see no reason why "the sons of God" in the flesh should assume that they have passed beyond the possibility of a fall.

Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.
—1 Corinthians 10:12.

The Apostle John says:

If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.—
1 John 5:16.

"There is a sin unto death," and when a brother commits that sin, it is no use of praying for him, he will not repent.

So, while I believe, as the Bible teaches, that God "will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth"; I also believe that when they have come to this condition,—if they deliberately turn away, count the blood of their Savior on unholy thing, and willfully rebels against God,—they commit that sin which John says is "unto death." Hence the willful, deliberate, arrogant sin, which is done with the intention of doing "despite unto the Spirit of grace," with the intention of defying the power of God, "hath never forgiveness." Those who commit this sin will be "cast into the lake of fire" with the Devil and his angels, into "everlasting punishment." They will never repent, for they will never feel sorry for what they have done, "neither in this world, neither in the world to come."

Just what is meant by "the world to come," and how far into the future it may extend, I do not know; nor do I know what possibilities, if any at all, there may be for this class of sinners beyond that period known as "the world to come." The Bible shows that they have been saved, purified, and sanctified by the "blood of the covenant," and that they afterwards rebelled against God, willfully and maliciously. I have no theory to offer in regard to them, after they are "cast into the lake of fire"; I leave them in the hands of God, believing that all will be ordered for the best.

CHAPTER 5.

THE DIFFERENT GLORIES. EVERY ONE TO RECEIVE ACCORDING TO HIS WORKS.

That there will be a difference between the salvation of those who obey the gospel in this life and those who put it off till they go to the pit or prison, and there learn obedience by the things which they suffer, is so clearly taught in the Scriptures that it really needs no proof; but that there may be no misunderstanding in regard to our position on the final destiny of man, and that the reader may know there is nothing in our position to encourage a man in putting off obedience till this earth life is over, I think best to present this chapter on the different degrees of glory. The first text of scripture I shall quote is this:

For therefore we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is the Savior of all men, specially of those that believe.—1 Timothy 4:10.

I believe that, with all my heart. And as I have proven that he is "the Savior of all men," and that he "will have all men to be saved," I shall now attempt to prove that there is a special salvation for "those that believe." And in doing this it will be necessary to show that there are more places of happiness than one, and that those places of happiness differ, one from another, in glory. There are a number of proof-texts in the Old Testament to which I wish to call your attention, and as they are so nearly alike, I shall quote them, without stopping to comment, italicizing the words I wish you to notice.

Behold, the heaven and *the heaven of heavens* is the Lord's thy God.—Deuteronomy 10:14.

But will God indeed dwell on the earth? behold, the heaven and *heaven of heavens* can not contain thee.—1 Kings 8:27.

But who is able to build him a house, seeing the heaven and *heaven of heavens* can not contain him?—2 Chronicles 2:6.

But will God in very deed dwell with men on the earth? Behold, heaven and *the heaven of heavens* can not contain thee.—2 Chronicles 6:18.

Thou, even thou, art Lord alone; thou hast made heaven, *the heaven of heavens*, with all their hosts.—Nehemiah 9:6.

The heaven, *even the heavens*, are the Lord's.—Psalm 115:16.

If there be only one heaven, then why should all those inspired writers use the word in the plural number? And if those "heavens" are all the same in glory, then why should one of them be represented as being so much superior to the others as to entitle it to be called "the heaven of heavens"? Evidently there is one that is superior to all the others, and we shall doubtless find it to be the special salvation for "those that believe." But this idea of more heavens than one is not confined to the writers of the Old Testament. Paul says:

I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I can not tell; or whether out of the body, I can not tell: God knoweth;) such a one caught up to the third heaven.—2 Corinthians 12:2.

There could not be a "third" finger on your hand if there were not a first and a second finger; there could not be a "third" day in the week if there were not a first and a second day; neither could there be a "third heaven" if there were not a first and a second heaven.

Again, the same writer says:

There are also celestial bodies, and bodies terrestrial: but the glory of the celestial is one, and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead.—1 Corinthians 15:40-42.

You will notice that those glories are not the same: the glory of the celestial is *one*, and the glory of the terrestrial is *another*. The "glory of the sun," because of its great superiority, is doubtless "the heaven of heavens": the special salvation for "those that believe."

Next to the glory of the sun is the glory of the moon; and as its glory is *one*, those who attain to it will be *one*, just as those who attain to the glory of the sun will be *one*; but it will, of course, be an inferior glory. But it will be different with those who attain to the glory of the stars: their glory will be inferior to that of the moon, and they will *differ, one from another*, as the stars of heaven differ in brightness and splendor.

On this same subject the Savior says:

In my father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.—John 14:2, 3.

He says there are “many mansions,” while Amos says “stories” or “chambers”:

It is he that buildeth his stories in the heaven.—Amos 9:6.

The Revised Version says, “chambers.” There are then “many mansions,” or “stories,” or “chambers,” in this great universe which God has builded; and the Savior said that he went to “prepare a place”—one of those “mansions” or “chambers”—for his followers. And this, again, is the special salvation for “those that believe,” “the glory of the sun,” or “the heaven of heavens”: to dwell in the presence of the Savior, and with a fullness of his glory. This is the “inheritance” which Peter says is “incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you” (1 Peter 1:4). Those who reject the gospel here can *never*, so far as I can see, have any right or title to this inheritance, this special salvation, but must take a less glory than that of the sun. Where God and Christ are they can never come, but must suffer a never-ending loss, the loss of celestial salvation in the presence of God. Those who reject the gospel here may never receive even the glory of the moon, which when compared with the glory of the sun, is very inferior indeed; but they may be glad “after many days” of suffering “in the pit,” to accept even a glory that is represented by one of the dimmest stars. But, while they might be very glad to be sent forth “out of the pit wherein is no water” and be received into one of the smallest glories, I doubt their being perfectly happy. There will be something lacking to make their joy full and complete. But they will be saved from death, from hell, and from sin, “every man in his own order.” Their loss, though, will be *very* great, as great as the difference between the brightness and splendor of the sun and the brightness of the dimmest star that bedecks the heavens.

And this is not all. Those who reject the gospel here must

be "turned into hell, with all the nations that forget God"; and when the dead in Christ shall be raised from the dead, to reign with the Savior, we are told that "the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." There is a strong probability then of the wicked having to remain "shut up in prison," in "outer darkness," where "there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth," during this thousand years, while the righteous dwell with God. The apostle says:

Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after.—1 Timothy 5:24.

Another apostle says:

The time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?—1 Peter 4:17.

Putting the two statements together, I get the idea that the saints of God were being judged, in part at least, even then; that their sins were going "before to judgment," and the saints were being cleansed from all sin by "obeying the truth"; and that when they are called to stand in the presence of God, they will receive the "crown of righteousness" which is laid up "for all them that love his appearing." But not so with the wicked; when they are called to stand before God, their sins "follow after" and condemn them in the presence of the Great Judge, and they are cast out "into outer darkness"; there they suffer "until the thousand years were finished," and "after many days shall they be visited."

Malachi, in speaking of the time when the Lord shall come and "make up my jewels," says:

Then shall ye return, and discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not.—Malachi 3:18.

Yes; there will be a difference. The parable of the prodigal son, found in Luke 15:11-31 illustrates this difference quite clearly. In it we have two brothers represented. One of them takes his portion of the father's goods and wastes it in sin and folly. The other one stays at home and faithfully discharges his duty as a faithful and obedient son. By and

by there arose a great famine in the "far country," whither the younger son had gone, and in his dire extremity he resolved to return to his "father's house." His father ran to meet him, ordered that he should be well clothed, that the "fatted calf" be killed, and that the whole household "be merry"; all because of the prodigal's safe return. The elder son, coming to the house at this time and learning the cause of all this merrymaking, became offended and refused to go into the house. When his father came out and urged him to go in, he still refused, and proceeded to justify his conduct by referring to his past faithfulness as compared with his brother's unfaithfulness, and to the fact that during all those long years his father had never done for him as he was now doing for his unfaithful brother.

It is claimed by some that this parable represents the father of those two brothers as being partial to the disobedient son and unjust to the obedient one, and that it practically sets a premium on sin. It does nothing of the kind. It represents the father as being merciful and forgiving to the disobedient son. On the other hand, it represents him as giving everything he had to the obedient one, to the elder son; for, in verse 31, he says to him: "Son, thou art ever with me, and *all that I have is thine.*" While the younger son was received back with great demonstrations of joy and gladness, the entire estate went to the elder son. The younger son might sit down and look out upon the farm, the barn, the stock, the machinery, the house that covered and protected him from the weather, the victuals upon the table from which he was eating; but he must recognize the fact that all, *all* belongs to the son who had been faithful and obedient. He must remember, too, with many regrets, that his father had given him the same chance that his brother had; but that he had squandered his part of the inheritance, and that now he is simply a beggar in the house of his father; a pauper, dependent upon the charity of his father and his brother. Thoughts like this would no doubt pass through his mind: I might have had a good farm, a good house, a good barn, plenty of stock, and plenty of money; but alas!

I wasted everything, and my life is a blank—worse than a blank.

Reader, can you see any difference between the prodigal son and his faithful brother? Do you think for a moment that the prodigal is just as well off as if he had been faithful? Do you think that this being received back into his father's house, being conscious of all he had lost by disobedience could make him perfectly happy. No, his loss will surely lessen his happiness. And, while I would not take the position that the Savior referred to those who do not obey the gospel in this life, in bringing before us this prodigal son, I do believe that the *principle* holds good with them, and that the lesson is a good one. It teaches that the faithful and obedient will receive the entire inheritance, even though the unfaithful and disobedient, after humble and contrite repentance, may be saved. And in line with this is the teaching of Paul:

If a man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.—1 Corinthians 3:14, 15.

The works of the elder son, in the foregoing parable, did "abide," and he received "a reward"; "all that I have is thine," the father said to him. But the works of the younger son, being bad, were "burned," and he suffered "loss"—the loss of his part of the inheritance; but "he himself" was "saved; yet so as by fire."

Daniel says:

And the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom.—Daniel 7:22.

And again he says:

And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High.—Daniel 7:27.

And in verse 18 he says:

But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever.

Yes; there is a special salvation for "those that believe." Whatever salvation may be in store for those who have to

learn obedience in the world to come, by the things which they suffer, one thing is sure: the "dominion," and the "greatness of the kingdom," are to be given to the saints of the Most High. God's love and mercy are unbounded, infinite; but we must remember that his justice is as great as his love, and that mercy can not rob justice. The God of heaven has decreed that "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap"; and there is no power beneath the heavens that can change his decrees, or thwart his purposes. Hence we believe that the wicked shall be "turned into hell," and that their punishment will be great; we believe too that their loss will be eternal, and that their suffering must continue until they learn obedience; and, further, we believe that they must accept God's terms of pardon before they can ever come out of the "prison house" to inherit even the smallest glory of the "many mansions" in our "Father's house." In other words, we take the position that there is no salvation for man, here or hereafter, only through obedience to God's law.

Can you see then anything in our position to encourage men to go on, even for one day, in sin and rebellion against God? Is a man going to break his arm simply because he is sure it can be set, and that it will get well in a few weeks? Is a man willing to go to state's prison simply because he will be permitted to go free after ten or fifteen years of hard labor? Then would a sensible man be willing to put off obedience to God simply because there is a possibility of his coming out of the pit after suffering there, in "outer darkness," for a thousand years? And then, remember, he can not come where God and Christ are; can have no part in that special salvation, but must remain outside of the Holy City in some of the smaller glories. He will be as far inferior to what he might have been as one of the stars is inferior to the sun in brilliancy and power.

No, reader, there is nothing in God's law that will give man any encouragement to continue in sin. Every day, every *hour* that is spent in sin must cause us suffering; not only suffering, but the loss will be irreparable, in some respects at least. The temptation, here, to launch out upon the

results of obedience and disobedience is strong; but I must forbear, lest we get too far from the object of this paper.

The Savior says:

Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.—Revelation 22:12.

If our works are bad they will be “burned,” and we shall “suffer loss”—the loss of a fullness of glory in the presence of our Savior.

CHAPTER 6. *punish*

THE OBJECT OF FUTURE PUNISHMENT. FOR THE GOOD OF THE INDIVIDUAL.

We can never fully understand the subject of the “eternal judgment,” and the final destiny of man, unless we have correct ideas of the object or purpose God has in view in punishing the children of men. Many have, seemingly at least, overlooked this matter in the investigation of this subject, and have therefore arrived at conclusions that are incorrect. Not only are they incorrect, but they are repugnant to all the better feelings of our nature, and in direct opposition to the unbounded goodness, love, and mercy of our heavenly Father, as presented to us in his word. The Lord said to Moses:

Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee.—Deuteronomy 8:5.

How? “As a man chasteneth his son.” The wise man also says:

My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction. For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth.—Proverbs 3:11, 12.

Here are two witnesses who testify that God chastens his children as a father corrects his son; “the son in whom he delighteth.” Let us take a view of a father chastening his son. We shall suppose this boy to be fifteen years old; he has disobeyed his father’s command, and the father now purposes to chastise him. The boy is tied to a tree, a red hot iron is brought forth and applied to his body. Again and again this heroic treatment is applied, all the while the boy’s

screams are rending the air; his pleas for mercy are pouring into this father's ears, and his agony is fearful to behold. But there is no cessation of the punishment. The boy faints in a dead swoon, but the father is determined to show him how much "he delighteth" in him, so he continues to apply the torture as long as there is a throb of the pulse, a spark of life, left in his boy's body—the boy "in whom he delighteth."

During this time the rest of the family are standing around shouting, Glory! Hallelujah! along with other expressions of gratitude and happiness.

You would say that man is a brute, and the whole family are worse than heathen cannibals. Such a thing would not be tolerated anywhere in all this land. Yet if God's punishment of the wicked, those who have not obeyed the gospel in this life, has been correctly represented by the religious world, the above is the way a father should chasten "his son in whom he delighteth." Men have tried to make me believe that my heavenly Father will take his erring creatures, pack them in a lake of fire and brimstone, and roast them there for millions and millions of ages; and they have thought me an unbeliever in the Bible because I *could not* believe it. I am not yet prepared to accept it. But I look upon the chastisement of God in the light in which it is presented in the Scriptures, quoted above, that is, as a father chasteneth his "son, in whom he delighteth," even so the Lord chastens his erring creatures. That idea is confirmed by what the Lord said of David and his posterity:

If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgression *with the rod*, and their iniquities *with stripes*. Nevertheless, *my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail*. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.—Psalm 89:30-34.

Yes, the Lord will use "the rod" and inflict "stripes" upon the transgressor; but even in this his "loving-kindness" and his "faithfulness" will be ever present, and he will "use the rod" in order to "spare the child." And, as an example of this, please note the following statement of the Psalmist:

Before I was afflicted I went astray : but now have I kept thy word. . . . It is good for me that I have been afflicted ; that I might learn thy statutes.—Psalm 119 : 67, 71.

I can see that the chastisement, in his case, was upon the principle of correction, and that it had the desired effect. So it is, as a rule, when a loving parent chastises his son; the son is corrected, and the father is respected and honored because of his superior judgment. Not so, however, with a brutal father; he drives his son from him, loses his love and respect, and the boy, as a rule, goes to the bad. As to which of these is to be taken to represent our heavenly Father, I leave the reader to decide for himself. The Psalmist says again:

He that chastiseth the heathen, shall he not correct?—Psalm 94 : 10.

Do you think he will? If not, what is meant by this?

For all nations shall come and worship before thee; *for thy judgments are made manifest.*—Revelation 15 : 4.

And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.—Revelation 11 : 15.

“The kingdoms of this world,” at the present time, would hardly be recognized as “the kingdoms of our Lord”; nor do “all nations come and worship before thee.” This is to be in the future. But when? “*When thy judgments are made manifest.*” Surely, then, “he that chastiseth the heathen” will “correct,” when his “judgments are made manifest,” and will, by those judgments, cause “all nations” to “come and worship before thee,” and to “become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ.” And this is made doubly strong by the Prophet Isaiah:

For *when thy judgments are in the earth*, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.—Isaiah 26 : 9.

’Twere better to learn righteousness *before* that time; but, if one does not learn before then, it is a consolation to know that their sufferings will be of such a character as to teach them righteousness, and cause them to “come and worship before” God. The Lord chastens his children in this life, that they might escape those judgments, the condemnation

that shall rest upon the wicked. Paul says, in speaking of the afflictions that come upon the people of God in this life:

But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.—1 Corinthians 11:32.

Peter says:

For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end of them that obey not the gospel of God?—1 Peter 4:17.

This is all in harmony with the statement:

Some men's sins are open beforehand, going before to judgment; and some men they follow after.—1 Timothy 5:24.

Hence the Lord says of Israel:

Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee *in the furnace of affliction*.—Isaiah 48:10.

Subjecting them to "the furnace of affliction" did, in some respects at least, correct them; for the Psalmist says:

When he slew them then they sought him: and they returned and inquired early after God.—Psalm 78:34.

And they remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their redeemer.—Verse 35.

True, they did not become as good as they might have been; but they were corrected, in a measure, and kept from altogether forgetting the Lord: the chastisement caused them to "remember" that the Lord "was their rock." As examples of this, please note the following:

"And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord" and he sold them into the hand of the king of Mesopotamia, and they served him "eight years"; but "when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, the Lord raised up a deliverer." See Judges 3:7-10.

"And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord," and for this they were given into the hands of Moab, and were compelled to serve them "eighteen years"; but "when the children of Israel cried unto the Lord, the Lord raised them up a deliverer." See Judges 3:12-30.

"And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the Lord," and this time they were sold into the hand of the Canaanites; but "the children of Israel cried unto the Lord," and again he delivered them. See Judges 4:1-24.

So we might continue writing those examples, page after page, proving the truth of what the Psalmist says: "When he slew them, then they sought him." They were chosen, indeed, "in the furnace of affliction"; but their whole history shows that the afflictions which the Lord put upon them were corrective, and for the good of those who were being chastened.

The Lord has seldom seen fit to allow his people to sail along on "flowery beds of ease," for any great length of time without some afflictions. Not that he delights in seeing them suffer, but because this suffering usually becomes an absolute necessity in correcting and curing them of evils that would lead to greater suffering if not corrected now. Even the noble Paul was no exception in this. He says of himself:

And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.—2 Corinthians 12:7.

When Paul plead with the Lord to remove this affliction, the Lord kindly showed him that the affliction was really a blessing in disguise, an absolute necessity in disciplining this grand and noble man for the work of the Master. Then Paul said:

Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.—2 Corinthians 12:9.

Paul had learned the following important lesson:

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.—Romans 8:28.

Many, *very* many, have failed to learn this lesson, and are therefore most always complaining of their afflictions, trials, and sufferings; not realizing that a loving Savior is trying, by this means, to purify and prepare them for his presence. The apostles, we are told:

Departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.—Acts 5:41.

The apostles were "men of like passions" (Acts 14:15) as other men, and they had to learn humility, many times, by the things which they had to suffer. Paul, it seems, was of

that disposition that could be faithful in all kinds of tribulation and suffering; but when blessed with such an abundance of revelations, it became necessary for the hand of affliction to be laid upon him, too, lest he become "exalted above measure." But when he realized that it was *for his good*, he could rejoice even in his infirmities. He evidently believed his own teaching, in the following:

For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons.—Hebrews 12:6, 7.

A little further on, in comparing the motives of earthly parents with the motives of our heavenly Father in the administration of punishment, he says:

For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he *for our profit*, that we might be partakers of his holiness.—Verse 10.

Notice that the Lord's object in punishing is, "that we might be partakers of his holiness." It is not for the purpose of wreaking vengeance upon the offender, nor to satisfy divine anger; it is "*for our profit*." Then in the next verse he says:

Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.—Verse 11.

Chastisement, then, although it usually seems grievous while we are suffering it, is purifying in its nature; and this, no doubt, is why future punishment is so often referred to in the Scriptures as being "cast into fire," "into a furnace of fire," etc. "I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction," said the Lord to the children of Israel.

As another example of God's object in punishing that people, choosing them "in the furnace of affliction," I wish to call your attention to Jeremiah 24:1-5. The Lord here, in speaking of those who were in captivity, says:

Like these good figs, so will I acknowledge them that are carried away captive of Judah, whom I have sent out of this place into the land of the Chaldeans *for their good*.—Verse 5.

They had been wicked and rebellious no doubt, which was the cause of their having to be turned over to the cruelty of

the heathen; {but God still loved them,} and in order to correct them "for their good," brought this punishment upon them. } And that their captivity was working in them "the peaceable fruit of righteousness," is evident from the fact that the Lord says, "so will I acknowledge them." Their captivity, being enslaved by the heathen who knew nothing of the "true and living God," was indeed "grievous" to them; but it was "for their good."

As men are sometimes delivered into the hands of their enemies, into the hands of the heathen, "for their good," so they are sometimes delivered over to Satan for the same purpose. Paul, speaking of those who had made shipwreck of the faith, said:

Of whom is Hymeneus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.—1 Timothy 1:20.

Of the one at Corinth who had committed such a grievous sin, he said, as before noted:

To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.—1 Corinthians 5:5.

When men are delivered "unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh" in order to teach them "not to blaspheme," and to the end "that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus," it is certainly "for their good," just the same as when they are delivered into the hands of the heathen for their correction. It could be for their good, however, only upon the principle that the punishment was corrective and reformatory: upon the principle that it will cause them to turn from that which is evil and seek the Lord. Will it do so? Listen to what the Lord says of Israel:

The pride of Israel doth testify to his face: therefore shall Israel and Ephraim fall in their iniquity; Judah also shall fall with them.—Hosea 5:5.

They have dealt treacherously against the Lord; . . . now shall a mouth devour them.—Verse 7.

Ephraim shall be desolate in the day of rebuke.—Verse 7.

For I will be unto Ephraim as a lion, and as a young lion to the house of Judah: I, even I, will tear and go away, and none shall rescue him.—Verse 14.

I shall go away and return to my place, *till* they acknowledge

their offence, and seek my place: *(in their affliction they will seek me early.*—Verse 15.)

They were proud and treacherous in their prosperity, hence they must “fall in their iniquity,” and the wrath of God must be poured out upon them; but the Lord says that “*in their affliction they will seek me early,*” and hence he will go away “till” they are willing to acknowledge their sin: “till” they are willing to “seek my face.”

➤ Proof-texts and examples by the dozen might be produced, in confirmation of the foregoing, but these are sufficient; they show that God punishes people, now, “for their good,” that they “might not be condemned with the world,” that they “might be partakers of his holiness,” “for our profit,” to yield in them the “peaceable fruit of righteousness,” and “that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.”

By what line of reasoning do we reach the conclusion that he chastises upon just the opposite principle to this in the world to come? “He that chastiseth the heathen, shall he not correct?” As God’s people are chastised upon the principle of correction, and as the chastisement of the heathen is to be corrective, too, then I see no reason to doubt that the punishment of those who are “turned into hell” will be upon the same principle; that the correction and final good of the individual who is being chastened will be the grand purpose in the divine Mind. If the punishment is to be upon any other principle, I can see no good to come of it; the individual would not be made any better, the righteous would not be made any happier, and God’s glory would not be made any greater.

Besides that, we are told that God is unchangeable; “the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever”; and as he punishes upon the principle of correction *here*, we are forced to believe that he will do so hereafter. This, taken with what we have learned in regard to the mission of the Savior to “the dead,” to “the spirits in prison,” certainly justifies us in believing that when the wicked are “turned into hell, with all the nations that forget God,” it will be for the same pur-

pose that the children of Israel were sent into Chaldean captivity, "for their good."

The old proverb says: "Experience is a dear school; but fools will learn in no other." The child who will not obey his parents must learn obedience in the house of correction; citizens who will not obey the laws of the land must learn obedience in the state's prison; and men and women who will not obey God here must be "turned into hell," and learn obedience in God's prison house, and that, too, by the things which they suffer. I say they *must* learn it there, because God has declared, by the inspired writers of the Bible, that "every knee shall bow" and that "every tongue shall confess"; that "all nations shall come and worship before thee"; that he will "reconcile all things unto himself" through the blood of his cross."

God has declared this, and his "purpose shall stand." May the Lord help us to live so that we may escape the punishment that shall overtake the wicked.

good

CHAPTER 7.

"FOR EVER," "EVERLASTING," AND "ETERNAL," AS APPLIED TO FUTURE PUNISHMENT.

It is thought by many that the words *for ever*, *everlasting*, and *eternal*, when applied to the punishment of the wicked, in the world to come, must necessarily mean unending, *endless*, in the fullest sense. But upon a careful examination of the use of these words, as applied to other things, I find that they do not always mean endless; and if they do not always mean endless when applied to other things than future punishment, I can see no reason for deciding that when applied to that subject, they must necessarily and invariably mean never ending.

We shall take those words, as used in our Bible, and learn, if possible, if they always signify endless duration. Let us take first the words, *for ever*. Jonah, in speaking of his experience when cast overboard and swallowed by the "great fish," said:

For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; . . . all thy billows and thy waves passed over me. . . . The waters compassed me about, even to the soul: the depth closed me round about. . . . I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me *for ever*.—Jonah 2:3-6

He was in the fish three days and nights, yet he calls it "for ever." Surely he did not mean *without end*. The Lord gave to Israel a law in regard to Hebrew servants, and in that law he said that when the servant did not wish to go out free at the end of the seven years, certain ordinances should be performed, "and he shall serve him *for ever*" (Exodus 21:6). Again, in speaking of the heathen nations in that country, the Lord said:

They shall be your bondmen *for ever*.—Leviticus 25:46.

In speaking of the earth, the wise man says:

One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth *for ever*.—Ecclesiastes 1:4.

And David says:

Who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed *for ever*.—Psalm 104:5.

Yet Isaiah says:

And the earth shall remove out of her place, in the wrath of the Lord of hosts, and in the day of his fierce anger.—Isaiah 13:13.

The Savior says:

Heaven and earth shall pass away.—Matthew 24:35.

Peter says:

The earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.—2 Peter 3:10. (See also Revelation 20:11; 21:1.)

So the earth is to be "removed," "burned up," and "pass away," notwithstanding it "abideth *for ever*," and "shall not be removed *for ever*." "For ever," then, does not mean endless in these texts. It means three days and nights, the time Jonah was navigating the sea inside the "great fish"; it means the lifetime of a Hebrew servant, which may be one hour or may be fifty years; it means the length of time the heathen nations served Israel, which ceased long ago; and it also means the length of time the earth shall stand, before being

“burned up” and “removed” to give place for the “new earth.”

If the meaning of this word is so flexible and indefinite, when applied to other things; if it can be used to express any length of time, from three days and nights to ten millions of years; then why not admit that it has the same flexible and indefinite meaning when applied to the punishment of the wicked in the great hereafter? The wise man says:

I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be *for ever*: nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it: and God doeth it, that men should fear before him.—Ecclesiastes 3:14.

The word *everlasting* is, perhaps, a stronger term than *for ever*; but whether it is or not, it is used in the Bible in just about the same way. The Lord said to Abraham that he would give to him the land of Canaan “for an everlasting possession” (Genesis 17:8). And to Jacob: “And will give this land to thy seed after thee for an everlasting possession” (Genesis 48:4).

In Genesis 49:26 the hills are called, “the everlasting hills.” In Habakkuk 3:6 we are told, “and the everlasting mountains were scattered.” But notwithstanding they are called “everlasting hills” and “everlasting mountains,” the Bible says:

For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed.—Isaiah 54:10.

Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low.—Isaiah 40:4.

Yet they are “everlasting.” Not only this, but we are also informed that “the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up”; and that “we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.” (2 Peter 3:10, 13.)

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.—Revelation 21:1.

When the earth is “burned up,” and when there is “a new heaven and a new earth,” are we to understand that the “everlasting mountains” and the “everlasting hills” will still remain? If “everlasting” means without end, they surely must. Will Abraham and his posterity inherit the land of Canaan,

as their possession, after this earth is "burned up," and after the "holy city, the new Jerusalem," comes "down from God out of heaven" upon the "new earth"? Well, it was to be "an everlasting possession."

Again we read:

And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee. This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.—Genesis 17:7, 10, 13.

The above tells us that God gave to Abraham, *and his seed after him*, the law of circumcision for "an everlasting covenant." Yet Paul tells us:

For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision.—Galatians 5:6.; also 6:15.

Yet it was to be "an everlasting covenant" with Abraham and his seed, "in their generations." And, mind you, Paul says, "if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed" (Galatians 3:29). Should all who "are Christ's" continue to keep this "everlasting covenant"? No; for Paul says "if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing" (Galatians 5:2). An "everlasting covenant," then, may be fulfilled and cease to be binding. Why may not "everlasting punishment" accomplish its work, and then cease to be operative too? Why should this word mean more, when applied to future punishment, than it does when applied to a covenant, to an inheritance, or to the hills and mountains? Why should it?

Let us now notice briefly the word *eternal*. Does it mean endless? Yes, *sometimes*. But it is like those other words: its meaning is *not* so definitely fixed that there can be no variation. If we had a perfect language, a language in which every word had but one meaning, we might afford to be more dogmatic in some of our opinions; but when we consider that most every word in our language has more definitions than one, and that we must often determine the meaning from the

connections, it ought to teach us to be at least very cautious in taking our positions.

I shall use but one proof-text in which the word *eternal* is used, and in that it is used in connection with the punishment of the wicked:

Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.—Jude, verse 7.

Now this people suffered “the vengeance of eternal fire,” and they are “set forth for an example,” too. And if we can learn its effect upon them, it will be of help to us in understanding the meaning of the word, also of the word *everlasting*, as used elsewhere. By reading Genesis 19:24-28, we learn that the Lord rained “brimstone and fire” upon those cities and burned them up with their inhabitants, leaving them “neither root nor branch” in all that land—except Lot and family. But when they were burned up, the fire ceased to burn; there was nothing more for it to burn, and so it went out. If you take the position that the “eternal fire” is to burn them after they are cast into hell, as it did the “rich man,” then I shall prove to you that even that burning, however severe it may be, is to have an end.

Please turn and read, carefully, Ezekiel 16:44-63. The Lord here is talking to Israel, and in verse 46 he says:

And thine elder sister is Samaria, she and her daughters that dwell at thy left hand: and thy younger sister, that dwelleth at thy right hand, is Sodom and her daughters.

The younger sister of Israel, then, is “Sodom and her daughters.” Please keep that in mind. In verses 49 and 50, he says:

Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fullness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy. And they were haughty, and committed abomination before me: therefore I took them away as I saw good.

I call especial attention to this to show you that the Sodom, of which the Lord is speaking here, is the same wicked Sodom that he destroyed from off the earth because of their abomina-

tions, and that it is therefore the same Sodom that suffered "the vengeance of eternal fire." The Lord says here, "I took them away *as I saw good.*" I believe that God destroyed them from off the face of the earth, and sent them down "into the lower parts of the earth," into the pit or prison: turned them into hell with other "nations that forget God." That this was to be a kind of "house of correction" or "reform school" for them is proven by what follows. In verse 53 the Lord says to Israel:

When I shall bring again their captivity, the captivity of Sodom and her daughters, and the captivity of Samaria and her daughters, then will I bring again the captivity of thy captives in the midst of them.

And in verse 55 he says again:

When thy sisters, Sodom and her daughters, shall return to their former estate, and Samaria and her daughters shall return to their former estate, then thou and thy daughters shall return to your former estate.

Israel had been *very* wicked, more so than Sodom and Samaria, and the Lord tells them, in verse 59, that they had "despised the oath in breaking the covenant," and then, in verses 60 and 61 he says:

Nevertheless, I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant. Then thou shalt remember thy ways, and be ashamed, when thou shalt receive thy sisters, thine elder and thy younger: and I will give them unto thee for daughters, but not by thy covenant.

Sodom and her daughters are to be restored to their "former estate" or inheritance, and are to be given to Israel for daughters; but the Lord says it shall not be "by thy covenant." No; for in verse 62 the Lord says: "And I will establish my covenant with thee." The covenant is to be made with Israel; and Sodom and her daughters, those who suffered "the vengeance of eternal fire," are to be restored to "their former estate" and given to Israel "for daughters." Not for slaves nor servants, but "*for daughters.*"

Then in verse 63 we are told that Israel shall be ashamed and confounded, "when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God." Yes, the Lord is to be *pacified* toward them, and they are to "know that I am the

Lord"; but when they "remember their ways," and think over their past conduct, they will "be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame." They *must* suffer for their wrongdoing. Just so with Sodom: they must suffer the "vengeance of eternal fire," and then, although they may be restored to "their former estate," although it may be "more tolerable" (Matthew 10: 15 and 11: 24) for them "in the day of judgment" than for those who reject the greater light, the light of the gospel, I find no promise, *for them*, of an inheritance in the presence of God. Like the prodigal son, their deeds have been bad and are burned up; they themselves "may be saved, yet so as by fire."

But the "suffering the vengeance of eternal fire," in their case is quite a different thing from suffering a never-ending torment, in the lake of fire and brimstone, with the Devil and his angels. Both these words *everlasting* and *eternal*, are applied to God; and he is represented as being "eternal," and as being "everlasting." But we must remember that God has no beginning of days, as well as no end of life, and that we can not use those words in the same sense, give them the same meaning, when used in connection with future punishment as when applied to God. If "eternal," when applied to God, means without beginning or end, then when it is applied to the punishment of the sinner in the world to come, it means the same thing, or it *does not* mean the same thing, one of the two. And when you admit that it *can not* mean the same in the latter case as in the former, because punishment in the world to come must have a beginning, you then concede that the word *eternal*, when applied to future punishment, is used *only in a limited sense*. And what is true of the word *eternal* is also true of *everlasting*, although *eternal* seems to be the stronger word of the two. And when we concede that those words are used in a limited sense when applied to future punishment, and that they *can not* mean the same as when applied to God, then why should we assert so dogmatically that they *must* mean without end? If "everlasting punishment" *must* have a beginning, then I contend that it *may* have an end also.

“But,” says one, “if ‘everlasting punishment’ may have an end, why may not ‘eternal life’ have an end, too?” What is eternal life? If we can learn from the Bible what “eternal life” is, then perhaps we can tell whether it *may* have an end or not.

In him was life; and the life was the light of men.—John 1 : 4.

And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.—1 John 5 : 11.

Not only is the “eternal life” in him, but he *is* the life.

I am the way, the truth, and the life.—John 14 : 6.

I am the resurrection, and the life.—John 11 : 25.

When Christ, who is our life, shall appear.—Colossians 3 : 4.

John says:

For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.—1 John 1 : 2.

Christ then is “*the life*”; he is “*our life*”; and he is “*that eternal life*.” May we have “eternal life” abiding in us?

Yes:

He that hath the Son hath life: and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.—1 John 5 : 12.

Who has the Son?

He that *abideth in the doctrine of Christ*, he hath both the Father and the Son.—2 John 1 : 9.

If a man love me, he will *keep my words*: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.—John 14 : 23.

And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, *that we may know him that is true*, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, *and eternal life*.—1 John 5 : 20.

And *this is life eternal*, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.—John 17 : 3.

Christ is the life, that eternal life, and the life is in him. When we come to him, the Father and the Son make their abode with us and give “us an understanding, that we may know him that is true”; and when we are placed in a condition that we “might know him,” that is, by having him dwell in us and commune with us, “this is life eternal.” As long as “Christ, who is our life,” shall dwell within us, just that

long we shall have eternal life abiding in us. "If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death" (John 8:51), for "we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John 14:23), and "he that hath the Son, hath life" (1 John 5:12). The life (Christ) can never die. He has neither beginning of days nor end of years. But by transgression, by ceasing to "abide in the doctrine of Christ," we *may lose* eternal life, that is, our communion with "Christ, who is our life," may be severed, and we may die; but Christ is the life, and he can never die. Paul says:

Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.—1 Corinthians 3:16, 17.

Again he says:

What! know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God?—1 Corinthians 6:19.

And again:

For the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.—2 Corinthians 3:6.

The thought is: Our bodies are temples in which God purposes to dwell by his Spirit, and while that Spirit is in us we know God, and the Spirit gives us life. But God's Spirit will not dwell in unholy temples, and if we defile the temple of God, he will destroy us by withdrawing the Spirit that "giveth life." The *life* does not die, but we *lose* it, are *separated from it*, if we "willfully" rebel against God after having received "the knowledge of the truth." And as man may lose "eternal life" by rebelling and turning away *from* God, the source of life, so the sinner may be freed from "everlasting punishment" by repenting and turning *to* God.

The Savior said to the Jews:

And ye will not come to me, that ye might have life.—John 4:40.

There was life in him for all, and all were invited to come to him and partake of "that eternal life"; the only thing that prevented their having eternal life was that they would not come to the life. The Lord had said, long before the birth of our Savior:

But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed,

and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die.—Ezekiel 18:21. (See also Ezekiel 18:24 and 33:14-15.)

When the righteous turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, he shall even die thereby.—Ezekiel 33:18.

The wicked may secure life by coming to the Lord, and the righteous may lose this life and bring death upon himself by turning from the Lord and refusing to “abide in the doctrine of Christ.” The difference is this: In the world to come there will be nothing to cause the righteous, those who are saved, to wish to turn away from God; but everything to cause them to wish to remain with him. Not so with the wicked. Everything will be of a nature to cause them to desire to get away from sin and its consequences, and back to that condition of purity which we understand to be the normal condition of the human family.

“Eternal life” then, is God’s life, the life of the Eternal One; “everlasting life” is God’s life, the life of the Everlasting One; and when we obey him and come before him in that condition of purity and holiness that he can take up his abode with us and dwell in us, he gives unto us this “eternal life,” and then we have “eternal life,” the divine life, the Christ life, abiding in us.

On the other hand, “eternal punishment” is God’s punishment, the punishment of the “Eternal One”; “everlasting punishment” is God’s punishment, the punishment of the “Everlasting One”; and when we get so wicked, and so far away from God that his Spirit finds no place in us, then we have to suffer “eternal punishment,” “everlasting punishment,” just as long as we remain in that condition.

By taking this broad and liberal view of the matter we can believe that “the wicked shall be turned into hell, with all the nations that forget God,” and at the same time believe that God “will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth”; we can believe that those on his left hand shall go away “into everlasting punishment,” and still believe that “all the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the Lord”; we can believe that “Except a man be born again he can not see the kingdom of God,” and still

believe that "all nations whom thou hast made, shall come and worship before thee"; and we can believe that "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he can not enter into the kingdom of God," and yet believe that God will "reconcile all things unto himself," "through the blood of his cross," and that the time will come when "every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them," shall say, "Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

By taking this view of the subject we can believe God's word in its entirety, and have the consolation of knowing that, when so accepted, it will harmonize with itself, from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Revelation.

Now, allow me to quote again, in conclusion, the words of the Creator in the beginning: "Let there be light."

May the Lord help us all to come to the divine light, the heavenly light, and to "walk in the light as he is in the light," that "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son" may cleanse "us from all sin."

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