

MAN

his Nature  
and  
Destiny



**C.R. STAM**

# **MAN**

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## Acknowledgments

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# MAN

## His Nature and Destiny

by

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## PREFACE

Consciously or subconsciously all men are concerned about their final destiny and even about what lies in store for them immediately after this life is over.

Were this not so, death would not hold for man a fear so universal and overwhelming that only a firm faith in God and His Word could take him triumphantly through the experience.

Most men, too, wonder about such subjects as the inner man and his relation to the outer man; life, death and resurrection; heaven, hell, etc., and many would like to know more *facts* about these things.

While there is manifestly still much that we do not know about all of these subjects, it is amazing how much we can learn about them from the Bible, the *only* authoritative source of such information.

With this in mind, and realizing that much has been written on these subjects which is contrary to the divine Revelation, we wrote a series of articles on *Man and His Future* which appeared in the *Berean Searchlight* in 1954-1956.

Since then many additional questions have been asked and answered in our private correspondence, with the result that the whole has now been incorporated in the present volume.

While, as we say, most men *wonder* about the important subjects herein discussed, it is also true that because of sin the majority fear to face up to them. Foolishly they live for this life as though it were never to end and for the next as though it were never to begin.

As we send this volume forth to our readers, therefore, we pray that the Holy Spirit will use our poor efforts to help many to find salvation and eternal security in Christ, and to help all to live this life with eternity's values in view.

--CORNELIUS R. STAM

Chicago, Illinois

March 1, 1961

# INTRODUCTION

In a book intended for popular consumption it is obviously impossible to deal exhaustively with a subject so vast as *Man, His Nature and Destiny*. We will, however, try to deal with it as comprehensively and conclusively as possible. Also, we will deal with it only on the basis of *what God has said in His Word*, for human speculation and reasoning here are inconclusive and idle. Here the Scriptures alone can speak with authority and give us the light we need.

We do not deal with such views as reincarnation, the annihilation of *all, et al.*, for those who hold these views do not regard the Bible as the final authority in the matter, hence we have no common platform for discussion.

We will not confuse our readers by referring too often to Hebrew and Greek words, but those who can may verify for themselves what we do say about the meanings of such words.

Among those who claim to believe the Bible and its message of grace there are basically two schools of thought which have challenged the orthodox view that all men will spend eternity either in conscious bliss or in conscious suffering. These are 1.) that which teaches the *annihilation* of the unsaved and 2.) that which teaches the eventual *reconciliation* of all.

We will deal with each of these views separately, but first let us consider what the Scriptures say about some of the basic subjects in which either one or both of these views are involved. These subjects include: Man's body, soul and spirit, death, the intermediate state, the resurrection, judgment to come, hades, the lake of fire and everlasting punishment.

## Chapter I

# THE SOUL AND THE BODY

We have before us several writings on *Conditional Immortality* which, while differing widely in many respects, unite in teaching that immortality, far from being the possession of all men or of their souls, is obtainable only upon condition of faith in Christ. They teach further that those who do *not* thus obtain immortality will be "destroyed," caused to "perish" or "made extinct." Some of these, however, teach with respect to the unsaved, that the *whole man* ceases to exist at death and is brought *into* being again at the resurrection, to be tried and destroyed in "the second death," while others teach "that the soul survives the death of the body until the Judgment Day, after which God finally destroys both the soul and body of the wicked in hell."

Since it appears that the majority of so-called Annihilationists hold the former view, we will deal first with the question of whether or not the soul survives the death of the body and then see what the answer implies.

### DOES THE SOUL SURVIVE THE DEATH OF THE BODY?

As a matter of fact we too believe that immortality is obtainable only by faith in Christ. The Word of God never speaks of "the immortality of the soul" for the soul can die, and "the soul that sinneth, it *shall die*" (Ezek. 18:4). But the Scriptures do *not* teach that death is merely a cessation of conscious or other existence, nor that immortality is merely a state where such cessation is impossible. Immortality, according to the Word of God, is that fullness of life, untouchable by death, which only God possesses in Himself (I Tim. 6:16) but which will be bestowed upon the whole regenerate man in resurrection (I Cor. 15:53, 54).

Some teach that since God "*breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul*" (Gen. 2:7) therefore man is no more than a "creature that has life." This last phrase is used of the lower animal creation in Gen. 1:20, hence we are further told that "this inception of life is equally true of all living creatures, for they have all one breath" (Eccl. 3:19).<sup>1</sup> Thus when God withdraws "the breath of life" nothing but a dead body is left, for the living soul has ceased to exist. In confirmation of this Gen. 3:19 is cited: "*Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.*"<sup>2</sup>

But in this there is a difference between man and the brute creation, for while it is true that the animal is also called "the living creature," [Lit., *soul*] (Gen. 1:20-

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<sup>1</sup> *Conditional Immortality*, by R. K. Strang. P. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Some teach that at death man becomes a "dead soul" but this is a subterfuge for even in the view of those who use this term all that actually remains after death is a dead *body*.

24) Scripture nowhere tells us that God breathed into the nostrils of animals to make them such. Herein lies the great difference between man and the brute creation. By the divine inbreathing man has a link with God which animals do not have.

It is further true that according to Genesis 2 the man *became* a living soul but it does not follow from this that the *body* had now become a soul, as it is sometimes taught, but rather that the man was now *more than a body: a living person*.

But, insisting that man *is* a soul, but does not *have* a soul, some in this first group of so-called Annihilationists remind us that men are frequently called souls in Scripture (e.g., [Gen. 46:18, 22, 25, 26, 27](#); [Acts 2:41, 43](#)). This is true, but is it not perfectly natural that man should be designated by that which is the very seat of his being; that the soul should be considered the person? This is less to be wondered at than the fact that the *body* is also often called the person. But the Annihilationist will exclaim: "Of course! Do we not contend that the living body *is* the soul?" Yes, but the *dead* body is frequently designated as the person too. For example, "*David . . . saw corruption*" (Acts 13:36) "*devout men carried Stephen to his burial*" (Acts 8:2) and Joseph "*was put in a coffin in Egypt*" (Gen. 50:26). We do not read that quantities of dust were buried or saw corruption, since the men in question had become extinct by the withdrawal of "the breath of life." Thus the body and the soul remain as separate entities, though each is frequently called the person - so mysteriously are the body and the soul intertwined.

But here some Annihilationists depart from their original premise to argue that the soul is merely "*the life*" which God breathed into man,<sup>3</sup> and which can either be extended forever or cut off. But the fact that by this inbreathing man became "*a living soul*," proves that the soul itself is not merely the life of the man.

It is true that the presence of the soul maintains life in the body, and that when the soul departs the body disintegrates, but the life which the soul gives to the body is not to be confused with that life which God gives to the believer in salvation, for that life is scarcely discussed in the Old Testament, and in the New is expressed by a different word altogether from that which is rendered *soul* (*psuche*, soul: *zoe*, life). The Good Shepherd gives his *soul* (Gr., *psuche*) for the sheep (John 10:11) but gives *them* eternal *life* (Gr., *zoe*, John 10:28). Thus a mere insured continuance of natural life would by no means be immortality.

As man is a soul, then, he also is a body, and as he *has* a body he also has a soul. The two are distinct parts of the whole man. "*Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return*" (Gen. 3:19) is true of the body but not of the whole man. There

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<sup>3</sup> The original premise being that according to Gen. 2:7, man (then only dust) "*became* a living *soul* [Heb. *Nephesh*]" by receiving the breath of God, so that the soul now was *the body with life in it*.

is such a volume of Scripture on this subject that one wonders how anyone could fail to see it.

## PROOFS THAT MAN HAS A SOUL

One advocate of a variation of Conditional Immortality, arguing that the whole man, including the body, *is* a soul, has stated: "When we say that man has a soul we speak the language of Plato; when we say that man is a soul we speak the language of the Word of God" (*Word of Truth*, Vol. VI, P. 21). Let us put this statement to the Berean test and see whether it will stand.

If the soul is the whole man rather than the tenant of the body, what did Job mean when he said: "But his flesh upon him shall have pain, and his soul within him shall mourn"? (Job 14:22). How could David have said, by inspiration: "*I lift up my soul*"? (Psa. 25:1). How could he have said: "Bless the Lord, O *my soul*; and all that is *within* me"? (Psa. 103:1). Why did our Lord speak of those who can "kill the body, but are *not* able to kill the soul"? (Matt. 10:28). And what could Elijah have meant when he prayed: "*Let this child's soul come into him again*"? (I Kings 17:21).

Some Annihilationists, again, claim that all this merely has to do with the physical life or breath, but how could David lift up his life or breath and what could our Lord have meant by saying that men could kill the body but could *not* kill the life? Further, what does Paul mean by "the *outward* man" and "the *inward* man"? (II Cor. 4:16). Why does he speak of "our earthly *house* of this *tabernacle*"? (II Cor. 5:1). Why does he speak of being "*at home in*" or "*absent from*" the body? (II Cor. 5:6, 8). What does he mean by his statement that in one experience he was either "*in the body . . . or . . . out of the body*"? (II Cor. 12:2). What does Acts 15:24 mean by the term: "*subverting your souls*," or I Pet. 1:9 by "the *salvation* of your souls," or Rom. 2:8, 9 by "*indignation and wrath . . . upon every soul of man* that doeth evil"? Why does John wish for Gaius: "that thou mayest prosper and be in health, *even as thy soul prospereth*"? (III John 2).

All this testifies to the fact that man has a soul, as a distinct part of his being; an immaterial "inner man." Indeed there is still another and higher part to man's being: *the spirit*.

## MAN A BODY, A SOUL AND A SPIRIT

Paul wrote by inspiration to the Thessalonian believers:

**"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Thes. 5:23).**

Surely the apostle was not praying here for the sanctification of the body and its *life* and the *breath* that produced it, for the physical life need not be sanctified and the breath that produced it was of God. Furthermore, if such a prayer were possible, it would have been made for the body, the soul and the spirit, not the spirit, the soul and the body. Nor does the spirit here refer to the new man, as some teach, for the new man does not, indeed *cannot*, sin (Eph. 4:24).

Clearly the apostle is here praying for the sanctification of the entire individual and it should be noted that he uses two "ands" to emphasize the fact that the spirit, the soul and the body are all distinct parts of the whole man: "your whole spirit *and* soul *and* body."

Annihilationists generally teach that man's spirit is part of God's spirit, originally breathed into man, and interpret [Eccl. 12:7](#) to mean that at death each individual's portion of God's Spirit simply returns to God again.

But there can be no question that there *are* spirits who exist as individual personalities ([Psa. 104:4](#); [Matt. 12:43-45](#); [Heb. 1:14](#)). Why, then, should it be so difficult to believe that a man's spirit exists as a separate personality? God said: "Let us make man *in our image, after our likeness*" (Gen. 1:26) not "Let us make man *part of us*." Thus we read of "the spirit *of man* which is in him" (I Cor. 2:11) not "the Spirit of God which is in man," for His Spirit is *not* in all men (Rom. 8:9).

As with regard to the soul, so with regard to the spirit, we read of "the spirit [Gr., *pneuma*] of man which is *in* him" (I Cor. 2:11) and are told that the Lord "*formeth* the spirit [Heb., *ruach*] of man *within* him" ([Zech. 12:1](#)) and that the Lord Himself "*yielded up* the ghost [Lit., *spirit*]" ([Matt. 27:50](#)).

## THE SPIRIT AND THE SOUL NOT THE SAME

The spirit and the soul both being immaterial and being closely interrelated (as *both* are with the body) have some of the same functions ascribed to them in the Scriptures and are sometimes spoken of interchangeably (though never synonymously) but in addition to I Thes. 5:23 there are several other passages of Scripture which indicate clearly that they are not one and the same. In the Hebrews Epistle, for example, we read:

**"For the Word of God is quick [living] and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, PIERCING EVEN TO THE DIVIDING ASUNDER OF SOUL AND SPIRIT . . ." (Heb. 4:12).<sup>4</sup>**

And to the Corinthians Paul wrote, with respect to the believer's body:

---

<sup>4</sup> Incidentally this passage suggests that it may often be difficult to distinguish between the soul and the spirit.

**"It is sown a natural [Lit., SOULISH] body; it is raised a SPIRITUAL body . . ." (I COR. 15:44).<sup>5</sup>**

As the soul is the seat of man's emotions, desires and affections, the spirit is the seat of his intelligence and judgment. The troubled emotions which the soul *feels* are the results of adversity which the *spirit* has *recognized* or *appreciated*. According to I Cor. 2:11 all human knowledge is ascribed to "the spirit of man which is in him."<sup>6</sup> It is defined in Lexicons as the *rational* part of man; that upon which the Spirit of God works and by which he perceives and grasps divine and eternal things.

It has been rightly said: *world-consciousness* belongs to the body (Matt. 6:22; I Cor. 12:14-17) *self-consciousness* to the soul (Matt. 16:26; I Pet. 1:9) and *God-consciousness* to the spirit (Rom. 1:9; 8:16).<sup>6</sup>

Never is it said in Scripture that beasts have spirits, except in Eccl. 3:19-21, and this is a passage which Annihilationists make the most of. But if, as they teach from this passage, that which befalls men apart from Christ is the same as that which befalls the beasts and "as the one dieth so dieth the other" and "they have all one breath, so that a man hath no pre-eminence over a beast" and "all go to one place," why does the same passage say that "the spirit of man... goeth upward" while "the spirit of the beast ... goeth downward"?

This passage is no revelation as to the nature of man or beast. Those who cite it to prove that "the dead are dead" seem to overlook or ignore the fact that these are the words of one who had given himself to mirth and pleasure, wine and folly, to learn by human wisdom and experience what was good *under the heaven* (Eccl. 2:1-3). Strangely those who use Eccl. 3:19-21 to prove that men die like beasts, seldom quote from Verse 19 that phrase which is so characteristic of the book: "*all is vanity*," or cite 7:1, 2 to prove that it is better to die than to live. These are simply the observations of man "under the sun" and do not at all prove that beasts have spirits or that man and beast die alike. In contrast to these recorded observations of the natural man, we have the declared Word of God that "it is appointed unto men once to die, but *after this the judgment*" (Heb. 9:27). No such thing is ever said with respect to the lower animal creation.

Ecclesiastes is an inspired *record* of man's futile effort to learn the truth by human wisdom. It is limited to man's knowledge of things "under heaven" and affords ample evidence that man by searching *cannot* find God. Characteristically its horizon is the grave.

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<sup>5</sup> I.e., as the soul is now the central part of the believer's being, the spirit will some day be its central part.

<sup>6</sup> It is interesting to note that with all man's physical organs referred to in Scripture the brain is not once mentioned. It alone is directly the instrument of the spirit, and this is why the *mind* is frequently mentioned.

<sup>6</sup> A fuller discussion of this subject may be found in the author's book: *True Spirituality*.



Thus man, by the possession of a spirit, has another relationship to God which the brute does not have. God is called the God and Father of *spirits* (Num. 16:22; 27:16; Heb. 12:9) not of souls. This explains why angels are called the sons of God while animals are not.

True, the soul is still the seat of man's being, so that he is *called* "a soul," but this place will some day be given to the spirit, so that we read in I Cor. 15:44: "It is sown a natural [Lit., *soulish*] body; it is raised a *spiritual* body." Indeed, even in the inter-mediate state, when the body is "put off," the Scriptures identify man with his spirit rather than with his soul.<sup>7</sup> Hence, "the *spirits* in prison" (I Pet. 3:19) and "the *spirits* of just men made perfect" (Heb. 12:23).

The soul is more closely related to the *body* than is the spirit. Angels are not said to have souls but man has a soul and is called "a living *soul*" to distinguish him from angels, which are pure spirit.

Thus the link which associates man with the lower animal creation - his soul - distinguishes him from the angels. On the other hand, the manner in which his soul was imparted and the fact that he also has a spirit, distinguishes him from the brute creation. He stands between the two.

As Psalm 8 and Heb. 2:5-8 so clearly teach, God has a glorious purpose for man and will yet "crown him with glory and honor and . . . set him over the works of His hands," and while "we see *not yet* all things put under him," we do, thank God, "*see Jesus . . . crowned with glory and honor; that He by the grace of God should taste death for every man*" (Ver. 9). He is the believer's assurance of glory to come.

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<sup>7</sup> Though in vision John "saw under the altar [in heaven] the *souls* of them that were slain for the Word of God" (Rev. 6:9). This is because their former sufferings are here in view.

## Chapter II

# DEATH

### ERRONEOUS VIEWS

One author who denies consciousness in death, teaches that "the natural destiny of all men is to 'perish'" (in the sense of extinction of personal existence) and argues that death is nothing more than "the withdrawal of God's gift - 'the breath of life' "; that when the breath of life is withdrawn "*man* goes back to dust." (Italics his).<sup>8</sup>

Another, who also denies conscious existence between death and resurrection, says:

"... I do not believe that the dead are either conscious or unconscious. I believe the dead are dead. The words conscious and unconscious have to do with the living."<sup>9</sup>

But this is a subterfuge, for the same writer quotes with approval the words of J. H. Pettengell as to his belief in "the complete solidarity of man" and "the entire unconsciousness of the whole individual in death" (Vol. VI, P. 69).

As to whether or not man is *conscious* or unconscious in death, this same writer makes his position clear enough when he says:

"'The dead know not anything' is the testimony of the Word of God, and there is nothing in the Scripture or in human experience that contradicts this."<sup>10</sup>

Still another, who denies the theory of the annihilation of the wicked, but teaches Universal Reconciliation, says of man's death at the close of this life: "Let us never think of it as life in any sense."<sup>11</sup> But this is part of an argument that *the dead* cannot be alive in any sense, for he too denies conscious existence between death and resurrection. From this he argues further that the term "death" is "the divine definition of the lake of fire" (P. 12). If, then, the dead cannot be alive *in any sense* and the lake of fire is *defined* as *death*, the unsaved, of course, have little to fear.

What about the words "fire" and "torment," which sooner *describe* the second death? This is all explained in another book by the same author, in which he says of the lake of fire:

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<sup>8</sup> *Conditional Immortality*. by R. K. Strang, Pp. 4, 5, 11.

<sup>9</sup> The Word of Truth, Vol. IV, P. 94.

<sup>10</sup> The Word of Truth, Vol. IX, P. 94.

<sup>11</sup> *What is Death?* by A. E. Knoch. P. 10.

"Let no one shrink with horror at this fact, as though it entailed excessive suffering and agony. A death by fire is not necessarily painful. God has allowed many to die the first death by means of fire. Some are unconscious before they have time to feel the flames. Others, especially His own witnesses, have suffered agonies at the stake. The lake of fire is not presented as a place of suffering, but a place of death, in connection with the great white throne judgment. Every court has some means of inflicting the extreme penalty, such as hanging or electrocution. They use the least painful process. The lake of fire is the executioner of the great white throne. Death should be instantaneous and almost painless." "Death is always oblivion."<sup>12</sup>

So the lake of fire isn't so bad after all! Of course the above statement is a brazen and outrageous distortion of the Word of God itself as to the lake of fire, that place of *"torment,"* where the wicked dead shall "have their part" ([Rev. 21:8](#)) and be judged "according to their works" ([Rev. 20:12](#)). But the *pity* is that this author understands the dispensational position of Paul's ministry and the truth of the mystery better than most so-called Fundamentalists, and thus has led some to suppose that his teachings are in harmony with grace. Moreover all the unscriptural teachings cited above find a natural welcome among the unsaved because of the escape they offer from the fear of the penal consequences of sin.

## **DEATH NOT A CESSATION OF CONSCIOUS EXISTENCE**

Death is not extinction or suspension of personal existence, nor even of conscious existence.

Such sallies as "The dead are dead" or, "How can the dead be alive?" are mere subterfuges which fail utterly to define the various phases of death as set forth in the Word of God.

The fact is that death has various forms and that those who are dead in one sense may be quite alive in another.

God warned Adam: "*In the day* that thou eatest thereof, dying thou shalt die"<sup>13</sup> ([Gen. 2:17](#)). And in that day he was "separated from the life of God," yet in connection with this very fact God said: "In sorrow shalt thou eat of it [the fruit of the ground] *all the days of thy life*" ([Gen. 3:17](#)).

We ourselves were "*dead in* trespasses and sins," yet "*walked* according to the course of this world" ([Eph. 2:1, 2](#)). The Apostle Paul refers to the merry widow as being "*dead while she liveth*" ([I Tim. 5:6](#)). Abraham, the rich man and Lazarus are all represented as fully conscious between death and resurrection

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<sup>12</sup> *The Unveiling of Jesus Christ*, by A. E. Knoch. pp. 529, 534.

<sup>13</sup> This latter phrase a figure of speech for emphasis, indicated by the word "surely" in A.V.

and in the record of their interchange Abraham is said to have stated that for Lazarus to go to the rich man's brothers he would have to rise *from the dead* (Luke 16:19-31).<sup>14</sup>

If death at the close of this earthly life is a cessation of conscious or other existence, what did our Lord mean when He said to the dying thief: "*Today shall thou be with Me in Paradise*" (Luke 23:43) and how could He then have preached to "the spirits in prison"? (I Pet. 3:18, 19). And how could He have said:

**"... I lay down My life, THAT I MIGHT TAKE IT AGAIN . . . I HAVE POWER TO TAKE IT AGAIN . . ." (John 10:17, 18).**

How could *He* take back His life again if laying it down meant cessation of personal or conscious existence? And how could He then have said to His enemies: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up"? (John 2:19). "But He spake of the *temple* of His *Body*" (Ver. 21) and the very phraseology indicates that His body was but the *abode* in which *He* dwelt.

Indeed, if death is extinction of personal existence it is vain to talk about resurrection, for then the same person who died *could not* be raised again and what is called resurrection would actually be the creation of *another* individual.

This heresy strikes at the very doctrine of salvation, for if death is a cessation of conscious or other existence, how could anyone receive "*everlasting life*" on earth? And what about those who have "*passed from death unto life*"? (John 5:24). Will they have to pass back from life into death again at the close of their earthly career? Surely the theory that all life and conscious existence ceases or is suspended at physical death is a denial of the present possession of everlasting life.

The possession of a body is not essential to consciousness. "God is Spirit" (John 4:24) and *was Spirit*, without a corporeal body, before the incarnation. Was He not conscious? Our Lord was put to death in the flesh and for three days His body lay in Joseph's tomb. Was He not conscious during that time? The angels are spirits (Heb. 1:14). Are they not conscious? And surely our Lord would not have "preached unto the spirits in prison" if *they* were not conscious.

The Apostle Paul surely did not believe that the elimination of the physical brings unconsciousness, for he clearly states that while he *did not know* whether he was "*in the body or out of the body*" when "caught up to the third heaven," he *was* an intelligent witness of the unutterable things seen and heard there (II Cor. 12:1-7).

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<sup>14</sup> Nowhere is it stated that the story of the rich man and Lazarus is a parable, but if it *were* it would still teach that men are conscious in the intermediate state.

## THE SOUL DOES NOT SLEEP IN DEATH

The theory that the individual is *unconscious* between death and resurrection is sometimes called *soul sleep*, because of the outward similarity between physical death and sleep, and because the Bible speaks of the departed as asleep.

The argument for unconsciousness in death was long based largely on the former premise, since men are apparently unconscious when they sleep, but this has been practically disproven and few now deny that in sleep men are simply *conscious* in another way.

At any rate, the Scriptures which describe death as sleep refer to the body, not to the "inner man."

[Dan. 12:2](#) speaks of "them that *sleep in the dust of the earth.*" In [Matt. 27:52](#) we read that "many *bodies* of the saints which slept arose." Stephen prayed: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit" and *then* "fell asleep" and devout men carried *him* (i.e., his *body*) to his burial ([Acts 7:59, 60; 8:2](#)). Thus too, "David... *fell asleep ... and saw corruption*" ([Acts 13:36](#)).

In I Cor. 15 Paul, by inspiration, has much to say about the body. He refers to the *body* of the grain (Vers. 37, 38) to the *flesh* of men, beasts, fishes, birds (Ver. 39) to "celestial *bodies* and *bodies* terrestrial" (Ver. 40) and to the *bodies* of believers. Concerning their physical death, he uses the phrase: "*It is sown... it is sown... it is sown,*" clearly referring to the *body* (Vers. 42-44). And it is in *this* connection that the apostle exclaims: "*Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep . . .*" (Ver. 51).

It is important to note the fact that nowhere in Scripture do we read of a *soul* sleeping. We do read of *men*, sleeping, but, as we have seen, the body, like the soul and spirit, is sometimes called the man.

Thus it is not the soul, nor the spirit, nor the whole man that sleeps at physical death, but only the *body*. It is the *body* which is "sown" and shall be "raised"; which "sleeps" and shall be *awakened* ([I Cor. 15:42, 51](#)). Not once does the Scripture speak of *soul sleep*, but always of *body sleep*.

## WHAT THE SCRIPTURES TEACH AS TO DEATH

**"In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die [Lit., Dying thou shalt die]" ([Gen. 2:17](#)).**

This judgment of which God had warned Adam was straightway executed, for the moment he disobeyed God death, both physical and spiritual, "entered" and "reigned" ([Rom. 5:12-14](#)).

In this connection, however, there could hardly be stronger proof that God, by His inbreathing, had imparted to man something more than the mere life which animates the physical body, for though *immediately* "alienated from the life of God" ([Eph. 4:18](#)) and "dead in sins" ([Eph. 2:1](#); [Col. 2:13](#)) he did not die physically until centuries later.<sup>15</sup> Thus the death of the inner man must be distinguished from that of the outer man. But even this is not all, for all Adam's posterity are "by nature the children of wrath" ([Eph. 2:3](#)) and their destination, apart from redemption through Christ, is "*the lake of fire . . . the second death*" ([Rev. 20:14](#)).

The teaching of the Word of God as to man's death, then, may be classified as follows:

1. The death of the *inner* man.
2. The death of the *outer* man.
3. The "second death" of the *whole* man in "the lake of fire."

## THE DEATH OF THE INNER MAN

The death of the inner man, sometimes called "spiritual death," is the separation of the soul and spirit from God.

"In the day" that Adam and his wife ate of the forbidden tree they were alienated from God. Whereas they had enjoyed sweetest fellowship with Him, they now "*hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden*" so that He had to seek them, calling: "*Adam... Where art thou?*" ([Gen. 3:8, 9](#)). This was more than broken fellowship; it was a broken *relationship*. God now sought Adam as Savior rather than as God and Friend. And when found, Adam stammered: "*I heard Thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself*" (Ver. 10). Suddenly a sense of blameworthiness had overtaken him and, found out, he stood before God naked, guilty and ashamed.

That this separation of the soul and spirit from God is the death of the inner man and is the *present* state of all the unsaved, is taught in Paul's epistles as cited above, where we read that the natural man is "*dead in sins*" ([Eph. 2:1, 5](#)) and "*alienated from the life of God*" ([Eph. 4:18](#)).<sup>16</sup> It is also clear from our Lord's

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<sup>15</sup> Though death *began* at once to work in his body.

<sup>16</sup> The phrase which follows: "*through the ignorance that is in them,*" may at first seem to limit this to the benighted Gentiles, which are, indeed, particularly discussed here. But this is the condition of all the

command: "*Let the dead bury their dead*" (Matt. 8:22) and from His declaration that the believer "hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation [judgment]; but *is passed from death unto life*" (John 5:24) as well as from John's Spirit-inspired words: "*We know that we have passed from death unto life . . .*" (John 3:14).

## THE DEATH OF THE OUTER MAN

The death of the outer man, usually called "physical death," is the separation of the spirit and soul from the body and the resultant decomposition of its members.

A study of the death with which this earthly life is brought to a close affords many answers to the erroneous conclusions drawn from Gen. 3:19, that the body with life in it is the whole man, and that at death the whole man returns to the dust, or that the spirit which God breathed into man is but the impersonal breath of life which, when recalled, leaves no man at all, but only a body to be buried.

Why should our Lord say: "*Father into Thy hands I commend My spirit*" (Luke 23:46) and why should Stephen pray: "*Lord Jesus, receive my spirit*" (Acts 7:59) if the spirit returns to God anyway as the impersonal breath of life? And why should God be represented as saying to the rich fool: "*This night thy soul shall be required of thee*" (Luke 12:20) if the soul is no more than the body with the breath of life in it?

In the death with which this life closes, the inner man dearly sheds the outer, the house in which he lives. In one passage in II Cor. 5 alone this is stated in several ways for clarity and emphasis. There the apostle states that "if our earthly *house* of this *tabernacle* were [be] dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (II Cor. 5:1). In the next three verses he speaks of being "*unclothed*" and "*clothed upon with our house which is from heaven.*" In this connection what could the word "unclothed" refer to but the shedding of the outer man in death? Then again he declares that "*whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord,*" but adds: "We are . . . willing rather to be *absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord*" (Vers. 6, 8).

Thus Peter said, by the Spirit: "I must *put off* this my *tabernacle* . . ." (II Pet. 1:14) and Paul spoke of *departing* to be with Christ and of the time of his *departure* (Phil. 1:23; II Tim. 4:6). Departure is not a cessation or suspension of existence, and surely the *body* does not depart at death. It is the inner man that departs from the body at death. If Eccl. 3:19, 20 be used to deny this, Job 14:10-12 might as well be used to deny the resurrection.

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unsaved as sons of Adam, for in I Cor. 2:14 we read that "*the natural man* receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God... neither can he know them...."

The death of the outer man is that to which God referred in the curse of Gen. 3:17-19 (the death of the inner man having already taken place) when He said: "*For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return*" (Ver. 19). This is the death that man in his fallen state most naturally recognizes as a judgment. Though men have died for nearly six thousand years and we literally trample their dust, and while the graves of more recent generations dot the hillsides, yet man never becomes accustomed to death. It is still as abnormal and unnatural as ever and when it strikes is as great a shock to the victim and his near loved ones as if no one had ever died before. It is the presently visible evidence of God's wrath upon sin, and it is this death (though involved with the others) that is essentially referred to in Rom. 5:12:

**". . . BY ONE MAN SIN ENTERED INTO THE WORLD, AND DEATH BY SIN; AND SO DEATH PASSED UPON ALL MEN, FOR THAT ALL HAVE SINNED."<sup>17</sup>**

## THE SECOND DEATH

The "second death" is the banishment of the whole man from God in "the lake of fire." The Scriptures concerning it cause the serious-minded to stand aghast. It is natural, therefore, that sincere Christian men should search the whole Word of God to see if the teachings as to it may not be modified in some way, and even more natural that *unsaved* men should seek to explain them away. Yet there they stand as a terrifying warning against unbelief and sin. Nor can we question the justice of the lake of fire, for what right or ability has depraved man to judge as to the seriousness of his sin or the appropriateness of its penalty?

Twice in the Book of the Revelation it is specifically stated that banishment in the lake of fire is "the second death" ([Rev. 20:14](#); [21:8](#)).

In Rev. 19:20 we find that the "beast" and the "false prophet" of the future will be consigned to its flames. In Rev. 20:10 we learn that the devil will be cast there. A reference to [Matt. 25:41](#) indicates that it was especially prepared for "*the devil and his angels*." In Rev. [14:9-11](#) we are told that the "beast worshippers" will be sent there, and in [Rev. 20:15](#) that whoever is not found written in the Book of Life will be "cast into the lake of fire."

Whether or not *literal* fire and brimstone are contemplated is wide of the question here. In the light of the whole Scripture and of the character of this book of signs and symbols the fire and brimstone may well be symbolic, but this does not minimize the reality or horror of the judgment, for then the "fire and brimstone" are but symbolic of the burning anger with which God will judge sinners outside of Christ.

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<sup>17</sup> I.e., death passed upon all through Adam because *all* sinned *in Adam*.



That the lake of fire is a place of torment is clear from those passages which deal with it. The overcomers of Rev. 2:11 "shall not be *hurt* of the second death." On the other hand any who worship the beast and receive his mark:

**"THE SAME SHALL DRINK OF THE WINE OF THE WRATH OF GOD, WHICH IS Poured OUT WITHOUT MIXTURE INTO THE CUP OF HIS INDIGNATION; AND HE SHALL BE TORTURED WITH FIRE AND BRIMSTONE IN THE PRESENCE OF THE HOLY ANGELS, AND IN THE PRESENCE OF THE LAMB:**

**"AND THE SMOKE OF THEIR TORTURE ASCENDETH UP FOR EVER AND EVER [Gr., unto the ages of the ages]: AND THEY HAVE NO REST DAY NOR NIGHT . . ." (Rev. 14:10, 11).**

Of the "beast" and the "false prophet" we read, significantly, that both will be "cast *alive* into a lake of fire" (Rev. 19:20). As to Satan, his doom is described as follows:

**"AND THE DEVIL THAT DECEIVED THEM WAS CAST INTO THE LAKE OF FIRE AND BRIMSTONE, WHERE THE BEAST AND THE FALSE PROPHET ARE, AND SHALL BE TORTURED DAY AND NIGHT FOREVER AND EVER" (Rev. 20:10).**

Then, as to the unsaved dead, we are told that "*they were judged every man according to their works*" (Rev. 20:13).

**"AND WHOSEVER WAS NOT FOUND WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF LIFE WAS CAST INTO THE LAKE OF FIRE" (Rev. 20:15).**

Finally, we read that these all . . .

**"SHALL HAVE THEIR PART IN THE LAKE WHICH BURNETH WITH FIRE AND BRIMSTONE: WHICH IS THE SECOND DEATH" (Rev. 21:8).**

In the light of these solemn warnings, how unspeakably wicked to teach men *not* to "shrink with horror at this fact, as though it entailed excessive suffering and agony" since "a death by fire is not necessarily painful" and "the lake of fire is not presented as a place of suffering, but a place of death" and "death should be instantaneous and almost painless"! (*The Unveiling of Jesus Christ*, by A. E. Knoch, P. 529). What will be the judgment of those who send others to the lake of fire by influencing them to ignore God's warnings and assuring them that the lake of fire is *not* to be feared!

Mr. Knoch, seeking to prove that the second death is but a repetition of the first (which he already minimizes) and thus to water down its fire, states with regard to the unsaved that "Those who have been raised from death [which *he*

claims is unconscious existence] return to the same state in the second death." Again he argues with regard to the word *second*: "Was not the healing of the nobleman's son (John 4:46-54)<sup>18</sup> a *sign* just as well as when the water blushed at His presence in Cana of Galilee (John 2:11)? Was the second ward not a ward because it was *second* (Acts 12:10)? And the second Man, is He not a Man just as well as the first man, Adam (I Cor. 15:47)?" etc.<sup>19</sup>

But this Universalist could hardly have answered his own argument more simply, for our Lord's second sign, though also a sign, was *different* from the first in many respects. So was the "second ward" doubtless different from the first, and the "Second Man" certainly different from the first man, Adam. And who, honestly gathering the information which the Scriptures give as to the second death, would deny that while it is indeed also death, it is a vastly different experience from the first?

According to Mr. Knoch's teaching, the unsaved die at the close of this life and, to all intents and purposes, become non-existent for, he argues, we must not think of death "as life in any sense."<sup>20</sup> Then they are raised to stand before the great white throne. The sentence? A second death; further extinction of conscious existence. And from this they will again be raised to be reconciled to God at last! Thus the second death is a *deliverance* from punishment rather than an infliction of it. All this on the premise that God caused man to sin anyway, using it as "a gracious means to a glorious end," and since God brought man into misery and death by sin it is only just that He finally deliver him from it.

This may appear to some to be grace, but actually it waters grace down and makes it worthless, and the suspicion is irresistible that those who so pervert the Scriptures concerning sin and God's judgment upon it, are motivated by a desire to escape the responsibility for it.

Minimize God's judgment upon sin and you automatically minimize His grace. His wrath against sin is as infinite as His love for the sinner and the former. No one who minimizes or denies the *wrath* of God can truly proclaim the *grace* of God, for His grace shines against the black background of well deserved wrath. It was when we were "*children of disobedience . . . and . . . by nature the children of wrath*" that "*God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us,*" reached down to redeem and justify and glorify us. This is grace!

To deal further with Annihilationist and Universalist teachings at this point would involve too serious a digression. We bring this much in at this point because of the relation of these teachings to the subject of death and also to point out the folly and sin of denying the written Word of God as to His judgments in order to magnify His grace.

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<sup>18</sup> Our Lord's *second* miraculous sign.

<sup>19</sup> *Concordant Version* on Rev. 20:13; *What is Death*, Pp. 11, 12.

<sup>20</sup> *What is Death?* P. 10.

## ***Chapter III***

# **THE INTERMEDIATE STATE**

(Chapters III-VI)

We have shown from Scripture, at some length, that death is *not* "extinction of being" or "annihilation" or "oblivion" or even a "cessation of *conscious* existence." This fact is further brought out by an examination of those Old Testament Scriptures which refer to *sheol*, the region of the departed, or *hades*, as it is called in the Greek.

Before we consider these words and examine their usage, however, something should be said as to the divine revelation concerning the intermediate state. This, like other revelations, was *progressively* unfolded, especially since dispensational changes were involved.

It would be idle, therefore, to go to the Old Testament to find the *full revelation* concerning the intermediate state or to learn where our departed loved ones are *today*. And it would be worse than idle to seek to settle such matters, as some do, by the words (even though they comprise an inspired *record*) of one who had given himself to "mirth" and "pleasure," "wine" and "folly," to learn by human wisdom and experience what was good "*under the heaven*" (Eccl. 2:1-3) and whose verdict of all that this world offers is repeated until it almost becomes tiresome: "*All is vanity*" (Eccl.). And if this be so, what shall be said of those who would use passages from Ecclesiastes to explain away truths later revealed by our Lord on earth and still later by the *ascended* Lord, for the members of His Body?

But we do learn the first basic lessons as to the intermediate state from the Old Testament Scriptures, especially where they discuss *sheol*.

## **SHEOL**

Seeking to conform the teaching of the Bible as to *sheol* with his own theory on the unconscious state of the dead, Dr. E. W. Bullinger taught:

"The student will find that 'the grave,' taken literally as well as figuratively, will meet all the requirements of the Hebrew *sheol*" (*Sheol and Hades*, P. 7). "*Hades* can mean only and exactly what *sheol* means, *viz.*, the place where 'corruption' is seen . . . and from which resurrection is the only exit . . ." (*Sheol and Hades*, P. 24).

In this teaching Dr. Bullinger found himself in bad company, notably that of the followers of Pastor Russell, now known as Jehovah's Witnesses.

But actually Dr. Bullinger was not so "exact" in his teachings as to *sheol*, for while stating categorically that it is "the grave," "the place where corruption is seen," he *also* says, in the same book:

"... not that *sheol* means so much specifically A grave, as generically THE grave."

"*Sheol* therefore means *the state of death; or the state of the dead*, of which *the grave* is a tangible evidence.... It may be represented by a coined word, *Gravedom*, as meaning the dominion and power of *the grave*" (*Sheol and Hades*, Pp. 7, 8).

Here there is considerable confusion, for on the one hand *shed* is "the place where 'corruption' is seen . . . and from which resurrection is the only exit," while on the other it is "*the state of the dead*,"<sup>21</sup> represented by a coined word.

Clearly Dr. Bullinger was *forced* to thus qualify and confuse his teachings as to *sheol*. The Old Testament has a regular word for *grave* or *burial place*. It is the word *kehver*, used some 70 times and found both in the singular and the plural. But *sheol* is never used in the plural. There is but *one sheol*, not many.

It is true that graves, "where corruption is seen," may be, and are, referred to *collectively* as *the grave*, but in this sense "the grave" is made up of all "the graves" where the dead have been buried and from which they will be raised. Thus we read in Ezek. 37:12:

**"Behold, O my people, I will open your GRAVES, and cause you to come up out of your GRAVES, and bring you into the land of Israel."**

## A MISTRANSLATED WORD

Unfortunately *sheol* is nowhere translated correctly in the *Authorized Version*. It is used 65 times and is rendered *hell* 31 times, *grave* 31 times and *pit* three times. It cannot mean "pit" or "hell" for it is said that the saved go there ([Gen. 37:35](#); [42:38](#); etc.). It should always be remembered that wherever we read of "hell" in the Old Testament Scriptures it is a mistranslation of *sheol*. But neither can *sheol* mean the *grave*, as we shall now proceed to show.

## SHEOL NOT THE GRAVE

As we have pointed out, the truth concerning the intermediate state is *progressively* unfolded in the Scriptures and the light which Old Testament saints had on the subject was necessarily dim. Also, Israel's whole outlook was earthly.

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<sup>21</sup> Italics his.

It is not strange, therefore, that they were told only about death and resurrection life but were given little or no light on what transpired between. In this connection it is significant that the word *sheol* means "to ask" while *hades* means "unseen."

We believe our translators would have done better had they translated *sheol* in accordance with the above facts, though we can understand how they concluded that this word *sometimes* means grave, for to pious Israelites, who praised Jehovah and strove and longed for the time when He would dwell in their midst to receive their perfect praise - to these death was the silencing of the feeble praises already begun. Hence we find David saying: "*In sheol who shall give Thee thanks*" (Psa. 6:5) and Hezekiah: "*Sheol cannot praise thee*" (Isa. 38:18). Indeed, when we realize that *sheol* was to them the *unseen* and *unknown* it is not even strange to find Solomon saying that "*there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in sheol, whither thou goest*" (Eccl. 9:10) for while Ecclesiastes is an inspired *record*, Solomon spoke there, not by divine revelation but from human observation and, as far as he knew from what had thus far been revealed, death cut all human activity short. Yet even here there is no indication that by *sheol* Solomon meant the *soil* where men's *bodies* are interred.

Such passages as Psa. 141:7 and Ezek. 32:27 are sometimes advanced to prove that *sheol* is the grave, but in the former passage "bones" are said to be "scattered at sheol's mouth." This argues rather *against* the theory that *sheol* is the grave, for here men's bones are found *outside sheol* itself. And as to the latter passage, which pictures "the mighty" as having "gone down to *sheol* with their weapons of war," we need but to remember that to the Old Testament saints *sheol* was the unknown and the meaning is clear, for the mighty men who had fallen had disappeared from sight along with their weapons.

The case of Korah, Dathan and Abiram is also used to prove that *sheol* is the grave, for "*they and all that appertained to them, went down alive into sheol, and the earth closed upon them*" (Num. 16:33). Here we have a case where men and their belongings are said to have gone down into the unseen, giving another instance of the usage of the word *sheol*, but a natural reading of the story would lead any unbiased reader to conclude that the earth opening her mouth to swallow these three rebels, as fire from the Lord consumed two hundred and fifty others (Ver. 35) was something more than their simply being buried alive.

Even the inspired Old Testament writers, with their limited light, taught that *sheol* was something beside the grave; that it was the region of the departed. It was a place of peace and rest for the righteous (Isa. 57:1, 2; Cf. I Sam. 28:15) but of sorrow and anguish for most, and more often spoken of in that connection. Hence we read that "the wicked" shall be turned there (Psa. 9:17) and that "*the sorrows of sheol*" and the "*pains [or pangs] of sheol*" took hold of David in his distress (II Sam. 22:6; Psa. 18:5; 116:3). And since we further read of fire in connection with *hades* (the N.T. equivalent for *sheol*) it is also understandable that the translators of the *Authorized Version* *sometimes* rendered *sheol* as *hell*.

The invocation and consultation of "*familiar spirits*," as referred to in the Old Testament, also refute the theory that the dead are unconscious or non-existent in the intermediate state and that *sheol* is merely the grave. Intercourse with familiar spirits was forbidden by Mosaic law ([Lev. 20:27](#); [Deut. 18:10,11](#)) and while a medium might have no qualms about deceiving her patron, who can deny that the medium at Endor "*saw Samuel*," or that Samuel spoke to Saul and was answered by him? ([I Sam. 28:11-20](#)).

Evidently *sheol* is a region in the depths or heart of the earth, for in [Prov. 9:18](#), e.g., we read of "the *depths of sheol*" and in [Deut. 32:22](#) and [Psa. 86:13](#) of "the *lowest sheol*." This accounts for the fact that Korah, Dathan and Abiram "*went down . . . into sheol*," and that Samuel was "*brought up*" from it. Again in [Psa. 63:9](#) David states that his enemies would go into "the *lower parts of the earth*."<sup>22</sup> Surely this could not refer to the burial of their *bodies* in the *upper* part of the earth, nor can we divorce this in our thinking from [Eph. 4:9](#) where we read that our Lord "*descended... into the lower parts of the earth*."

The conclusion that *sheol* is nothing more than the grave is built upon the premise that there is no conscious existence between death and resurrection, but the conclusion, like the premise, is incorrect.

Abraham "was gathered to his people" and "buried . . . in the cave of Machpelah" ([Gen. 25:8, 9](#)) yet "his people" were *not* buried in the cave of Machpelah. His father was evidently buried in Haran ([Gen. 11:32](#)) and his other relatives in Ur of the Chaldees, from whence he had come ([Gen. 11:31](#)). Isaac and Jacob were both "gathered to their people" before their bodies were buried ([Gen. 35:29](#); [49:33](#); [50:1-14](#)). All of Joshua's generation were "gathered unto their fathers" ([Judg. 2:10](#)) though the corpses of the preceding generation had fallen in the wilderness ([Heb. 3:17](#)).

In [Psa. 139](#) David dwells upon the impossibility of escape from the *conscious* presence of the omniscient God. No matter where he goes God will find him. "Whither," he asks, "shall I go from Thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou art there: "*If I make my bed in sheol, behold, Thou art there*" ([Psa. 139:7, 8](#)). Surely he does not refer here to the burial of his body in the grave, for dead bodies have no consciousness of God's presence. David speaks here neither of the body nor of the grave, but of the 'I' who lives in the body, and of that place to which the "I" goes when the body is laid aside and where even those who sought to escape the presence of God will find that they have not succeeded.

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<sup>22</sup> In [Psa. 139:15](#) this term is used in a figurative sense, evidently to heighten the mystery connected with human birth.

## HADES

The *hades* of the New Testament is the *sheol* of the Old. This is settled by [Acts 2:27](#), where the Greek term *hades* is used for *sheol* in a quotation of [Psalm 16:10](#). Naturally, however, the New Testament Scriptures give more light on this subject than do the Old Testament Scriptures.

For example, while in the Old Testament (so-called) we learn that both saved and unsaved went to *sheol* at death, in the New we learn that they occupied separate divisions, one a place of blessing, the other of torment. Further, we learn that the saved of the *present* dispensation no longer go to *hades* but depart immediately to be with Christ.

Before discussing this at length, however, let us examine the New Testament Scriptures as to *hades* and see again that it is more than the grave.

### THE ATTEMPT TO MAKE HADES THE GRAVE

Dr. Bullinger, who denied the conscious state of the dead, taught that "*hades* can mean only and exactly what *sheol* means" (*Sheol and Hades*, P. 24).

In using the word "only" in this connection, Dr. Bullinger left no room for the further revelation as to *hades* which the New Testament gives. *Hades* can mean "*only and exactly*" what *sheol* means.

As we scan again the New Testament references to *hades* we cannot avoid the conclusion that Dr. Bullinger limited the meaning of *hades* by these strong words because he found it even more difficult to prove from the New Testament that *hades* (or *sheol*) is the grave, than to prove this from the limited light of the Old Testament on the subject. He was *forced* to argue that *hades* can mean no more than *sheol*, or his whole theory of the intermediate state, with its denial of the conscious existence of the dead, would have collapsed forthwith.

Indeed, Dr. Bullinger went farther than this to maintain his position. Declaring that the "Hebrew words [of the Old Testament] are the words of the Holy Spirit," he contended that "when we come to the New Testament, the case is entirely different. Here, the Holy Spirit takes up *human words* which had been used among the Greeks for centuries, and had already acquired senses, and meanings, and usages...." These words, he says, had to be "purified," and many of them given "a totally different sense" in the New Testament Scriptures (*Sheol and Hades*, Pp. 9-11).

This, of course, opened the way for Dr. Bullinger to attach to the word *hades* a totally different meaning from that which the Greek word ordinarily carried with it, and so to conform it to his own interpretation of *sheol*, making it mean only the grave.

While it is true that many Greek words did undergo a process of purification with their use in Scripture and have thus acquired a higher, or *somewhat* different meaning, it is certain that our Lord would not have used the Greeks' word for the region of departed spirits to refer to a totally different idea - the *grave*. This would only have confused his hearers. There is a regular Greek word for *grave* which He could have used, and if this were not so, He would have done better to *coin* a new word than to have used a word that did *not* mean *grave*.

There must have been, then, and there *was*, good ground for using the Greek designation for the region of the departed in dealing with the intermediate state.

Dr. Bullinger himself has written a sizeable volume on Greek and Roman *Figures of Speech* and rightly says that it is of vital importance to understand their use in interpreting the Scriptures. And where would one get the meaning of the average Greek word used in the New Testament or even of a word used only once? Certainly not from the Old Testament! Dr. Bullinger did not consistently apply his own theory here; he *could* not.<sup>23</sup>

Bullinger and those who follow him in this have made a great mistake in limiting the meaning of *hades* to what they have learned - or thought they learned - about *sheol* in the Old Testament, for the simple reason that the revelation as to *sheol-hades* is progressive. In the Old Testament *sheol* is little more than the unknown, but in the New Testament, *hades*, while retaining the same basic meaning, carries with it a much fuller revelation. Our Lord Himself draws the curtain aside and gives us a glimpse of it as it was at that time.

The word *hades*<sup>24</sup> is found only eleven times in the New Testament Scriptures and in *no* case is there proof that the grave is referred to while, on the other hand, there is definite proof in several of them, not to mention many related passages, that the grave is *not* under consideration.

## HADES NOT THE GRAVE

Let us now proceed to examine the eleven occurrences of the word *hades*.

Matt. 11:23; Luke 10:15: "*And thou, Capernaum . . . shalt be brought down to hades.*"

Did our Lord here refer to the streets and buildings of Capernaum? No, for while they might be - and have been - demolished, they would hardly be buried in

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<sup>23</sup> Interestingly. Appendix 128 of the *Companion Bible* gives as the first definition of *hamartano* (to *sin*) "to miss the mark or aim," a definition any Greek would have given to the word, while in Scripture it is given a deeper, a purely moral and spiritual meaning.

<sup>24</sup> Unfortunately rendered "hell" ten times and "grave" once in the *Authorized Version*, the word itself means simply the *unseen*.



a grave, much less be consigned to a place of torment. Whatever happened to the physical city could be only symbolic. It was the *people* of Capernaum, Chorazin and Bethsaida who refused to repent and whom our Lord upbraided. Hence, his declaration as to Chorazin and Bethsaida: "*If the mighty works which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago...*" (Matt. 11:21).

Did our Lord then mean that the people of Capernaum would *die* and be buried? Hardly, for this would also be so of His most faithful followers. Clearly our Lord was not referring to the grave here. It was a sentence of doom He pronounced upon Capernaum and her unrepentant neighbors. He referred to the anguish they would suffer in *hades* which, for the lost, is but a preliminary to the lake of fire. Thus He declared: "*It shall be more tolerable for the land<sup>25</sup> of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee*" (Ver. 24). Thus, also, he speaks of *hades* as the extreme opposite of *heaven* "*exalted unto heaven... brought down to hades*" (Ver. 23).

Matt. 16:18: "*Upon this rock I will build My Church; and the gates of hades shall not prevail against it.*"

What proof is there that our Lord referred to the *grave* here? We can see how the grave might be said to prevail against individuals, but hardly against His Church.<sup>26</sup> In the nature of the case the grave could never prevail over *that*. Further, if the "gates" here could refer merely to the jaws of the grave, so to speak, the "grave" theory might be considered, but the gates of ancient cities were their seats of law and government, hence represented the *civil power* of the city (See [Deut. 22:24](#); [Jer. 36:10](#); [Prov. 1:21](#); etc.) Furthermore in Matt. 16:18 the "gates" are seen in an *active* role, as the place of spirits, rather than dead bodies, whose influence and power would not be permitted to overthrow Christ's Church.

Luke 16:23: "*And in hades he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.*"

We will deal with this passage later under a separate heading, but we point out here that to make *hades*, in this account, mean nothing more than the grave, and to make this passage conform to the theory that there is no conscious existence between death and resurrection is to do violence to the plainest Scripture by twisting and distorting it to make it support "the doctrines of men."

Should any of our readers be enamored of this theory, we beg of you, put your preconceived notions aside and read [Luke 16:19-31](#) again, as *it is*, in *any* translation of the New Testament. There will doubtless be some things in the narrative that you will not understand, but one fact will stand out above all: that of the *consciousness* of both the saved and unsaved between death and

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<sup>25</sup> I.e., the *people* of the land.

<sup>26</sup> The Church of Pentecost is referred to here.

resurrection. And remember, this is the one passage that gives us the fullest information as to *hades*.

It has always amazed us that to bolster up his views as to the intermediate state, Dr. Bullinger should "propose another punctuation" for this passage (in *Sheol and Hades*, P. 20) which is so manifestly incorrect. Connecting the opening words of Verse 23 with the closing words of Verse 22, Dr. Bullinger proposed this reading: "But the rich man also dies, and was buried also in *hades*" (Ibid., P. 21). Had it not been that this passage in Luke refutes his denial of conscious existence in the intermediate state, an alternate punctuation would probably never have occurred to him.

In their determination to uphold their theories that *hades* is merely the grave and that "the dead are dead," Annihilationists and Universalists have done the greatest violence of all to this passage and it is difficult for this writer to see how they can be sincerely satisfied with their own explanations of it.

In Acts 2:27 and 31 we have the next two occurrences of the word *hades*. In the former Peter quotes from Psalm 16: "*Thou wilt not leave My soul in hades, neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption.*" In the latter he declares that David "*spake of the resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in hades, neither His flesh did see corruption.*"

Dr. Bullinger took these passages as clear proof that *hades* is no more than the grave, "the place where 'corruption' is seen" (*Sheol and Hades*, P. 24). But since, according to Dr. Bullinger, it is the spirit in the body that makes the soul; since, according to him man, while alive, *is* a soul but does not *have* a soul, where was there any soul to be left in *hades* when Christ died? To uphold his theory that *hades* is simply the grave, Dr. Bullinger actually had to call the body (which alone was in the grave) the soul!

But leaving Christ's soul in *hades* would *not* have been the same as allowing Him to see corruption. Clearly the word "neither," in Acts 2:27 is meant to *distinguish* the soul from the body and *hades* from the grave. Indeed, Peter, "filled with the Spirit," interprets this to mean:

"... that His SOUL<sup>27</sup> was not left in HADES, NEITHER His FLESH did see corruption" (Ver. 31).

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<sup>27</sup> Since we do not read of the spirit, but only of the soul, as being *in hades*, it has been asked whether man's spirit went there at all. In this connection it should be remembered that the soul is presently the seat of man's conscious being and that therefore the man himself is frequently referred to as a soul. Indeed, only in this one passage in Acts are we explicitly told that a *soul* was in *hades*. We believe that the soul here refers to the inner man as distinguished from the outer man, which lay in the grave.

We do not repeat here the Scriptural evidences that our Lord was conscious and active between His death and resurrection. These, added to what we have pointed out above, prove conclusively, that *hades* is *not* the grave.

Next we have I Cor. 15:55: "*O hades, where is thy victory?*"

Dr. Bullinger wrote with reference to this: "This is translated in the A.V., 'O grave,' which is conclusive as to the meaning to be put upon the word *hades*" (*Sheol and Hades*, P. 22).

This statement by Bullinger is astonishing in view of the fact that A.V. renders *hades* as "hell" ten times out of eleven, and as "grave" only once! Why should not this prove ten times *more* "conclusively" that *hades* is "hell"?

But, it may be objected, if *hades* is not the grave and, indeed, if believers today have nothing to do with *hades* but depart, at death, to be with Christ, why should a possible victory over them by *hades* even be brought in?<sup>28</sup>

Here it should be remembered that while the believer is safe *in Christ*, the moment he believes, yet his salvation is not complete in every way until the redemption of the body, thus it is only at the redemption of the body, when salvation is complete, that the cry is wholly appropriate: "*O hades, where is your victory!*" for the one whom *hades* would have made its victim has finally been glorified.

Rev. 1:18; 6:8 and 20:13, 14 come next. In these four passages we find death and *hades* linked together. None of these passages afford any proof that *hades* is the grave, and two of them do indicate the opposite. In Rev. 20:13 we read that "*death and hades delivered up the dead which were in them.*" Now if *hades*, here, means the grave, what does *death* mean, especially in the light of Dr. Bullinger's assertion that *sheol or hades represents* "the state of the dead, of which *the grave* is a tangible evidence"? (*Sheol and Hades*, P. 7).

It would make far better sense here to recognize "*death*" as represented by the grave, its outward evidence, the place where men's *bodies* lie, and "*hades*" as the place where their *souls* are, so that *both hades and the grave* will give up their wicked dead in the resurrection for the judgment of the great white throne.

Finally, it should be noted that it is the *lake of fire* into which "death and hades" are cast and that this is called "*the second death.*" This is another strong indication that *hades*, associated with the *first* death, is more than the grave. The lake of fire is by no means a second grave.

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<sup>28</sup> Some texts do not even contain the word *hades* here, reading *thanatos*, "death." instead, but the original passage. Hos. 13:14, does contain the word *sheol*.

## ***Chapter IV***

### **THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS**

**"There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:**

**"And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores,**

**"And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores,**

**"And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;**

**"And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.**

**"And he cried and said, 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.**

**"But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.**

**"And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.**

**"Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house:**

**"For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment.**

**"Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.**

**"And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent.**

**"And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."**

**--Luke 16:19-31.**

It is remarkable what lengths the sons of fallen Adam will go to in their attempts to make God more just than His own Word shows Him to be!

In the ease of these plain words by our Lord as to the intermediate state, some have gone to the greatest excesses to make the narrative conform to their own theory that death is no more than oblivion - a total cessation of conscious existence.

### **DOES THIS NARRATIVE CONTAIN FALSE DOCTRINE?**

The *Companion Bible* calls this passage in Luke "a notable example of the Pharisees' tradition, which had been brought from Babylon." Referring to the truths which our Lord taught here, the notes in the *Companion Bible* repeatedly say: "The *Pharisees* taught...." This was Dr. Bullinger's explanation of this solemn passage and probably his greatest doctrinal blunder.

Another, who shares this view, states that the account is a "suppositional story told by our Lord in order to expose . . ." that it was told for "exposure, not for teaching" (*Word of Truth*, Vol. IX, Pp. 19, 20).

In other words, the account is neither factual nor even instructive as to the intermediate state, for our Lord did not mean to teach anything about this; He meant only to repeat the Pharisees' traditions so as to expose their untruthfulness!

But did our Lord ever expose false teaching by repeating it as His own? Did He - *could* He - ever repeat false doctrine without distinctly labeling it as such? Indeed, could He sound as a solemn warning what was in fact but a false alarm by false teachers? And would it be quite legitimate of Him to expect us, in the absence of an explanation, somehow to understand that what He was saying was the *opposite* of the truth; a repetition of the Pharisees' Babylonian traditions, rather than truth to be taken to heart?

God forbid that we should ever accept such interpretations of even the most difficult passages of Scripture! Far better wait for further light than to implicate our Lord and Savior in a charge of placing a bottle of poison on the medicine shelf' of Scripture without plainly labelling it.

### **IS IT A FABLE?**

But there are other ways of getting around the truth.

The *Concordant Publishing Concern* (Universalist) in a pamphlet by A. Burns, seeks to prove that the passage about the Rich Man and Lazarus is nothing more than a "parable."

We would have no objection to this except that by a "parable" Burns really means a *fable*, thus making this the only fable our Lord told during His earthly ministry.

Denying the reality of what our Lord teaches in Luke 16:19-31 as to the intermediate state, Burns likens the passage to what he calls Jotham's "parable," in Judges 9.

But Jotham propounded an *apologue*, or *fable*, not a parable. In Jotham's fable, perhaps the oldest extant, he has trees talking to one another, and a governmental order among them imagined. True, the passage has a moral, and even a dispensational lesson, but it is *not* a parable.

A parable is a method of speech in which truth is illustrated *from the analogy of common experience*.

An unabridged Webster's dictionary which we have here at hand defines the word *parable* thus: "A story or allegorical relation or representation of something real in life or nature, from which a moral lesson is drawn for instruction. It ...differs from the apologue [fable] by narrating events which, though fictitious, might have happened in nature." Thus *Trench* in his *Parables of our Lord* rightly distinguishes Jotham's fable from parabolic teaching.

Certainly in our Lord's parables He took things which actually could or did happen and used them as likenesses.<sup>29</sup> Burns himself admits: "That other parables are historically possible cannot be denied" (P. 8). He should have admitted further that *all* of our Lord's parables were historically possible. He *calls* the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus a parable, but actually makes it a fable, to negate the *reality* of its teaching.

## IS IT A PARABLE?

We believe that many of our Lord's parables had foundation in fact as, for example that of the Prodigal Son. There we read that "*A certain man had two sons,*" and we see no reason to doubt this simple statement that a *certain* man *had* two sons, or to interpret this differently. Yet that it is used as a parable no one will deny for, linked as it is with the two parables which precede it, our Lord uses it to point out the fact that there is greater joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over all the "just persons" who "need no repentance" ([Luke 15:7, 10](#)).

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<sup>29</sup> To illustrate truths to His own and to hide them from those who wilfully rejected Him.

In the next narrative, that of the Unjust Steward, the Lord again says: "*There was a certain rich man*" and He uses this account too to illustrate a truth (Luke 16:8-12).

In the next, which we are here considering, He goes even farther to identify it as factual. He says: "*There was a certain rich man .... And there was a certain beggar NAMED LAZARUS*" (Vers. 19, 20). Further, He does not use it as an illustration or a likeness. He draws no comparison from it. It is a solemn lesson in itself.

It is, of course, objected by some that this story cannot be a relation of facts since in it we have disembodied spirits seeing, talking, having fingers, tongues, etc. In reply we suggest that until we know more about the quality of soul and spirit we had better not offer this as an objection. We *do* know that it takes more than these physical eyes to see and these physical ears to hear, for within one moment after death these physical eyes and ears, though still connected with the brain, are blind and deaf. They are but the present *vehicles* of sight and hearing to the man within.

But what about Abraham's bosom, in the story? Mr. A. E. Knoch, leading Universalist, says of this: "Abraham's bosom cannot be literal for he is dead, and even were he alive the picture of thousands of believers in his literal bosom is preposterous" (*Concordant Version* on Luke 16:24).

Such a picture is indeed preposterous, but Mr. Knoch of all men does or should know that here we have *metaphorical* language, a figure of speech used to portray the joy of Abraham, the father of believers, as he receives and embraces his children in the faith. Nor is Mr. Knoch right in his implication that Abraham is dead in every sense. With regard to the survival of this very man *through* physical death, our Lord said: "*For God is not a God of the dead, but of the living, for all live unto Him*" (Luke 20:38).

But suppose the passage in Luke 16:19-31 could be proven to be a parable. In that case it would still depict conditions in the intermediate state as they were in our Lord's day, employing such terms as "finger," "tongue," etc., in a metaphorical way. To make it relate to anything else instead is to harness the words of Christ to our own theories and opinions.

We have an example of this in the *Concordant* pamphlet by Burns.

## **IS IT A DISPENSATIONAL STORY?**

Burns, in his pamphlet, *The Rich Man and Lazarus*, presents the passages in Luke 15 and 16 on The Lost Sheep, The Lost Coin, The Lost Son, The Unjust Steward and The Rich Man and Lazarus as *one composite parable* and points

out a dispensational connection between them. But Mr. Burns' interpretation is too obviously an attempt to negate the truth of the last two of these narratives.

While we too have observed dispensational connections between the narratives of the gospel records, Mr. Burns stretches a point here so as to deny the *reality* of the teaching of our Lord as to the intermediate state. That the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus is *not* part of a fivefold parable is evident from the following:

The three narratives of Luke 15 are naturally linked together as one by the fact that they all deal with lost things which are found again. Further, the dispensational teaching in them forms a complete unit, the story of the shepherd and the sheep referring to the time when our Lord Himself sought "the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 15:24) that of the woman and the lost coin referring to the Pentecostal period, when the apostles and disciples sought to recover Israel's lost *value* to the rest of the world (Acts 3:25, 26) and that of the father and his prodigal son referring to the restoration of Israel of the future. Furthermore, the parable of the Unjust Steward is a *separate* parable, addressed to "His disciples" (16:1) *not* to the "Pharisees and Scribes," as is the threefold parable of Luke 15. And finally, there is no proof, as we have already shown, that the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus is a parable at all.

But even if there were an indirect dispensational connection between the narrative of the Rich Man and Lazarus and the four parables preceding it, this should not be used to make void the basic truth *directly* taught there. And Burns does just this. He uses an indirect dispensational connection which he feels he sees in Luke 16 to *hide* and *nullify* the *basic* truths our Lord taught there. Thus he roughly epitomizes the chapter in three words: "Deprivation; Divorce; Death" - of *national Israel*.

But who can deny that the parable of the Unjust Steward was directed against *the Pharisees in His audience* who discounted God's just claims upon men because *they* were covetous of personal gain? Indeed, Verse 14 says: "*And the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things; and they derided Him.*"

And what shall be said of nullifying the pointed words on divorce and remarriage which our Lord directed against those same self-indulgent Pharisees, by making them refer to Jehovah's divorce *of Israel* - especially when the *censure* here is directed against the *man* who puts away his wife, and marries another! Would God censure Himself?<sup>30</sup>

And if this be so, then what shall be said of using a dispensational application to nullify our Lord's solemn warning as to conditions after death? This Burns does by teaching with regard to the Rich Man and Lazarus, that we must "recognize

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<sup>30</sup> Jehovah Himself was Israel's "Husband" (Jer. 31:32; *et al*).



the 'death' as national and dispensational, instead of individual and physical" (P. 12). And all this from one who himself writes: "The evils of 'spiritualizing' Scripture are all too painfully manifest in the standard commentaries of Christendom, and are sufficient in themselves to deter us from emulating their example" (*The Rich Man and Lazarus*, P. 1 ).

Whatever hidden dispensational *connection* there may be, our Lord *said* nothing about national Israel in Luke 16. His words, following naturally after Chapter 15, were addressed to the rich and covetous Pharisees, who lived in self-gratification while criticizing *Him* for befriending sinners. And in the narrative of the Rich Man and Lazarus He warned them that conditions might soon be reversed, the self-centered and self-satisfied Pharisees suffering the torments of *hades* and the repentant sinners they loathed, enjoying "good things" with Abraham.

## WHAT THE NARRATIVE TEACHES

Without offering a detailed exposition of this remarkable narrative here, we point out those truths - taught with great clarity and force - which are involved in the subject we have been considering.

1. The narrative deals with the intermediate state between death and resurrection (Vers. 27, 30, 31).

2. It teaches that between death and resurrection the Rich Man and Lazarus occupied two different *places* (Vers. 22-28; note the words "here" and "this place").

3. It teaches conscious and intelligent existence between death and resurrection (Vers. 23-28).

4. It teaches that Lazarus was "comforted" (Ver. 25).

5. It teaches that the Rich Man was "tormented" and this is emphasized by a fourfold repetition (Vers. 23, 24, 25, 28).

6. It teaches, thus, that the fire of *hades* is a source of suffering, not annihilation.

7. It teaches that the Rich Man had not changed in character. Crying for mercy for himself and his brothers, he besought Abraham to send Lazarus, first to hell,<sup>31</sup> then to earth (Vers. 24, 27).

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<sup>31</sup> The word hell simply means "burnings" and, while an inaccurate translation of *hades*, fifty describes the place of torment in which this Rich Man found himself.

8. It teaches that the Rich Man neither had, nor was given, any hope of deliverance (Vers. 24-28).

9. It teaches that man's eternal destiny is fixed at physical death on the basis of acceptance or rejection of the written Word of God during his lifetime (Vs. 25-31.)

10. It does more than teach consciousness in the intermediate state; it *enlarges* upon it, *describes* it, *emphasizes* the truths regarding it, so as to give ample warning.

11. It teaches that the torment of *hades* is *avoidable*: "They have Moses and the prophets..." (Ver. 29).

How this one narrative, from the lips of our Lord, sweeps the supports from under these false doctrines of Annihilationism and Universalism! How revealing that the only manner in which these heresies can be maintained in the face of this passage, is to make it a mere repetition by our Lord of the Pharisees' false teachings, or a fable, or to "recognize" it as teaching something which it does not even allude to!

## Chapter V

# IS THERE A PURGATORY?

Before bringing our study on the intermediate state to a close the doctrine of *purgatory* ought still to be considered, especially since so large a segment of the professing Church holds this doctrine.

### PURGATORY IN ROMAN CATHOLIC DOCTRINE

The Purgatory of Roman Catholicism must not be confused with *hades*, which both the *Douay-Rheims* Version and its *Revision* take to be "hell," though Catholic writings on *hades* are anything but clear.

According to Roman Catholic teaching, purgatory is that state of suffering after death in which the souls of those who die in venial, or slight sin, or who still owe some debt of temporal punishment for mortal sin, are rendered fit for heaven. These sufferings in purgatorial flames may be shortened by the prayers, alms and other good works of the living, and especially by the sacrifices of the Mass. Although the souls in purgatory are detained there until the last farthing is paid, their final salvation is assured. In this, of course, it differs from hell, for the Roman Church distinguishes between *temporal* punishment (in purgatory) and *eternal* punishment (in hell forever). That the pains of purgatory are intense, however, is the united testimony of "the Church," some of its theologians declaring that purgatory differs from hell only in that the latter is eternal.

The opening pages of the Catholic Revision of the *Douay* New Testament contains the following notice:

"Pope Leo XIII granted to the faithful who shall read for at least a quarter of an hour the books of the Sacred Scripture with the veneration due to the Divine Word and as spiritual reading, an indulgence of 300 days."

An indulgence, of course, is "the remission in whole or in part of the temporal punishment due to sin" (*Baltimore Catechism*). Now the fact that fifteen minutes of devotional Bible reading can gain 300 days indulgence indicates that the suffering of purgatory can be measured by days and years, but beyond this the teachings as to purgatory are vague and indefinite. Indeed, the Council of Trent bade bishops to teach "the sound doctrine of purgatory" but exhorted them to exclude from popular addresses the "more difficult and subtle questions relating to the subject."

## PURGATORY NOT IN THE SCRIPTURES

For the sake of our Roman Catholic friends we quote all Scriptures relating to this subject from the *Douay-Rheims* Version (if Old Testament) and from the *Confraternity Revision* (if New Testament).

It should be observed at the outset that *the doctrine of purgatory is nowhere to be found in the Word of God. It is not in the Bible.* This is of basic importance. The few isolated verses, or fragments of verses, which Rome uses to support the doctrine say nothing about purgatory or about temporal punishment inflicted to make men fit for heaven; they are only supposed to refer to it by inference. Even II Macc. 12:43-46 (in the Apocrypha) which is most prominently cited in support of the doctrine, does not say anything about it. There "valiant Judas" is shown making arrangements for prayers for the sins of the dead, *that they might be raised again, "for if he had not hoped that they that were slain should rise again, it would have seemed superfluous and vain to pray for the dead."*

This very statement is one of the proofs that the books of the Maccabees are spurious, for in the Catholic Bible itself it is clearly taught that *all* the dead will be raised *whether or not their sins have been forgiven* (see [John 5:28,29](#); [Acts 24:15](#); Apoc. [[Rev.](#)] [20:13, 14](#)).

The Hebrews, of course, never recognized the Apocrypha as inspired of God and, remember, "*the oracles of God*" were entrusted to them ([Rom. 3:2](#)). Indeed, it was not until the Council of Trent, in 1545 A.D., that the Roman Church first added the Apocrypha to the Sacred Scriptures. Strange that the Roman Church, which claims to be man's supreme authority and guide on earth should have remained in ignorance for 1500 years as to whether or not these books were the inspired Word of God!

For that matter, purgatory itself was not proclaimed as a doctrine of the Church of Rome until 1438 A.D. We wonder about all the souls in purgatory all that time when "the Church" was not even sure it existed.

Before we proceed, then, mark well that purgatory is a doctrine of the Roman Church *not* of the Word of God. Nowhere, even in the Roman Catholic Bible, is it mentioned or taught. It is clearly a case of ecclesiastical versus Scriptural authority.

## INCONSISTENCIES OF THE DOCTRINE

Though we do not wish to offend our Catholic friends, there are several pointed questions which must in honesty be asked.

With purgatory the place of agony and torment it is supposed to be, is it not strange that a mere *fifteen minutes* of devotional Bible reading should procure

*three hundred days of indulgence*, as stated in the opening pages of the *Confraternity Revision* of the New Testament?

With indulgences indirectly offered for sale, as is constantly done, especially in connection with Masses, do not the rich have a better chance than the poor?

How does one know when a soul has finally been released from purgatory? Might not many Catholics be paying for Masses for *loved* ones no longer even *in* purgatory? How does the priest know? Is it morally right of him to accept payment for Masses for souls in purgatory who may no longer be there? Is it right in the sight of *God* to charge a price for this anyway?

Surely the doctrine of purgatory is the gold mine of the Roman Catholic Church, as it plays on the tender feelings of loved ones and charges them a price for prayers that their departed may be delivered from the flames of torment, yet almost never gives them the glad report that their prayers have been answered. Nor can the members of a Roman Catholic Church call for an accounting of funds contributed, for "the Church" has no members with any rights whatsoever - only *subjects*.

We decline to go further into the grave excesses to which the doctrine of purgatory has opened the door, except to say that apart from this unscriptural doctrine Rome could never have reaped her fabulous financial harvest. She *needed* a purgatory.

## WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?

Let us never forget the Bereans, who "*received the word [Paul's word] with great eagerness, STUDYING THE SCRIPTURES EVERY DAY TO SEE WHETHER THESE THINGS WERE SO*" (Acts 17:11). The Bereans, eagerly as they listened to Paul's teachings when he first came among them, would not receive them as their own until first they had diligently searched the Scriptures to see whether these things were so. For this God called them "noble." Sincere Catholics, who would truly obey God, should follow their example, always subjecting the words of men, even of church leaders and church fathers, to the infallible, unchangeable *Word of God*. Like the noble Bereans they should search the Scriptures daily and diligently to see whether these things are so.

Not only will the Scriptures - even the Catholic versions of them - be searched in vain for the doctrine of purgatory; they will be found to refute it utterly. There we learn that it is the vicarious work of Christ and of Christ alone that can purge from sin. There God tells us that *His Son*:

**"... has effected man's *PURGATION* from sin and taken His seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Heb. 1:3).**

**"And every priest indeed stands daily ministering, and often offering the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins; but Jesus, having offered ONE SACRIFICE FOR SINS, has taken His seat forever at the right hand of God . . . FOR BY ONE OFFERING HE HAS PERFECTED FOREVER THOSE WHO ARE SANCTIFIED" (Heb. 10:11-14).**

The Roman Catholic Bible further teaches that since Christ took *all* the punishment due to sin, believers are saved from it.

**"JESUS, HIS SON . . . HAS DELIVERED US FROM THE WRATH TO COME" (I Thes. 1:10).**

**"FOR GOD HAS NOT DESTINED US UNTO WRATH, BUT TO GAIN SALVATION THROUGH OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, WHO DIED FOR US IN ORDER THAT, WHETHER WE WAKE OR SLEEP, WE SHOULD LIVE TOGETHER WITH HIM. WHEREFORE, COMFORT ONE ANOTHER AND EDIFY ONE ANOTHER, EVEN AS INDEED YOU DO" (I Thes. 5:9-11).**

The Catholic Bible teaches also that since this salvation from wrath to come is accomplished entirely by the once-for-all sacrifice of Christ, men cannot gain it by works or prayers, but must accept it as the *gift* of God.

**"THEY ARE JUSTIFIED FREELY BY HIS GRACE THROUGH THE REDEMPTION WHICH IS IN CHRIST JESUS" (Rom. 3:24).**

**"BUT TO HIM WHO DOES NOT WORK, BUT BELIEVES IN HM WHO JUSTIFIES THE IMPIOUS, HIS FAITH IS CREDITED TO HIM AS JUSTICE" (Rom. 4:5).**

**"For the wages of sin is death, but THE GIFT OF GOD is life everlasting in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 6:23).**

**"For BY GRACE you have been saved THROUGH FAITH: and that NOT FROM YOURSELVES, for it is THE GIFT OF GOD: NOT AS THE OUTCOME OF WORKS, LEST ANYONE MAY BOAST" (Eph. 2:8, 9).**

Certainly the works and prayers of one person cannot redeem another, for it is written:

**"NO BROTHER CAN REDEEM, nor shall man redeem: he shall not give to God his ransom" (Psa. 48:8; 49:7 in Prot. Versions).**

**"For there is one God, and ONE MEDIATOR BETWEEN GOD AND MEN, Himself man, Christ Jesus, WHO GAVE HIMSELF A RANSOM FOR ALL" (I Tim. 2:5, 6).**

In the light of the Word of God, even as translated by the Roman Church, then, there *could not* be a purgatory for believers after death, much less could human works or prayers help pay the penalty due to sin.

Further, the thought of purgatory should and necessarily does strike *fear* into the hearts of sincere and thoughtful Roman Catholics, yet their own Bible clearly teaches:

**"Therefore because children have blood and flesh in common, so lie in like manner has shared in these; THAT THROUGH DEATH HE MIGHT DESTROY HIM WHO HAD THE EMPIRE OF DEATH, THAT IS, THE DEVIL; AND MIGHT DELIVER THEM, WHO THROUGHOUT THEIR LIFE WERE KEPT IN SERVITUDE BY THE FEAR OF DEATH" (Heb. 2:14, 15).**

Even before the crucifixion of Christ on Calvary we are told that Lazarus, at death, entered immediately into bliss, while the rich man entered immediately into torment, with *no hope* of escape (Luke 16:22, 23) while to the dying thief our Lord said:

**"THIS DAY THOU SHALT BE WITH ME IN PARADISE" (Luke 23:43).**

And if a *thief* be thus permitted to pass directly into bliss at death because of his faith in Christ, surely those who have lived consistent Christian *lives* should expect no less gracious a reception.

Indeed, the Catholic Bible, like the Protestant Bible, teaches that today believers at physical death depart *immediately* to be with Christ:

**"For to me to live is Christ and TO DIE IS GAIN.... INDEED I AM HARD PRESSED FROM BOTH SIDES - DESIRING TO DEPART AND TO BE WITH CIIRIST, A LOT BY FAR THE BETTER" (Phil. 1:21-23).**

**"WE EVEN HAVE THE COURAGE TO PREFER TO BE EXILED FROM THE BODY AND TO BE AT HOME WITII THE LORI)" (II Cor. 5:8).**

## Chapter VI

# SHEOL-HADES AND PROGRESSIVE REVELATION

As we have already begun to show, the truth about *sheol* or *hades* is, like so many other Bible truths, *progressively* unfolded.

While we learn from the Old Testament Scriptures that both the saved and the unsaved went to *sheol* at death, we learn from the Gospel records that they occupied two separate divisions. Thus we read in Luke 16 that Lazarus was "comforted" with "good things," while the rich man was "tormented" with "evil things." Moreover, a "great gulf" separated the two so that neither could pass to the other.

But this emphasis on the fact that the state of each was permanently fixed at death does not imply that each was to remain in the same place forever, for the Scriptures teach that *both* divisions of *hades* were ultimately to be emptied - the one into heaven and the other into the lake of fire.

## PARADISE TRANSFERRED TO HEAVEN

The blessed division of *hades* was called *paradise*. Our Lord said to the dying thief: "*Verily I say unto thee, Today shall thou be with Me in paradise*" (Luke 23:43) and we know where Christ went that day, for [Acts 2:31](#) states that David (in Psa. 16) referred to Christ, "that His soul was not left in hell [Gr., *hades*] neither His flesh did see corruption."

We are aware that some, who teach that paradise is only a garden in the future redeemed earth, or a third, future heaven, have changed the punctuation to read, "*I say unto thee today, thou shall be with Me in paradise.*" Bullinger, Knoch and others would probably never have made this change had our Lord's words not conflicted with their theory that there is no consciousness in death. We believe their rendering of this passage to be wholly unwarranted for the following reasons:

1. Out of 25 translations at our immediate disposal *not one* renders the verse in this way except the *Concordant* Version, sponsored by the Universalists.

2. It would have been superfluous for our Lord to tell the thief that it was on that day that He was speaking to him.

3. It is a peculiarity of the Greek language that it indicates where the emphasis lies. In this passage the word "*Today*" is emphasized, so that many



versions have rendered it: "*This day . . .*" or "*This very day shalt thou be with Me in paradise.*"

4. Our Lord was replying to a request in which the time element was important. The thief had asked to be remembered by Christ *when He came into His kingdom*. In reply, our Lord informed him that he would not have to wait that long, solemnly promising him that he would be with Him in paradise *that very day*.

Paradise, then, was that division of *hades* where the blessed dead resided.

But after the resurrection of Christ a change evidently took place. Never again do we read of believers going to *hades*, but we *do* read that Paul was "caught up [or away] into paradise" in "the third heaven" (II Cor. 12:1-4).

This statement, too, is explained away by some who deny consciousness in death. Knoch, for example, points out that the Scriptures refer to three successive heavens: the heavens which "were of old," the heavens which "are now" and the "new heavens," the last of these being "the third heaven" to which Paul was caught away "*in spirit*." But this explanation collapses in the light of Verses 2 and 3, where the apostle asserts twice that as far as he knows he might have been caught away to the third heaven *in body*. Clearly "the third heaven" was then in existence.

Evidently, then, paradise has been transferred from its place in *hades* to the third heaven, the very presence of God. The only other occurrence of this word is found in Rev. 2:7, where it is called "*the paradise of God*," though by the time this verse is fulfilled God will have taken up His residence with men.

These are not the only Scriptures, however, that testify to the removal of paradise from *hades* to heaven. In Eph. 4:8-9, for example, we are told that "*When [Christ] ascended up on high, He led captivity captive*," and that this was preceded by His having "*descended first into the lower parts of the earth*."

This "ascension" in which our Lord led captivity captive may well have been an ascension of the soul and spirit, preceding His bodily ascension, for immediately after His resurrection He said to Mary: "*Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father*" (John 20:17) yet eight days later He urged doubting Thomas to touch Him (John 20:26, 27). This would seem to indicate that He *had* ascended to the Father in the meantime.

Today, then, believers depart immediately to be with Christ at death. Hence Paul, by the Spirit Says:

**"We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be ABSENT FROM THE BODY, and to be PRESENT WITH THE LORD" (II Cor. 5:8).**

**"For I am in a strait betwixt two, HAVING A DESIRE TO DEPART, AND TO BE WITH CHRIST; WHICH IS FAR BETTER" (Phil. 1:23).**

**"For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,**

**"WHO DIED FOR US, THAT, WHETHER WE WAKE OR SLEEP, WE SHOULD LIVE TOGETHER WITH HIM" (I Thes. 5:9, 10).**

## **HADES CAST INTO THE LAKE OF FIRE**

With paradise removed to heaven, *hades* is now only a place of torment to which the lost go. But, as with the saved, *hades* is only their temporary residence, for, as paradise was transferred to heaven, so what remains of *hades* will be cast into the lake of fire after the judgment of the great white throne, as it is written:

**"AND DEATH AND HELL [HADES] WERE CAST INTO THE LAKE OF FIRE. THIS IS THE SECOND DEATH" (Rev. 20:14).**

*"God is love" but "our God" is also "a consuming fire" and "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." God's grace is infinite, but it must not be confused with tolerance. God is equally infinite in justice and offers the riches of His grace to sinners only on the basis of "the redemption that is in Christ Jesus."*

Should these lines be read by those who have foolishly gone their way, heedless of their guilt and condemnation, and of Christ and His finished work in their behalf, we beg them to stop and consider; to hear God's Word and acknowledge their sin and accept Christ as their personal Savior.

## **THE WAGES OF SIN**

**"For the wages of sin is death . . ." (Rom. 6:23).**

If there were no conscious existence in death, as taught by Bullinger, Welch, Sellers, Knoch and others, how could death be the wages of sin?

Surely oblivion could not be the wages of sin. Let a man believe in annihilation or universal reconciliation if he will, but the results of sin *in this present life*, along with whatever unbelievers must suffer in resurrection, would more appropriately be called the wages of sin than would the oblivion that is supposed to *release* men from all suffering.

There could hardly be a stronger argument that there is conscious existence in death and that the dissolution of the body is only *one* aspect of death, than God's warning that *THE WAGES OF SIN IS DEATH.*

## Chapter VII

# RESURRECTION

## ERRONEOUS THEORIES

In Paul's day erroneous views as to resurrection were already being entertained and propagated. Some held that there is "no resurrection of the dead" (I Cor. 15:13) others that "the resurrection is past already" (II Tim. 2:18). Paul said of the latter: "who concerning the truth have erred . . . and overthrow the faith of some," and this was certainly also true of the former.

Since Paul's time these erroneous teachings have multiplied, multiplying the sad results as well.

Pastor Russell, founder of the sect now known as *Jehovah's Witnesses*, taught: "Death is a period of *absolute non-existence*" (*Studies in the Scriptures*, Vol. V, P. 329, italics ours). "The dead are dead, utterly destroyed" (Vol. V, P. 347). As to the physical body of Christ, he wrote: "We know nothing about what became of it" (Vol. I, P. 129) suggesting that it may have been dissolved into gasses. Again: "Since death is complete destruction and extinction of being, resurrection, which is not a raising up of the body, but of the spirit, is of necessity the creation of a new and different being; for that which does not exist cannot be recreated" (Vol. V, P. 362).

Thus the resurrection of the body is openly denied and a so-called "resurrection" of the spirit substituted for it. But "resurrection," here, is a misnomer, for if the dead are "utterly destroyed" and "absolutely non-existent," how can there be any resurrection from the dead? The *dead* can be raised up again, but not that which does not even exist. And mark well, according to the above statement even the spirit "does not exist" and "cannot be re-created"; therefore there must be "of necessity, the creation of a new and different being." So while talking about resurrection, Russell actually denied it *en toto*.

Then there is the theory set forth by Mr. Otis Q. Sellers, that resurrection affects, not merely one part of man's make-up, but the whole. He states: "The Bible testimony reveals that both death and resurrection touch the entire man. This is the whole burden of Scripture from beginning to end" (*Word of Truth*, Vol. IX, P. 96). This statement is as emphatic as it is sweeping, but Mr. Sellers does not advance even *one* Scripture in support of it. In this he reminds us of the preacher who was wont to "prove" his points merely by pounding the pulpit and declaring: "The Word of God is very definite on this point." Of course Mr. Sellers has based his conclusion on his own false premise as to what comprises "the entire man."

Another theory is an offspring of the old "germ theory," that at death there must still be some element of the body remaining alive, or it could not be raised again. The offspring of this theory is that taught by Mr. Oscar Baker, who holds on the basis of such passages as [John 3:36](#) that only the saved will be raised from the dead, because they alone have everlasting life, utterly failing to distinguish between physical life and the spiritual, eternal life which is ours in Christ. Says Mr. Baker:

"There are just two ways. One is that one may receive everlasting life and have a resurrection through [believing \(John 3:16\)](#). The other is failing to believe (whether willfully or in ignorance) and perishing. Such will never see life (John 3:36)" (*Truth for Today*, May, 1954).

This, of course, involves the immediate annihilation of the unsaved *at physical death*. Does the reader ask how the unsaved can then stand before God in judgment? Mr. Baker denies that this will take place at all, or even that all men are fully responsible before God for their sins.

Denying that "all men are responsible to God for all they do," he says: "If the theory be true, then it would naturally follow that all men would have to give an account of their works before God, or face the record, as some say. To do so they would have to have a resurrection of some sort. They would again see life" (*Truth for Today*, May, 1954). This, he feels, would contradict John 3:36.

What about the great white throne, then? Oh, that is taken care of too. "Evidently," he says, "a judgment of believers is in progress here" (*Truth or Today*, Aug., 1953). We will deal further with this unscriptural theory later on.

Another theory, sometimes called "the Reincarnation Theory," holds that the same spirit later inhabits another body, i.e., that the former body is not actually resurrected. This is another denial of the Bible doctrine of the resurrection of the dead.

Still another is Swedenborg's theory that at death a "spirit body" is evolved from the physical body.

Then there is the "Identity Theory," according to which "men will arise in the form in which they died, though they will be glorified." Thus a deceased babe would arise as a babe, a cripple as a cripple, etc.

We will deal more directly with these unscriptural theories as we examine what the Word of God actually says about resurrection.

## **BOTH SAVED AND LOST TO BE RAISED**

Contrary to the notion that only the saved will experience a resurrection, the Scriptures state emphatically that *both* the saved and the unsaved will be raised from the dead:

**Dan. 12:2: "AND MANY OF THEM THAT SLEEP IN THE DUST OF THE EARTH SHALL AWAKE, SOME TO EVERLASTING LIFE, AND SOME TO SHAME AND EVERLASTING CONTEMPT."**

**John 5:28, 29: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which ALL THAT ARE IN THE GRAVES SHALL HEAR HIS VOICE,**

**"AND SHALL COME FORTH; THEY THAT HAVE DONE GOOD, UNTO THE RESURRECTION OF LIFE; AND THEY THAT HAVE DONE EVIL, UNTO THE RESURRECTION OF DAMNATION."**

**Acts 24:15: "... THERE SHALL BE A RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD, BOTH OF THE JUST AND UNJUST."**

**Rev. 20:12,13: "AND I SAW THE DEAD, SMALL AND GREAT, STAND BEFORE GOD.... AND THE SEA GAVE UP THE DEAD WHICH WERE IN IT; AND DEATH AND HELL [HADES] DELIVERED UP THE DEAD WHICH WERE IN THEM.... "**

These plain and emphatic statements from the Word should certainly be enough to silence the objections of those who claim to believe the Bible, yet deny that the unsaved will be raised from the dead. What astonishes us is that in the light of such passages as these some would confuse the issue by making it appear that a resurrection would afford *hope* to unbelievers, as in the statement: "We should realize that the masses are returning to the dust with no hope of a return. They perish" (*Truth for Today*, Jan., 1954).

This form of conditional immortality is based on a misinterpretation of John 3:36, where it is stated that the believer in Christ has "everlasting life," while the unbeliever "shall not see life."

Pursuing this theory, Mr. Oscar Baker says: "It is the same with the seed which we plant in the ground. If it does not have life in it when planted, it will never, no never, grow. It will perish" (*Truth for Today*, Jan., 1954). "Just how," he asks, "could people who do not have life in them be made alive again?" (*Truth for Today*, May, 1953). We reply to this foolish question by asking how one could be *made alive again* if he already *had* life? Obviously, only that which has *died* and does *not* have life can be *made alive again*.

Perhaps Mr. Baker should ponder more carefully over the simple words of our Lord:

**"Verily, verily, I say unto you, EXCEPT A CORN [KERNEL] OF WHEAT FALL INTO THE GROUND AND DIE, IT ABIDETH ALONE: BUT IF IT DIE, IT BRINGETH FORTH MUCH FRUIT" (John 12:24).**

Or perhaps he should read and heed those stronger words of the Spirit through Paul:

**"THOU FOOL, THAT WHICH THOU SOWEST IS NOT QUICKENED EXCEPT IT DIE" (I Cor. 15:36).**

### **THE GRAND EXCEPTION**

But will all men, without exception, experience physical death and resurrection? No. One generation of the Body of Christ will not. Paul tells us a wonderful secret about this when he says, by revelation:

**"Behold, I show you a mystery [secret]; We shall NOT all sleep, but we SHALL all be changed,**

**"In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump:<sup>32</sup> for the trumpet shall sound, and THE DEAD SHALL BE RAISED incorruptible, AND WE SHALL BE CHANGED" (I Cor. 15:51, 52).**

**"For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and THE DEAD IN CHRIST SHALL RISE FIRST:**

**"THEN WE WHICH ARE ALIVE AND REMAIN SHALL BE CAUGHT UP TOGETHER WITH THEM IN THE CLOUDS, TO MEET THE LORD IN THE AIR: AND SO SHALL WE EVER BE WITH THE LORD" (I Thes. 4:16, 17).**

What a blessed secret to know and to "comfort one another" with! The hope of a glorious resurrection is, to be sure, the precious portion of all believers who die in the Lord, and the "blessed hope" is Christ's coming to "change our vile body [this body of our humiliation]" and to take us away with [Himself \(Phil. 3:20, 21; I Thes. 5:9-11\)](#). But *some* generation of believers will be here on earth when the Lord comes for His Body and will be raptured alive into heaven, like Enoch, who was *"translated that he should not see death"* ([Heb. 11:5](#)).

This is why the apostle says: *"IF our earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved . . ."* (II Cor. 5:1). It is not at all certain that it will be.

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<sup>32</sup> A military term referring to the trumpet which calls the soldiers horse from battle. Not the last of the seven trumpets of Revelation since this one is distinguished as "the trump of God" (I Thes. 4:16,17).

"Well, the delightful day will come!" Let us go on with our study of resurrection.

## THE HOPE OF THE RESURRECTION

The hope of a blessed resurrection from the dead has been the portion of believers from the earliest times.

Job, probably the first of the Scripture writers, said:

**"O that thou wouldst hide me in the grave [sheol], that Thou wouldst keep me secret UNTIL Thy wrath be past, that Thou wouldst appoint me a set time, and remember me!**

**"If a man die, shall he live again? All the days of my appointed time will I wait, TILL MY CHANGE<sup>33</sup> COME" (Job 14:13, 14).**

And in clearer, stronger language:

**"For I know that my Redeemer liveth . . .**

**"And though after my skin worms destroy this body, YET IN MY FLESH SHALL I SEE GOD:**

**"WHOM I SHALL SEE FOR MYSELF, AND MINE EYES SHALL BEHOLD, AND NOT ANOTHER; THOUGH MY REINS BE CONSUMED WITHIN ME" (Job 19:25-27).**

Likewise, it was revealed to Daniel that there would be a resurrection of his people in which the "wise" would be glorified:

**"AND MANY OF THEM THAT SLEEP IN THE DUST OF THE EARTH SHALL AWAKE ....**

**"AND THEY THAT BE WISE SHALL SHINE AS THE BRIGHTNESS OF THE FIRMAMENT; AND THEY THAT TURN MANY TO RIGHTEOUSNESS AS THE STARS FOR EVER AND EVER" (Dan. 12:2, 3).**

Martha expressed her hope in the resurrection when she said of her brother:

**"I KNOW THAT HE SHALL RISE AGAIN in the resurrection at the last day" (John 11:24).**

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<sup>33</sup> The word *chaliphah* indicates a change for the better. Verses 13, 14 explain Verse 12.



Paul proclaimed this hope as the hope of Israel, especially when he cried in the Jewish council:

**"OF THE HOPE AND RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD I AM CALLED IN QUESTION" (Acts 23:6).**

Indeed, the belief in the resurrection is specifically named as one of the distinctive features of Judaism in [Heb. 6:1,2](#).

Resurrection is also the hope of believers in the present dispensation. Since believers partake of the resurrection life of Christ because they are "in Him" ([Eph. 2:5, 6](#); [Col. 3:1-3](#)) they are also given to expect a bodily resurrection.

The resurrection of Christ *and His people* in glorified bodies is part of Paul's gospel. This he states emphatically in I Cor. 15:1-4, 20, 43, 52, and this agrees with what he says elsewhere in the Corinthian letters:

**I Cor 6:14: "AND GOD HATH BOTH RAISED UP THE LORD, AND WILL ALSO RAISE UP US BY HIS OWN POWER."**

**II Cor. 4:14: "KNOWING THAT HE WHICH RAISED UP THE LORD JESUS SHALL RAISE UP US ALSO BY JESUS, AND SHALL PRESENT US WITH YOU."**

This hope sustained Paul when, in persecution, he "despaired even of life," for he says:

**"But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, THAT WE SHOULD NOT TRUST IN OURSELVES, BUT IN GOD WHICH RAISETH THE DEAD" (II Cor. 1:9).**

He referred to this hope as "the redemption of the body" and explained that as we "groan" in the present body we "wait" for its redemption ([Rom. 8:23](#)).

## **THE BODY ALONE TO BE RAISED**

Arguing for the resurrection of *the whole man*, Mr. Sellers says: "Since some people believe that death touches only one aspect or part of man, the body, they must follow this up with the idea that the body is the only aspect or part of man affected by resurrection" (*Word of Truth*, Vol. IX, P. 96).

Now we *do* believe that that phase of death with which this mortal life is brought to a close affects only the body, but we do not merely "follow this up with the idea" that the body only is to be raised from the dead. It is the Scriptures that teach this.

As we have already pointed out, Mr. Sellers teaches that a living man does not have, but *is* a soul; that the soul is the whole man, and that this is nothing more than *the body with life in it*. Logically, then, when life leaves the body there is no longer a soul but only a lifeless body, so that his references to the deceased as "dead souls" and his references to the resurrection of "the entire man" are contradictory. He still has only a dead *body* to be raised.

Let it be understood, then, that when Mr. Sellers refers to the resurrection of "the entire man" he does not have the soul and the body, or the spirit, the soul and the body in mind; he means the body alone, which *he* calls "a dead soul." Nor do we ever read in Scripture of the soul being raised with the body. It is always the body alone, since the soul does *not* die.

**Dan. 12:2: "And many of THEM THAT SLEEP IN THE DUST OF THE EARTH shall awake .... "**

**Matt. 27:52, 53: "And the GRAVES were OPENED, and many BODIES of the saints which slept AROSE,**

**"AND CAME OUT OF THE GRAVES AFTER HIS RESURRECTION ...."**

**John 5:28, 29: "...ALL THAT ARE IN THE GRAVES SHALL HEAR HIS VOICE,**

**"AND SHALL COME FORTH ...."**

**I Cor. 15:35: ".... with what BODY do they come?"**

**I Cor. 15:37: "... . Thou sowest not that BODY that shall be..."**

**I Cor. 15:44: "It is SOWN a natural BODY; it is RAISED a spiritual BODY .... "**

## **IDENTITY PRESERVED IN RESURRECTION**

Identity *must* be preserved in resurrection in the very nature of the case. If it is not that which died that is raised to life, we do not have resurrection at all, but rather the creation of an entirely new being. The simple statement, for example, that "*Women received THEIR DEAD raised to life AGAIN*" ([Heb. 11:35](#)) indicates the preservation of identity in resurrection. The same persons who had died were raised to life again, and since it is only the body, representing the whole man, that died, *that body* is raised again.

We can brook the sneers of modern Sadducees who, because their brains work fairly well, forget that *God* made them, and rise to inform Him that

resurrection is impossible, for they *"do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God"* (Matt. 22:29).

Let them cite their objections and multiply their examples if they will, but an omnipotent God will still answer them: *"Fool! That which thou sowest is not quickened except it die"* (I Cor. 15:36). You say resurrection is impossible? Look about you! Deny it all you will, but you are still *surrounded* by it on every hand! It seems foolish to deny the sun or the planets and stars just because your finite mind cannot understand how they came into being or what keeps them traveling so swiftly in their orbits. And it is well for you that you are surrounded by evidence of resurrection, for it is the simplest logic as well as the plainest Scripture that *"if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen"* (I Cor. 15:13) *and if Christ be not risen we have no Savior and all preaching and faith is vain* (See I Cor. 15:14-19).

That according to Scripture the identical *bodies* of those who have died will rise again, has already been demonstrated above by those passages which state that *those who sleep in the dust shall awake*, that *graves were opened and the bodies came out*, that *bodies which are "sown" in the grave will be raised again*.

When Paul broached the subject of resurrection to the Athenians, "some mocked" while others, more polite, but yet as unbelieving, said: "We will hear thee again of this matter," but these philosophers, at the seat of earth's learning, were themselves still so much in the dark that they "spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing" (Acts 17:21, 32).

When our Lord indicated that He would raise Jairus' daughter from the dead, *"they laughed Him to scorn"* (Mark 5:40). Nevertheless at His word *"the damsel arose, and walked"* (Ver. 42).

Martha, though believing in "the resurrection at the last day," found her faith wavering when our Lord actually proceeded to work the wondrous miracle *then*. Though Lazarus had been dead only four days, she remonstrated: *"Lord, by this time he stinketh"* (John 11:39). But her doubts notwithstanding, *"he that was dead came forth"* (Ver. 44) in a public demonstration of the power of God that immediately sent His enemies into consultation as to what they should do next (Ver. 47).

It is true that these two were not then raised in *glorified* bodies, but that is beside the point here.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Neither do we discuss here the distinctions between the various original words used for resurrection or the numerous resurrections outlined in Scripture. Our subject here is the simple *fact* of resurrection: that God brings the dead back to life again.

## IN WHAT CONDITION WILL THE DEAD BE RAISED?

But while the Scriptures teach that God will raise the identical bodies that have been buried, they do not indicate that He will raise them in the identical *form* in which they were laid away. There is no Scriptural support for the so-called "Identity Theory"; in fact there is evidence against it.

For obvious reasons we are given *no descriptions* of the resurrection body, but we are told all we need to know and more than our finite minds can visualize.

As to the unsaved dead, we are told simply that they will be raised "*to shame and everlasting contempt*" (Dan. 12:2) and that their resurrection will be a "*resurrection of damnation [or condemnation]*" (John 5:29). It is evident from this that they will *not* have glorified bodies, but rather the opposite.

The saved, however, will be glorified in resurrection. This is indicated with regard to the saved of all ages, regardless of dispensation.

David said, by the Spirit:

**"As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I SHALL BE SATISFIED, WHEN I AWAKE WITH THY LIKENESS" (Psa. 17:15).**

John wrote to the believers of the dispersion:

**"Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when He shall appear, WE SHALL BE LIKE HIM; FOR WE SHALL SEE HIM AS HE IS" (I John 3:2).**

But, again, it is in the revelation given through Paul that we find most light on the subject, and light regarding *our own* resurrection.

In I Cor. 15:51 the apostle assures us that "*we shall all be changed,*" but he has more to say as to the *extent* of that change:

First, all the saved will not be glorified to the same extent in resurrection. To illustrate this the Apostle Paul deals with the variety of "bodies" which God has given to the members of the vegetable and animal creations, adding:

**"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... (I Cor. 15:40-42).**

The fact remains, however, that for the poorest saint the change from humiliation to glory will be stupendous and profound.

**"So . . . is the resurrection of the dead. IT IS SOWN IN CORRUPTION; IT IS RAISED IN INCORRUPTION:**

**"IT IS SOWN IN DISHONOR; IT IS RAISED IN GLORY: IT IS SOWN IN WEAKNESS; IT IS RAISED IN POWER:**

**"IT IS SOWN A NATURAL BODY; IT IS RAISED A SPIRITUAL BODY . . ."**  
(I Cor. 15:42-44).

**"AS WE HAVE BORNE THE IMAGE OF THE EARTHY, WE SHALL ALSO BEAR THE IMAGE OF THE HEAVENLY"** (I Cor. 15:49).

**"[THE LORD JESUS CHRIST] SHALL CHANGE OUR VILE BODY [LIT., BODY OF OUR HUMILIATION] THAT IT MAY BE FASHIONED LIKE UNTO HIS GLORIOUS BODY, ACCORDING TO THE WORKING WHEREBY HE IS ABLE EVEN TO SUBDUE ALL THINGS UNTO HIMSELF"** (Phil. 3:21).

## **CHRIST'S RELATION TO RESURRECTION**

Death *overtakes* men, but it never overtook Christ. He rather overtook *it*. He came into this world specifically to meet death, grapple with it, overcome it and arise victorious over it.

So likewise there have been resurrections from the dead both before and after that of Christ, but these were rather resuscitations or revivifications of those who had died. No mere man ever arose as *conqueror* over death. Christ did, and *all* future resurrection centers in Him, though His resurrection is presented to us as the *hope of believers*. He could say:

**"I AM THE RESURRECTION, AND THE LIFE: HE THAT BELIEVETH IN ME, THOUGH HE WERE DEAD, YET SHALL HE LIVE"** (John 11:25).

**"BUT NOW IS CHRIST RISEN FROM THE DEAD, AND BECOME THE FIRSTFRUITS OF THEM THAT SLEPT.**

**"FOR SINCE BY MAN CAME DEATH, BY MAN CAME ALSO THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD.**

**"FOR AS IN ADAM ALL DIE, EVEN SO IN CHRIST SHALL ALL BE MADE ALIVE"** (I Cor. 15:20-22).

That he refers here to the resurrection of the saved, is evident from what follows:

**"BUT EVERY MAN IN HIS OWN ORDER: CHRIST THE FIRSTFRUITS: AFTERWARD THEY THAT ARE CHRIST'S AT HIS COMING" (Ver. 23).**

Thus we cry with Peter:

**"BLESSED BE THE GOD AND FATHER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, WHICH ACCORDING TO HIS ABUNDANT MERCY HATH BEGOTTEN US AGAIN UNTO A LIVING HOPE BY THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST FROM THE DEAD" (I Pet. 1:3).**

And more: we long to experience *"the power of His resurrection"* here and now (Phil. 3:10) for Paul by revelation, informs us that it is God's will that we might know:

**"...WHAT IS THE EXCEEDING GREATNESS OF HIS POWER TO USWARD WHO BELIEVE, ACCORDING TO THE WORKING OF HIS MIGHTY POWER,**

**"WHICH HE WROUGHT IN CHRIST, WHEN HE RAISED HIM FROM THE DEAD, AND SET HIM AT HIS OWN RIGHT HAND IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES" (Eph. 1:19, 20).**

## **Chapter VIII**

# **JUDGMENT TO COME**

**"And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled ..." (Acts 24:25).**

Judgment to come is stated in Scripture to be one of the "first principles" of its doctrine ([Heb. 6:1, 2](#)). We live in a day, however, when this fact is held in general disregard and often made light of. Listen to the average juke box and you are apt to hear a humorous number by a night club singer, entitled, "There's a Big Day Coming" or "Get Ready for the Judgment Day." Few men tremble as Felix did, at the thought of judgment to come, probably because few men preach it as Paul did.

Even believers, failing to understand Paul's great message of grace, too often think of God only as a Being of infinite love, who gave His Son to die for man, forgetting that it was His very justice that demanded so terrible a price for sin and that the flames of the Lake of Fire are but the expression of His righteous indignation at man's rejection of His love and grace. Believers are also prone to put the mildest possible construction upon those passages which deal with the coming judgment of their conduct as Christians, as though it were nothing more than a joyous handing out of rewards at the close of life's race.

## **GOD THE SUPREME JUDGE**

That God is, among other things, the great Judge of all and acts in that capacity is the consistent testimony of Scripture.

In [Gen. 18:25](#) He is called "*the Judge of all the earth,*" in [Judg. 11:27](#), "*the Lord, the Judge*" and in [Psa. 9:7](#) we read: "*He hath prepared His throne for judgment.*" Paul, by inspiration, calls Him, "*the Lord, the righteous Judge*" and "*God, the Judge of all*" ([II Tim. 4:8](#); [Heb. 12:23](#)). And in this connection he warns that "*it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*" ([Heb. 10:31](#)).

## **DIRECT JUDGMENT COMMITTED TO THE SON**

It is not God the *Father*, however, but God the *Son*, who will have direct charge of the future judgment of mankind. The Apostle John, by the Spirit, records our Lord's own words as to this:

**"FOR THE FATHER JUDGETH NO MAN, BUT HATH COMMITTED ALL JUDGMENT UNTO THE SON" (John 5:22).**

**"AND HATH GIVEN HIM AUTHORITY TO EXECUTE JUDGMENT ALSO, BECAUSE HE IS THE<sup>35</sup> SON OF MAN" (John 5:27).**

This is reasonable, for as Son of God and Son of man our Lord has both the right and the qualifications to judge men.

Thus Peter declared to Cornelius and his household that it is *Christ* who was "*ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead*" (Acts 10:42). And Paul adds his confirmation to this. In his defense before Agrippa he declares that God "*hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained*" (Acts 17:31). Again in II Tim. 4:1 he refers to "*the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead.*" Even the judgment at which the service and conduct of believers will be dealt with, he twice calls "*the judgment seat of Christ*" (Rom. 14:10; II Cor. 5:10).

## **THE VARIOUS WORDS FOR JUDGMENT**

There are various synonyms for judgment in both Hebrew and Greek, denoting either the weighing of the evidence, or the discernment exercised in judging, or the arriving at a decision, or the passing or execution of the sentence, or some other aspect of judgment, but suffice it to say that in this discussion every passage used has to do with some aspect of administrative judgment as we know it.

This is so even of the *bema*, from which the Lord Jesus Christ will some day try believers' works, for while believers have already been judged for *sin* in Christ at Calvary, they will still be tried for their *service* and *conduct* as Christians and will either gain rewards or suffer loss and disgrace. More of this later.

All the words for judgment here used, then, have to do with administrative judgment in the accepted sense. Sometimes this may be penal, sometimes disciplinary and sometimes to determine the granting or withholding of rewards, but always the thought of trial and judicial decision is in view.

## **THE COMING "DAY OF JUDGMENT"**

There are various judgments to be distinguished from that "judgment to come" of which Paul reasoned with Felix. There is, for example, the judgment of the world at Calvary - God laying the sins of the world upon Christ (John 12:31). There is also the judgment of the believer's old nature in his death with Christ (Rom. 6:2, 3) the believer's judgment of himself (I Cor. 11:31) etc. Then too, there will be a future judgment on earth of Israel and the living nations (Matt. 24:27 - 25:46). But beyond all these<sup>36</sup> there still lies a judgment for sins which will

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<sup>35</sup> The definite article does not appear in the original.

<sup>36</sup> We do not believe that the sentence of Matt. 25:41 constitutes the final judgment of the enemies of Israel.



take place after the present life is over, except for those whose sins have already been dealt with by grace through the vicarious death of Christ.

It is of mankind in general that the Apostle Paul declares:

**"... It is appointed unto men once to die, but AFTER THIS THE JUDGMENT" (Heb. 9:27).**

Thus our Lord referred to *"the day of judgment"* as something beyond His premillennial judgment of the living nations, for "in that day," He said, it will be more tolerable for the people of the land of Sodom (who had long since died) than for His rejectors ([Matt. 10:15](#)).

Again, He evidently referred to the same judgment when He said: *"But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in THE DAY OF JUDGMENT"* (Matt. 12:36).

Peter also declares that God will *"reserve the unjust unto THE DAY OF JUDGMENT to be punished"* and refers further to *"THE DAY OF JUDGMENT and perdition of ungodly men"* (II Pet. 2:9; 3:7).

## **NONE CAN ESCAPE GOD'S JUDGMENT**

In [Gen. 18:25](#) God is called *"the Judge of all the earth"* and in [Heb. 12:23](#), *"the Judge of all."* Again, in [Rom. 3:6](#) Paul states that God will *"judge the world."* The fact that believers have *already* been judged in Christ only emphasizes the fact that none who have *not* thus been judged will escape the judgment to *come* - that *all* are subject to God's righteous judgment.

Some Annihilationists deny that there will be a resurrection of the unsaved dead, and argue that therefore they *cannot* be judged. Other Annihilationists, if they carried their arguments for the "destruction" of the unsaved to their logical conclusions, would have to say the same. But if the Scriptures are clear on anything, it is the fact that there will be a resurrection of the "unjust" as well as of the "just" ([Acts 24:15](#)). Indeed, our Lord distinctly stated that "they that have done evil" will "come forth" in "the resurrection of damnation [Lit., judgment]" ([John 5:29](#)).

Our Lord is repeatedly called "the Judge of the quick [living] and the dead" ([Acts 10:42](#); [II Tim. 4:1](#); [I Pet. 4:5](#)) and, as we have seen, "the judgment" appointed for mankind, apart from Christ, is to take place "after death" ([Heb. 9:27](#)).

Let no man, therefore, entertain the unfounded hope that he can reject the Savior and yet escape being judged for his sins. If God could save even *one* soul on the grounds of His compassion alone, apart from the death of Christ, He could

save *all* on the same grounds, and the death of Christ would then prove to have been the greatest blunder, yea, the greatest crime ever committed.

Let self-righteous Christ-rejectors, then, ponder soberly over the words of the Spirit through Paul: "*Thinkest thou ... that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?*" (Rom. 2:3).

## **BELIEVERS ALREADY JUDGED FOR THEIR SINS**

As we have intimated, all true believers will escape this judgment for sins, since their sins have already been dealt with on the cross and they now stand before God "*justified from all things*" (Acts 13:39) "*accepted in the Beloved*" (Eph. 1:6) and "*complete in Him*" (Col. 2:10).

It is true that "*it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment,*" but this passage in its entirety has an encouraging message for the believer:

**"And AS it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment;**

**"SO CHRIST WAS ONCE OFFERED TO BEAR THE SINS OF MANY; AND UNTO THEM THAT LOOK FOR HIM SHALL HE APPEAR THE SECOND TIME WITHOUT SIN<sup>37</sup> UNTO SALVATION" (Heb. 9:27, 28).**

Hence we read in John 3:18 that "*He that believeth on Him is not condemned [judged, R.V.]*" and in John 5:24: "*He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation [judgment, R.V.] but is passed from death unto life*" and again in Rom, 8:1: "*There is therefore now no condemnation [judgment, R.V.] to them which are in Christ Jesus*"<sup>38</sup>

## **THE JUDGMENT OF BELIEVERS AS CHRISTIANS**

But believers will stand before the *bema*, or judgment seat, of Christ, to be tried for their conduct and service as Christians.

Some have supposed that the use of the word *bema* in this connection proves that no actual trial, but only the giving out of rewards is in view, since *bema*, in secular Greek, is used of the dais from which the judges at the Greek athletic events awarded the prizes to the winners.

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<sup>37</sup> Lit., "apart from sin," i.e., apart from the sin question.

<sup>38</sup> The rest of the verse in A.V. is an interpolation. It belongs at the end of Verse 4, where it also appears.

This, however, is not the only use of the word *bema* in secular Greek, and *in Scripture* the word is used at least eight times of judgment seats *at trials* ([Matt. 27:19](#); [John 19:13](#); [Acts 18:12, 16, 17](#); [Acts 25:6, 10, 17](#)) and never in connection with the giving out of awards *alone*.

It is significant, to be sure, that in connection with the judgment of the believer's works the Spirit used a word which was also used in connection with the awarding of prizes. It is significant, too, that the word *bema* is never used in connection with God's judgment of the unsaved. However, it is not the *word*, primarily, but the *context* which in each case establishes the character of the judgment referred to. The word *bema* is used only twice in relation to the judgment of the believer's works, though the subject is often dealt with in Paul's epistles. In these passages the important thing is not so much when or where men are judged as *what* they are judged for.

## A MEETING IN THE AIR

Will there then be a judgment in heaven, with all the remorse and shame that must necessarily accompany it? Evidently not *in heaven*. We believe this judgment will take place at our meeting with the Lord "in the air."

The word "meet" in [I Thes. 4:17](#) does not refer to a chance meeting, but to a *planned* meeting. Thus some translators have rendered this passage: "*We which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them . . . for a meeting with the Lord in the air.*"

Just where "in the air" this meeting will be held we do not know, nor how long it will last. Perhaps it will have some relation to the awful judgments taking place on earth during the tribulation period. But that the judgment of the members of Christ's Body will be held at this time seems further to be established by Paul's words in II Tim. 4:7, 8:

**"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:**

**"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me AT THAT DAY; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing."**

## WHAT ABOUT BELIEVERS OF OTHER DISPENSATIONS?

While in this matter, as in the questions of death, the intermediate state and resurrection, there is *progressive* revelation, it would appear that there will be a

comparable judgment for believers of other ages, like David and Daniel who, though as perfectly justified and as eternally secure as we, must have their works as *believers* reviewed and dealt with.

Apart from the questions of logic or justice involved, the Scriptures appear to bear this out. In connection with our appearance at the judgment seat of Christ, Paul cites Isa. 45:23:

**"For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall confess to God" (Rom. 14:11).<sup>39</sup>**

Thus we read of those of Daniel's people who will be raised "to everlasting life," that:

"...THEY THAT BE WISE SHALL SHINE AS THE BRIGHTNESS OF THE FIRMAMENT; AND THEY THAT TURN MANY TO RIGHTEOUSNESS AS THE STARS FOR EVER AND EVER" (Dan. 12:3).

It would appear also that Mal. 3:16, 17 has reference to this:

**"Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another; and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name.**

**"And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him."**

## **WE MUST ALL APPEAR**

As to believers of the present dispensation, the Apostle Paul leaves no doubt that there will be a judgment at which they must appear to answer for their lives as *Christians*. Among other things he says:

**"WE SHALL ALL STAND BEFORE THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST" (Rom. 14:10).**

**"WE MUST ALL APPEAR BEFORE THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST" (II Cor. 5:10).**

**"SO THEN EVERY ONE OF US SHALL GIVE ACCOUNT OF HIMSELF TO GOD" (Rom. 14:12).**

He urges believing servants to serve heartily "as to the Lord, and not unto men," adding:

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<sup>39</sup> Evidently to prove that even believers will not escape answering to God after this life is over.

**"KNOWING THAT OF THE LORD YE SHALL RECEIVE THE REWARD OF THE INHERITANCE: FOR YE SERVE THE LORD CHRIST" (Col. 3:23, 24).**

And to their believing masters, he says:

**"Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal, knowing that YE ALSO HAVE A MASTER IN HEAVEN" (Col. 4:1).**

This, after the declaration:

**"BUT HE THAT DOETH WRONG SHALL RECEIVE FOR THE WRONG WHICH HE HATH DONE: AND THERE IS NO RESPECT OF PERSONS" (Col. 3:25).**

These last statements by Paul are answer enough to those who go to extremes in dispensationalism and suppose that the judgment seat of Christ has no relation to us because Paul uses the word *bema* only in his early epistles!

As we have stated, the *sins* of believers from cradle to coffin, have already been judged in Christ and we are "*accepted in the Beloved.*" The great question to be decided at the *bema* of Christ, then, is not, "*What about your sins?*" but "*How have you done as a Christian?*" It does not concern acceptance with God, but rather the degree of glory to be enjoyed in the life to come.

One aspect of our Christian responsibility is, of course, our *service* for Christ as builders of the Church. Hence, at the judgment seat of Christ, there will be an examination of the *quality of our workmanship*.

## **THE QUALITY OF OUR WORKMANSHIP TO BE EXAMINED**

As God's instructed "masterbuilder," the Apostle Paul laid the foundation for the Church of the present dispensation and warns his co-laborers to take heed how they build upon it (I Cor. 3:10). In this Church Jesus Christ is again the foundation; there could be no other (I Cor. 3:11) but it is now Jesus Christ viewed and known in a different way from that in which He had previously been known. To Peter and the eleven He was "*the Christ [Heb., Messiah] the Son of the Living God*" (Matt. 16:16). It was upon a recognition of the royal claims, the *Messiahship*, of Christ, that the Millennial Church was to be built. But the Church of *this* dispensation is built upon a recognition of the *rejected* Christ as Lord and the Great Dispenser of grace to a world at enmity with Himself (Rom. 10:9-13). This is the foundation upon which we are to build. No longer are we to know Christ "after the flesh" (II Cor. 5:16) or to proclaim His claims to reign on earth. We are to know Him in His present glory, "far above all" and to proclaim His grace, undiluted and unadulterated.

It was by "the grace of God" that Paul laid this foundation and it is to keep God's temple of grace unmarred that he warns believers to take heed how they build upon that foundation (I Cor. 3:10) in view of the fact that the great Building Inspector will some day subject the completed structure to a thorough examination.

Alas, few of God's servants have heeded the warning! The majority have taken Petrine material and built it upon the Pauline foundation. They talk about "building the kingdom" and try vainly to carry out the "great commission" given to Peter and the eleven. They have taken the law, baptism, tongues, healings and signs of the times from an-other dispensation and brought them into the dispensation of the grace of God, until the Church is so confused and divided that no one knows what to believe. Thus has the temple of God been marred, and for this the builders will have to give an account (I Cor. 3:17).

## **REWARD OR LOSS**

The question here is entirely one of quality of workmanship. Some build upon Paul's foundation gold, silver and precious stones; others, wood, hay, stubble (I Cor. 3:12) but...

**"EVERY MAN'S WORK SHALL BE MADE MANIFEST: FOR THE DAY SHALL DECLARE IT, BECAUSE IT SHALL BE REVEALED BY FIRE; AND THE FIRE SHALL TRY EVERY MAN'S WORK, OF WHAT SORT IT IS.**

**"IF ANY 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.**

**"KNOW YE NOT THAT YE ARE THE TEMPLE OF GOD, AND THAT THE SPIRIT OF GOD DWELLETH IN YOU?**

**"IF ANY MAN DEFILE [MAR]<sup>40</sup> THE TEMPLE OF GOD, HIM SHALL GOD DESTROY [MAR] FOR THE TEMPLE OF GOD IS HOLY, WHICH TEMPLE YE ARE" (I Cor. 3:13-17).**

We appeal to Christian leaders and all those who have any part in the building of the Church today, to ask themselves how they will fare when they have finished building and the divine Building Inspector examines their work.

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<sup>40</sup> Not morally or physically here, but *spiritually*. The apostle deals, in this passage, with service for Christ, not moral behavior.

Good motives will prove no defense in that day, for God has given us, through his apostle, the plans and specifications to be followed. What, then, shall be said of the builder who ignores them to build in his own way?<sup>41</sup>

None can deny that the Church has been marred, nor is God to blame for its present condition. *The builders are to blame.* The fact is that many of them keep so busy "getting things going" that they have little time left to study the Word.

It is sometimes argued that in spite of failure to rightly divide the Word of truth, souls are being saved, but will the builders of the Church never awaken to the fact that hands raised or people coming forward do not measure the success of their work? *Does their work abide?* And more particularly: *Will it abide the fiery test of the judgment seat of Christ?* This is the question.

Thank God, we have in I Cor. 3 the promise that even the most unfaithful saint will still be saved, for salvation is wholly by the grace of God, but it will be a shameful and bitter experience for any child of God in that day to have to suffer loss, while others gain rewards; to see his work go up in flames, as it were, while he himself is saved only as by fire; to have to stand rebuked and empty-handed before the One who gave His life's blood to save him; to be told, perhaps after much strenuous building, that he has done little or no *real* service to his fellowmen, because he did not take heed *how* he built upon the foundation laid by the Apostle Paul in the Scriptures. In that day there will be tears and shame as well as rejoicing, and the phrase "saved by grace" will take on new meaning.<sup>42</sup>

Christian reader, let us rather bear the shame now; let us rather weep now, that we may not need to be ashamed and weep then. This is what Paul meant when he wrote to the Corinthians: *"And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned!"* (I Cor. 5:2).

Many a Christian who is puffed up now will be brought very low then, to see all his "pious" words and deeds burned up as so much wood, hay and stubble. May God help us, then, to be not only zealous, but *obedient* and *intelligent* workmen; workmen whom He can approve, who need not to be ashamed. And there is only ONE way:

**"STUDY TO SHOW THYSELF APPROVED UNTO GOD, A WORKMAN THAT NEEDETH NOT TO BE ASHAMED, RIGHTLY DIVIDING THE WORD OF TRUTH" (II Tim. 2:15).**

## **OUR CONDUCT TO BE REVIEWED**

But there are moral, as well as spiritual matters to be dealt with at the judgment seat of Christ.

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<sup>41</sup> See the author's booklet, entitled, *Paul, the Master-builder.*

<sup>42</sup> See the author's booklet, entitled, *Will There be Tears in Heaven?*

In I Cor. 9:24, 25 the apostle points to the contestants in the Greek games. They are "temperate in all things," he says. They discipline themselves; they exercise self-restraint; they forego worldly pleasures and suppress fleshly desires, and we should draw a lesson from this, for, he says:

**"They indeed do this to win a fading wreath, but we an unfading one" (I Cor. 9:25, Wey.).**

The apostle, like the Greek athlete, had a prize in mind - only a much greater one and one which was worth much more of self-discipline to win. Thus he continues:

**"I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:**

**"But I keep under my body [Lit., I buffet my body] and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (I Cor. 9:26, 27).**

The apostle had no thought here of being *lost* after having preached to others. He refers to the Christian *contest*. The Greek word translated "cast-away" here is the exact opposite of that rendered "approved" in II Tim. 2:15. One is the negative, the other the positive. His fear was that after having preached to others *about winning the contest and gaining the prize*, he himself might be disapproved and might fail to gain it. Thus he ran, determined to *win*, and beat his body with telling blows to bring it into subjection, lest *he* become a slave to *it* and, like the athlete grown fat and careless, he lose the race and forfeit the prize.

In II Cor. 5:9-11 the apostle speaks of the judgment seat of Christ, discussing the moral question involved, and here he makes it clearer than ever that this judgment is not merely a granting of awards, but that the whole Christian life will be held in review, with wrongs as well as rights dealt with:

**"Wherefore we labor, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of Him.**

**"FOR WE MUST ALL APPEAR BEFORE THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST; THAT EVERY ONE MAY RECEIVE THE THINGS DONE IN HIS BODY, ACCORDING TO THAT HE HATH DONE, WHETHER IT BE GOOD OR BAD.**

**"KNOWING THEREFORE THE TERROR OF THE LORD, WE PERSUADE MEN.... "**



This aspect of the judgment of believers is an important one. A man may know the message of grace and engage zealously in "the preaching of Jesus Christ according to the revelation of the mystery," yet deny it by his life. He may talk about being crucified and buried with Christ, yet live for self. He may talk about being raised with Christ to sit with Him in the heavenlies, yet fail to "walk in newness of life." He may talk about God's boundless grace toward sinners, yet hoard or squander his earthly goods as though he did not care whether or not others heard. For all this believers will give an account.

Knowing "the terror of the Lord," the apostle sought to persuade such of the folly of their way. Many of God's people need to heed this warning today; many who know the truth and even make it known to others, but fail to exercise self-restraint and self-sacrifice so as to be of greater service to Christ and others - they need to heed it, lest having lived pleasant and comfortable lives here, they suffer shame and loss there.

Let not the unfaithful believer presume that the loss to be suffered at the judgment seat of Christ will be merely negative in quality, for there, where the love and sacrifice of Christ for us will be more fully appreciated, rebuke for failure will be the more keenly felt.

## **REWARDS FOR SUFFERING**

To be faithful in our Christian testimony, whether spiritually or morally, involves suffering, and for this rich rewards will be given. Paul, by the Spirit, has much to say about this. We cite a few passages:

**"... IF SO BE THAT WE SUFFER WITH HIM, THAT WE MAY BE ALSO GLORIFIED TOGETHER.**

**"FOR I RECKON THAT THE SUFFERINGS OF THIS PRESENT TIME ARE NOT WORTHY TO BE COMPARED WITH THE GLORY WHICH SHALL BE REVEALED IN US" (Rom. 8:17, 18).**

**"FOR OUR LIGHT AFFLICTION, WHICH IS BUT FOR A MOMENT, WORKETH FOR US A FAR MORE EXCEEDING AND ETERNAL WEIGHT OF GLORY" (II Cor. 4:17).**

**"IF WE SUFFER, WE SHALL ALSO REIGN WITH HIM . . ." (II Tim. 2:12).**

It is only in this life that we are privileged to toil and sacrifice and suffer for our blessed Lord. When we are called to stand before Him that opportunity will be forever past.

Whether we live until the Lord comes for us, then, or whether we depart this world through death, may we, like Paul, be able to say:

**"I HAVE FOUGHT A GOOD FIGHT, I HAVE FINISHED MY COURSE, I  
HAVE KEPT THE FAITH:**

**"HENCEFORTH THERE IS LAID UP FOR ME A CROWN..." (II Tim. 4:7, 8).**

## ***Chapter IX***

# **THE GREAT WHITE THRONE**

**"And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.**

**"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 their works.**

**"And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.**

**"And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."**

**--Rev. 20:11-15.**

This judgment, which we have already referred to, stands between the passing of the present heaven and earth and the appearance of the new heaven and earth. It is the judgment at which all the remaining dead - all the *unsaved* dead - will stand before God the Son to answer for their sins.

Terrible as it is to contemplate, it is the *final* judgment of the ages. In the words of Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer, it is "the last word of a holy God respecting sin and all unrighteousness" (*Systematic Theology*, Vol. IV, P. 142).

### **NOT A GENERAL JUDGMENT OF ALL**

Those who believe that the judgment at the great white throne is to be a "general judgment" of all men, have confused it with the judgment of the living nations described by our Lord in [Matt. 25:31-46](#). But these two judgments cannot possibly be the same. In our Lord's description of the judgment of the living nations, sheep, goats *and brethren* are referred to, the judgment is held on earth and treatment of the Jew is the issue, while by comparison the judgment at the great white throne concerns only the unsaved, the earth will have fled away and *all* sinful works will be dealt with. Further, there could be no resurrection at the judgment of the *living* nations, while men are raised from the dead to stand before the great white throne.

Nor does the idea of a general resurrection and judgment stand the Berean test any better in the light of other related Scriptures.

It is true that we read in [Dan. 12:2](#) that "some" shall awake "to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt," and in [Acts 24:15](#) that "there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust," but neither of these passages say that the resurrection and judgment of the saved and of the unsaved will occur at the same time. They merely state that both will be raised and judged.

[Isa. 61:2, 3](#) contains a prediction concerning "the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance of our God" in one sentence, but by closing the book after reading only the former phrase, in Nazareth's synagogue, our Lord made it abundantly clear that these were not to occur simultaneously. The former phrase concerned the day in which He spoke, but the latter concerned a future day. Indeed, we *now* know that "the day of vengeance" did not even follow immediately after "the acceptable year of the Lord."<sup>43</sup> So it is with the two passages above referred to. They merely say that both the just and the unjust will be raised and judged, but other Scriptures must be consulted for further light as to details of time, etc.

Our Lord's words in John 5:28, 29 already indicate that only "they that have done evil" will arise in "the resurrection of damnation" and that this is thus to be distinguished from "the resurrection of life."

Should it be objected that our Lord spoke of an "hour" in this connection (Ver. 28) we reply that in Verse 25 He also spoke of an "hour" both coming and then present - an hour which has already lasted more than nineteen hundred years. The language is clearly idiomatic in both cases.

Furthermore, how could there be a general resurrection and judgment when [I Cor. 15:22-24](#) gives us a definite order of successive resurrections, when [I Thes. 4:16-18](#) speaks of a resurrection in which only "the dead in Christ" shall have part and when [Rev. 20:5](#) speaks of a "first [Lit., former] resurrection" to take place before the millennium and states that "*the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished*"?

## **NOT A JUDGMENT OF THE SAVED**

One Annihilationist states concerning the great white throne that "it is a judgment of believers" since "those who do not have life cannot stand (arise) in the judgment." This same writer sees no proof "that the wicked will be raised from the dead at some time and have to account for what they have done" (*Truth for Today*, May, Nov., 1953).

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<sup>43</sup> See the author's booklet: *Now is the Time*.

This encouragement to godlessness is given in the face of the fact that the passage itself explicitly states: "*I SAW THE DEAD, SMALL AND GREAT, STAND BEFORE GOD.*"

The fact is that the Scriptures clearly teach that it is *only* the unsaved and *none* of the saved who stand trial in this judgment; so far is this theory from the truth! The saved "*shall not come into judgment*" for sin, but have already "*passed from death unto life*" (John 5:24). "*There is therefore now no condemnation [Gr., judgment] to them which are in Christ Jesus*" (Rom. 8:1). Indeed, "*Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?*" (Rom. 8:33).

As to the supposed impossibility of the wicked being raised because they "do not have life," how could they be raised from the *dead* if they were alive, if they had not died? And not only does the passage in Revelation 20 state: "I saw the *dead... stand* before God"; it goes on to describe how the sea and death and *hades* "delivered up the dead which were in them."

As to the saved, they will already have been raised more than a thousand years before the judgment of the great white throne. This is clear from I Cor. 15:23, where we are told that "they that are Christ's" will be raised "*at His coming.*" At the rapture of the Church of this dispensation only "*the dead in Christ shall rise*" (I Thes. 4:16). Then, after the "great tribulation" which follows on earth, other saints will be raised in a "first" or "former" resurrection.<sup>44</sup> "But the rest of the dead" will not be raised "until the thousand years are finished" (Rev. 20:5,6). Moreover the statement: "*Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first [former] resurrection, on such the second death hath no power,*" indicates clearly that those who await the next resurrection, to stand before the great white throne, are the unsaved alone, over whom "the second death" *will* have power.

The passage on the great white throne itself also proves that only the unsaved will appear there.

First of all, the picture as a whole is one that would strike terror into any but the deceived and hardened heart, and the Apostle John says, by inspiration: "I saw the dead<sup>45</sup> *small and great* stand before God." Not one will escape the just judgment of his sins. Past prestige or position or power will count for nothing there, for the Judge is no respecter of persons.

The subjects will be judged strictly according to "*those things which are written in the books, according to their works*" (Ver. 12). Mark well, they are *not* judged out of "the book of life" but out of the records of their works. How could any of the saved be in view here? How could any man abide the judgment of the books? And, remember, this is *not* a judgment respecting rewards for Christian

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<sup>44</sup> As compared with the *latter* resurrection to take place after the millennium.

<sup>45</sup> I.e., the remaining dead: those not previously raised.

service. Not one word is said about rewards or the granting of any blessing. It is a judgment in which the lake of fire or escape therefrom is in question.

Again, we read:

**"And death and hell [hades] were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death" (Ver. 14).**

Now surely death and *hades* as *such* could not be cast into the lake of fire or experience a second death. Even if, as some suppose from I Cor. 15:26, this were "the death of death," it would then be death's *first* death, not its second. This is clearly a *second* death for men who have already died once, and the passage obviously means that the *subjects* and *occupants* of death and *hades* will be cast into the lake of fire. That "*the second death*" concerns people rather than things is evident from the phrase "*on him the second death hath no power*" (Rev. 20:6).

## THE FINAL JUDGMENT OF THE UNSAVED DEAD

The great white throne is clearly the final judgment of the unsaved dead. Its purpose, however, is not to determine the guilt of those who stand before it - this was established long before - but rather to manifest sin and deal with it finally, for the fire of the lake of fire has already been kindled in *hades*. Thus the rich man in *hades* spoke of being "tormented in this flame" and sought to save his brothers from "this place of torment." This also explains in what sense "death and *hades*" will be cast into the lake of fire.

Indeed, while "*gehenna*" is spoken of as synonymous with the lake of fire, our Lord frequently speaks as though His hearers will, if rebellious, be cast into its flames at death - this, simply because the fire has already been kindled. Hence His warnings regarding "*gehenna*" (Matt. 5:29, 30; 10:28; etc.) "everlasting fire" (Matt. 25:41) "the fire that never shall be quenched" (Mark 9:43-49) and "fire unquenchable" (Luke 3:17).

## THE SCENE DESCRIBED

What could be more terrible to contemplate than the final judgment of the ungodly, where the Son of God, who loved men enough to die in shame and disgrace for their sins, must deal righteously with those who have refused to call upon His name; where sinners will be made to appear before the august majesty of Him who occupies the great white throne; where their long-hidden sins will be exposed to the white light of His holiness!

## THE THRONE, ITS OCCUPANT AND THOSE WHO STAND BEFORE IT

The throne is called "great" evidently because of the vastness of its jurisdiction. There the billions of earth's unsaved will be gathered, from every age of history and every nation of the world.

It is called a "white" throne because its dazzling brilliance will not, like human courts, be sullied by partiality, dishonesty or cruelty. It will be a throne of perfect and absolute *justice*.

But if the throne is great and dazzling, more so its Occupant. He is not described. He cannot be, for He appears in the infinite glory of His eternal Godhead and from His face the earth and heaven flee away and no place is found for them. If only the multitudes before Him could also flee away, but they cannot. *He* holds the central place and claims the undivided attention of all. Here, at last, sinners will find themselves exposed to the searching gaze of Him who is "of purer eyes than to behold evil" and who "cannot look upon iniquity." Here, finally, their sins will be manifested in their true light as utterly accursed and worthy only of the most dreadful retribution. At first it may appear that there are no witnesses. But the Great Witness is on the throne. A second is in every man's heart, a third in every neighbor's face, and all the evidence is in the "books."

The throne of Rev. 4:2-6 and its Occupant are surrounded by a rainbow of promise, but not so here, for here there will no longer be any hope - only condemnation and doom.

**"And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God" (20:12).**

There they stand, the highest, who once presumed that their riches or learning or worldly prestige placed them in a position of special privilege – and the lowest, who confused sin with misfortune and supposed that God would not hold such as them accountable. There they stand, the small and the great, now all on the same level, to answer to Him who is no respecter of persons.

## THE BOOKS AND THE BOOK

**"And the books were opened . . . and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works" (Ver. 12).**

This can mean but one thing: Complete records have been kept of man's works. How? Of what sort? For one thing, modern science has discovered that nothing in nature is lost, whether sound or light or motion. Throw a stone into a pond and its ripples travel out to the edge and back endlessly, smaller as they go, but also faster, and leaving their impact upon all that with which they come into contact. Light and sound also keep traveling endlessly into space and are

woven into the very texture of things. Whether we like it or not, the words we say are recorded and the proper instruments could pick them up. Edison learned this and Joshua was doubtless more scientifically correct than he knew when he said to the children of Israel:

**"Behold, this stone shall be a witness unto us, for it hath heard all the words of the Lord which He spake unto us: it shall be therefore a witness unto you, lest ye deny your God" (Josh. 24:27).**

Let mechanical sound and photo recordings perish, but God will still have a journal of every man's career in the imperishable record of nature, and also a record, of whatever kind, of the hidden thoughts and motives. The sinner's biography will be exact and complete, with abundant and overwhelming proof of his guilt.

At the great white throne the vast library will be opened to scrutiny, to memory, to conscience, and the wicked will be judged according to its perfect record.

## **THE BASIS OF THE JUDGMENT**

**"... the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel" (Rom. 2:16).**

How just are the judgments of God!

Referring here, evidently, to the judgment of the unbelieving at the great white throne, the Apostle Paul points out the reasonableness and righteousness of that judgment. Let us consider this passage carefully.

*"God will judge the secrets of men."* In human courts there are frequently miscarriages of justice because all the facts are not brought to light. At the great white throne this will not be so. On the throne will be the One before whom no secret can remain hidden.

**"Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight, but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do" (Heb. 4:13).**

*"God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ."* This too has been done so that the judgment might be wholly just. Were the Judge God alone, and not also man, it *might* be objected that such judgment could hardly be fair, but as it is men will be judged at the great white throne by One who loved them enough to become one of them that He might understand them, help them, yea, and die for their sins to save them.



"... according to my gospel." But how, it may be asked, can it be just to judge men of bygone ages on the basis of a message which they have never heard? If it is true that Paul's gospel was "kept secret since the world began" ([Rom. 16:25](#)) until made known to him by the glorified Lord, how can it be just to judge men of all ages according to *his* gospel?

The answer is that in the Pauline revelation we have the very "*secret of the gospel*" ([Eph. 6:19](#)) - that is, the secret of all God's good news down through the ages. It has *now* been revealed *how* - on what basis - Abel, Noah, David and other Old Testament saints were saved; that because Christ was to die they could be saved by approaching God by faith in the way that He *then* prescribed. Thus when mere professors of the Mosaic dispensation, for example, appear before the great white throne, they will not be judged for imperfections in the sacrifices they offered, or technicalities in the Mosaic law which they failed to observe. They will be judged because their sacrifices and religious works were *not* offered to God *in faith*. The works for which men are to be judged at that great day will merely be the fruit and evidence of their unbelief, whether "*good*" works or bad works.

Suppose God, at that day, should judge men on the basis of the law of Moses rather than on the basis of the gospel of the grace of God. No one but Christ has ever been able to keep the law of Moses. How then would it be just to hold men accountable for that which they cannot possibly attain to? The only sense in which the law will enter into the judgment of the unsaved who lived from Moses to Christ, is that man's response to the revealed will of God is ever the evidence of his faith or unbelief, obedience or rebellion ([Rom. 2:11-15](#)).

This is why the judgment of the great white throne will proceed on the basis of the good news proclaimed by Paul, that because of the death of Christ for sin, salvation is, and always has been, essentially by grace, through faith - that never in any age has salvation been denied to one single person who has taken God at His Word and approached Him in *His* way.

Among the unsaved, of course, there are still degrees of wickedness. Thus, while the phrase "every man" of Rev. 20:13 indicates that there will be no respect of persons at the great white throne, the phrase "according to his works" indicates that the sentence will not be an arbitrary one; that the penalty will be graded to transgression and responsibility. This would agree with such passages as Matt. 11:20-24 and Luke 12:47,48. Indeed, the books will be opened so that each man may see for himself *what he did* and acknowledge the judgment to be just.

## THE BOOK OF LIFE

**"And another book was opened, which is the book of life" (Ver. 12).**

We repeat, the dead will *not* be judged out of *this* book. The other books contain nothing but thoughts, words and deeds; this one nothing but names.

But why will the "book of life" be opened at all at such a time? Evidently as a check against the others. Those who have been convicted out of the *books* must also see that their names are *not* found in the book of life.

The question has often been asked: Just what is the book of life? The term, or at least equivalent terms, are found in a variety of Scripture passages, Pauline and otherwise.

First, it must be observed that this book is called "the *Lamb's* book of life" (Rev. 13:8; 21:27). Second, names can be blotted out of this book (Ex. 32:32; Rev. 3:5; 22:19). Surely this cannot indicate that the saved can be lost again<sup>46</sup> for salvation is the work of God, and even Old Testament saints were as secure as we, though they knew it not.

Then how could names be blotted out of this book? Evidently the answer is that originally it contained the names of all mankind, since "*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). *Reservations*, if you please, were made for all, to begin with, so that the blotting out of its names does not indicate that the saved can be lost again, but rather that those for whom provision was made may have their right to accept it cancelled, as is the case with those who die unsaved. This would add significance to the statement which follows the description of the judgment and closes the scene: "*Whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire*" (Ver. 15).

## THE EXECUTION OF THE SENTENCE

**"And death and hell [hades] were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death,**

**"And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" (Rev. 20:14, 15).**

Dr. Joseph A. Seiss said of this: "What that 'lake of fire' is I cannot tell, I do not know and I pray God that I may never find out."

Whatever the character of the fire in the lake of fire, or just how much is involved in the second death, it is more than clear from this passage in Revelation alone that those who suffer this doom are finally and completely separated from God and made to bear the penalty for their own sins.

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<sup>46</sup> This would be illogical as well as unscriptural, for if finally lost in what sense were they ever saved? In none at all.

In the words of Panton: "The thunder is solemn: but what is it to the crash of ten thousand thunders, waking the dead, and emptying the deepest abysses, to the roar of disappearing worlds? The earthquake is solemn . . . but what is it to the convulsion which shall snap gravitation, disintegrate the universe, and drive a million worlds back into the nothingness out of which they came? O sinner you may not fear that Face now: but when all the worlds recoil from before Him. . . when every soul<sup>47</sup> stands self-poised in air - when not one object remains in all God's universe save that one glittering white throne, caught by every eye, with nothing between-You will fear Him then. For the Prosecutor is God; the evidence, eliciting the facts, is God's; the jury, deciding the issue, is God; the Judge is God; and the Executioner is God."

Thank God no reader of this volume need stand before the great white throne, for "the righteousness of God" is graciously conferred "upon all them that believe" and they are "JUSTIFIED FREELY BY HIS GRACE, THROUGH THE REDEMPTION THAT IS IN CHRIST JESUS" (Rom. 3:22, 24).

## EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT

Almost all men agree that God is an infinite Being. Even apart from the Scriptures they are convinced of this. Using their microscopes and telescopes they see the evidences of His wisdom and power in creation and rightly conclude that *He* is infinite. But how few have taken in the fact that *He therefore* must be infinite in *every* respect and in *all* His attributes!

If God's infinite wisdom and power prove that He is an infinite Being, this latter fact, in turn, proves that He is infinite, not only in wisdom and power, but also in love and mercy and grace, in holiness and righteousness and truth - *and in His wrath against sin.*

A serious consideration of the awful truths associated with the lake of fire leaves one almost speechless, yet it is unbelief and folly to allow *our reactions* to lead us to conclude that "it is probably not as bad as it sounds."

If God's grace is beyond our finite comprehension does it not logically follow that this must be equally so with respect to His wrath? Is it not altogether fitting that as we stand amazed at His grace, so we should stand aghast at His wrath? Should we revel in His infinite love and mercy but tone down His wrath to fit our finite notions?<sup>48</sup>

Whatever men may say as they sit in judgment upon Him, *He* presents Himself as "*the Father of mercies*" and "*the God of all grace*" to His own, but speaks of "*taking vengeance*" in "*flaming fire*" upon His enemies (II [Thes. 1:8](#)) and says:

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<sup>47</sup> He means every soul *present*, every unsaved soul.

<sup>48</sup> Indeed, grace can be proclaimed in power only against the background of God's just wrath against sin.

**"IT IS A FEARFUL THING TO FALL INTO THE HANDS OF THE LIVING GOD" (Heb. 10:31).**

That the lake of fire is a place of everlasting punishment for the lost is evident not only from the passages referring to it, but also from other related passages.

It may be argued that Rev. 20:15 does not say that those cast into the lake of fire will suffer for ever, but neither does Rev. 19:20 say that the coming "beast" and "false prophet" will suffer there for ever.

As with the wicked dead of Rev. 20:15 it simply says they are cast there. But Rev. 20:10 gives added light, as it says:

**"And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."<sup>49</sup>**

Then in Verse 15 we learn that the ungodly are also cast there, evidently to suffer the same fate; at least no indication is given that their case will be different.

Finally, *after* the prophecy regarding the passing away of tears, death, sorrow, crying and pain, in Rev. 21, we read that the ungodly...

**"... shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone;<sup>50</sup> which is the second death" (Rev. 21:8).**

This all agrees with other related passages.

In [Matt. 25:41](#) our Lord says by clearest implication that the "cursed" (among the living nations) will suffer the *fate* prepared for *"the devil and his angels,"* while in Verse 46 He speaks of this as *"everlasting punishment"* and contrasts it with *"life eternal."*<sup>51</sup>

[John 3:36](#) further says of the unbeliever that *"the wrath of God abideth on him"* and this again in contrast to the *"everlasting life"* of the believer. Then, again, in II Thes. 1:9 we read that unbelievers will be *"punished with everlasting destruction."*<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> Lit., *Unto the ages of the ages*; an idiom denoting endless future.

<sup>50</sup> Whether the fire and brimstone are literal or symbolic is beside the question here.

<sup>51</sup> "Everlasting" and "eternal," here, are the same word: *aionios*, and denote endless continuation. In II Cor. 4:18 it is contrasted with "temporal" and in Phile. 15 with "for a season." It is also used with reference to the endless existence of God (Rom. 16:26) of the Holy Spirit (Heb. 9:14) of redemption (Heb. 9:12) etc.

<sup>52</sup> Destruction is *not* annihilation, either in Scripture or elsewhere. If we destroy a thing we do not annihilate it; we simply reorder it unfit for its intended use.

Finally, in Rev. 14:10, 11 we read that the worshippers of the Beast "*shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God... poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation.*" And what is the cup they will have to drink? The answer is: they shall be "*tormented... for ever and ever, and they have no rest day nor night ....* "

Unbelievers may question all this, but they cannot prove it is not so. They may close their eyes to it, but that does not affect its awful reality. These solemn declarations from the Word of God should cause them to pause and consider.

## **THE SIN OF WATERING DOWN THESE SCRIPTURES**

Annihilationists and Universalists both pervert the plain Scriptures as to everlasting punishment. The former contend that everlasting torment would be unjust. God, they say, will *annihilate* the unsaved after appropriate punishment. The latter solve the problem by concluding that after appropriate "discipline" God will *reconcile* all to Himself.

One fact stands out, however, to those who seek only in God's Word for the truth; neither Annihilationists nor Universalists have concluded *from the Scriptures* that everlasting punishment is not taught there. They have concluded this from their own reasoning. They *reason* that everlasting punishment would be unjust and *then* use only certain Scripture passages, citing some in part and perverting others, to support their arguments.

Wannemacher, in his *Doom of the Unsaved*, opens his arguments by a reference to "so unreasonable a doctrine as that of the endless torment of the unsaved" (Foreword). Knoch, the Universalist, pleads that it would be unjust and immoral of God to allow *any* of His creatures to suffer endlessly.

But who of our fallen race, we ask, is qualified to decide this question - or is in a position to do so? Shall the criminal be the judge of his own guilt or decide his own penalty? Is he the one to question the justice of the sentence passed upon him?

If Paul could say with regard to God's exercise of His sovereign will: "*Nay but, o man, who art thou that repliest against God?*" (Rom. 9:20) how much more appropriately may this be said where God's justice is concerned!

Referring to Rev. 20:10, Wannemacher argues:

"Here it is said that the devil shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever, something not said of unsaved humans .... The heads and horns of the Beast and false prophet (Rev. 13:1,11) identify them as *not human beings, but systems . . .* who share in the devil's condemnation - Matt. 25:41" (*Doom of the Unsaved*, Pp. 25, 26).

How an abstract *system* could be cast into the lake of fire, where the devil suffers torment, is more than this writer can understand, but aside from this Wannemacher errs in his contention that the Scriptures do *not* say that unsaved humans will be tormented day and night for ever and ever. Of the passages we have already cited in this connection we call attention again to Rev. 14:10, 11, where it is written that the Beast worshippers of the future:

**"SHALL DRINK OF THE WINE OF THE WRATH OF GOD . . . POURED OUT WITHOUT MIXTURE INTO THE CUP OF HIS INDIGNATION; AND . . . SHALL BE TORMENTED . . . FOR EVER AND EVER: AND THEY HAVE NO REST DAY NOR NIGHT .... "**

Could anything be plainer than this ?

Mr. Wannemacher, of course, teaches conditional immortality and the eventual annihilation of the unsaved, but Mr. A. E. Knoch, the Universalist, takes a different approach altogether in his attempt to neutralize the truth about the lake of fire. Agreeing that the unsaved must die a second death, he says:

"The means for this is the lake of fire. Let no one shrink with horror at this fact, as though it entailed excessive suffering and agony. A death by fire is not necessarily painful .... The lake of fire is not presented as a place of suffering, but a place of death, in connection with the great white throne judgment. Every court has some means of inflicting the extreme penalty, such as hanging or electrocution. They use the least painful process. The lake of fire is the executioner of the great white throne. Death should be instantaneous and almost painless" (*The Unveiling of Jesus Christ*, P. 529).

Here Mr. Knoch makes death in a lake of fire sound almost pleasant, like the doctor saying to the child: "Don't be afraid; you will hardly feel it." Yet this is as far from the impression the honest inquirer would get from reading what is written about the lake of fire, as east is from west.

How unspeakably wicked to deal thus with so solemn a truth from God's Word and one fraught with such momentous consequences. If I should coolly watch a friend turn pale as he faced impending death by fire and should tell him not to "shrink with horror" at the thought, since his death would probably be "instantaneous and almost painless," I should be less guilty than Mr. Knoch and those who, with him, pervert the solemn warnings of God and minimize the terrors of the second death.

Evidently Mr. Knoch has not even been certain as to just what the death of the lake of fire is. Advancing several arguments to prove that it is literal death, he concludes: "This can only be *if* the lake of fire is literal death" (*The Unveiling of Jesus Christ*, P. 529, our italics). But in an issue of *Unsearchable Riches*,

published later, he says: "It is *not* literal death, but the *cause* of death" (Sept., 1944).

In any case, thinking of death as *oblivion*, Mr. Knoch says: "...the word death is chosen here as a *definition* of the lake of fire" (*Unveiling*, P. 526) but when we think of the solemn warnings of Scripture against the lake of fire and even *hades*, we wonder what this man has been thinking of. The lake of fire is "not presented as a place of suffering," he says, "but a place of death." Yet we have already seen that the devil, the Beast, the false prophet and the Beast worshippers all are to *suffer* there. In [Mark 9:43-48](#) we find our Lord's repeated warning against "*the fire that never shall be quenched*," where "*their worm dieth not*." Even in [Luke 16:24](#), with regard to *hades*, the vestibule to the lake of fire, we find the rich man "*tormented in this flame*." In every case it is fire and torment. In no case is the warning softened or the danger minimized. We should take careful note of this in the light of the fact that Mr. Knoch *does* soften the warning and minimize the danger, telling us not to "shrink with horror" since death in the lake of fire is "not necessarily painful," indeed, "should be instantaneous and almost painless."

But if Mr. Knoch is right, how could the lake of fire be God's judgment upon sinners? It isn't, he says. "The lake of fire is *not* their judgment" (*Eternal Torment or Universal Reconciliation*, P. 42). But what, then, *is* their judgment? This Mr. Knoch cannot tell us, for his contention is that their sentence is executed before the bar of justice itself; not in the lake of fire. "*Then and there*," he says, the penalty is inflicted, and "not in the lake of fire" (*Eternal Torment or Universal Reconciliation*, P. 42) and again: "The dead will be judged before the great white throne, *not in the lake of fire*" (20:12) (*Unveiling*, P. 518).

Mr. Knoch, of course, was *forced* into this position, for it is evident that there is no Scriptural support whatever for his contention here. Believing as he does that death is oblivion, the history of the unsaved without this "explanation" would be: a godless life, then oblivion (the first death) then resurrection for trial; the penalty: oblivion (the second death) and finally resurrection to reconciliation! Obviously this would make the great white throne a mockery, with nothing more than peaceful oblivion the penalty for sin. Hence Mr. Knoch has been *forced* to place the execution of the sentence *prior* to the lake of fire, at the throne itself, though he cannot give even a line of Scripture to support his contention, or an inkling of the nature of the punishment.

This is most evidently a makeshift, an "explanation" that he hopes will get him out of an impossible situation. Surely one hundred out of one hundred simple, honest people, reading Rev. 20, would conclude that the lake of fire is the *penalty* to which the wicked dead are *sentenced*. And this again is one of the great proofs that death is *not* oblivion or extinction of being. Indeed, Mr. Knoch himself admits that the Beast, the false prophet and the Beast worshippers will be judged in the lake of fire (*Unveiling*, Pp. 530, 531). And this after contending

that the lake of fire is *not* presented as a place of suffering but as a place of death and oblivion!<sup>53</sup>

"We imagine it a place of torture," he says, but "this is the second death ... In death there is no sensation whatever ... We will never understand the lake of fire or God's purpose in it until we... *simply* believe that it is oblivion, *death*, in which all sensation ceases and all *consciousness* of time and of place vanishes" (*Unsearchable Riches*, Sept., 1944).

Then, of course, Mr. Knoch departs even farther from the record, when he says:

"... the outcome of this judgment is universal reconciliation" (*Unveiling*, P. 518).

"Now men are blinded by sin and Satan," he says, "but when all veils are torn aside and they see themselves and their fellows and Christ as they actually are, before the great white throne, not a single one will be lost. All will want to be saved" (*Eternal Torment or Universal Reconciliation*, P.11).

How far can one go in contradicting God's Word while claiming to teach it? Where in Scripture is there even a hint that this judgment will end in universal reconciliation? Little wonder that one who deals so loosely with the Scriptures can say: "Doctrine is not the divine basis of fellowship. That is life and conduct" (*Eternal Torment or Universal Reconciliation*, P. 50).

While some close their ears to God's warnings of judgment to come and others pervert His words, let us believe what He has said about both judgment and grace and, like Paul, *prove* that we believe it by toiling, sacrificing and suffering to win the lost to Christ, especially since we know not how little time we may have left to make known the riches of His mercy and grace.

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<sup>53</sup> Mr. Knoch further demonstrates his confusion here by his argument that only one age or *eon* follows this, while himself agreeing that according to Rev. 20:10 the devil will be tormented in the lake of fire "*unto the ages of the ages*"!



## Chapter X

# UNIVERSAL RECONCILIATION

Our adversary, the devil, does not always appear as "a roaring lion . . . seeking whom he may devour." Sometimes he is "transformed into an angel of light," offering false hopes to Christ-rejecters and seeking, if possible, to deceive even the very elect.

If ever he has appeared as an angel of light it has been through the teachings of Universal Reconciliation. In warm, tender phraseology it is explained that God *planned* sin and introduced it into the world as "a gracious means to a glorious end," so that He might finally reconcile all to Himself - even the devil. This, it is argued, will be the glorious consummation of God's over-abounding grace.

But believe this lie and you are immediately plunged into a whirlpool of soul-destroying heresies, *for there is not one fundamental of the faith which Universalism does not in word or in fact deny.*

## SIN ATTRIBUTED TO GOD

If there is any such thing as moral wrong, then Universalism has led its followers into the most horrible and wicked blasphemy, for it attributes moral wrong to God.

The very basis of Universalist philosophy is that what we call sin - moral wrong - originated in the heart and mind of God, that He conceived it and brought it to pass for our good and His glory.

Of course, Universalism does not merely contend that God is a wicked being. The devil could not sell such an article as that. Its philosophy is, as we have said, that God introduced sin "*for His own gracious purpose.*" Indeed, Universalism appears to *defend* the honor of God, as in the statement that God is "not all-loving, *unless* He has a purpose to accomplish which justifies the employment of evil" (*The Problem of Evil*, P. 1).

Thus with honeyed and guarded phraseology it still teaches that lying, stealing, cruelty, adultery and all moral evil was originally conceived in the heart of God as part of His "gracious plan" and that its eruption among men is but the outworking of His will. Its constant insistence that "all is out of God" is really meant to convince men that *sin* is "out of God"; its continual affirmation that God "worketh all things after the counsel of His own will" is meant to persuade men that *sin* is but the outworking of His will and that therefore in the nature of the case He must and will finally reconcile all to Himself.

That these are indeed the teachings of Universalism may be seen from the following quotations from its foremost exponent for the past many years, Mr. A. E. Knoch, of the *Concordant Publishing Concern*. Says Mr. Knoch:

"God has introduced it [sin] into the world." (*Concordant Version*, at John 9).

"His purpose demands the presence of sin. He makes a medium - the slanderer - to inject the virus into creation. He rescues His creatures and gains their affection" (*Concordant Version*, at John 8).

And this is why he says that if unbelievers are *not* finally saved: "we despair - not for the unbeliever .... We despair for *the character of God...*" (*The Salvation of the Unbeliever*, P. 11).

Some years ago, when we came across a Universalist poem to Judas Iscariot we felt we had seen everything. Entitled ISCARIOT, it read as follows:

The stars which saw that night your traitor's kiss,  
Saw eons past, that you were born for this.  
For this role the Creator chose you then  
As part of His redemption plan for men.

The purchase price of Him whom you betrayed  
You flung down at their feet, hopeless, dismayed. Grief strangled you with  
strong cords of remorse  
While smug clothed Pharisees your act endorse.

Shrouded were they in plutocratic hate,  
Glad the Galilean had met his fate.  
Now through the centuries their ilk still name  
That deed on you, and to eternal flame  
Assign not only you, but from the fall,  
All who believe that God has planned it all.

Think of it! A poem in defense of Judas' betrayal of Christ! We quote it here to show the path down which Universalism leads. Judas could not help betraying his Master. His betrayal was but a part of God's unalterable plan! Indeed, it was the special service for which God had chosen him!

But look at the poem again. Was Judas a betrayer at all if he was but carrying out the irresistible will of God in this matter? Does not the whole poem argue that this foul deed was perpetrated (not merely permitted) by *God*, rather than Judas? And if Judas was "born" and "chosen.... for this role," was it not most unjust of our Lord to say: "*The Son of man goeth as it is written of Him: but WOE UNTO THAT MAN BY WHOM THE SON OF MAN IS BETRAYED!*" (Matt. 26:24).

Furthermore, if Judas was born for his role, were not the Pharisees born for theirs? Why does the author of this poem condemn *them* for their "plutocratic hate" of Christ? And why condemn us for "naming that deed" on Judas? Were we not born for our role as well as Judas was for his?

Was the betrayal of Christ merely a drama, in which there was no actual betrayal and no one was really guilty? Ask the Son of God, who bore our load of sin. Ask Pilate, Caiphas, the centurion, the apostles. Ask Judas himself, for he, unlike this deluded poet, was at least *not* guilty of charging God with the responsibility for his sin. Rather, driven by an accusing conscience, he returned to the rulers, bitterly confessing: "*I have sinned in that I have betrayed innocent blood.*" And at their reply he cast down the money in the temple and went out and hanged himself.

We have dealt at length with this case because it demonstrates what comes from man's age-old effort to rid himself of his responsibility and guilt and to establish his own righteousness.

Now all this is not only contrary to the written Word of God Himself, but actually makes God *the only sinner in the universe* though, of course, Universalist leaders are careful not to say this, and thus many embrace this heresy without realizing what its teachings imply. It is natural that Universalists should systematically avoid facing this fact, for it is their crowning blasphemy, as well as the weakest link in their weak chain of arguments.

The conclusion that Universalism makes God the only sinner in the universe is inescapable, for if *God* conceived sin and works it through man, then *God* - not man - is the sinner. Consequently, if dishonesty is the product of His heart, how can I trust Him? If it was He who conceived cruelty, how can I love Him?

We are well aware that some Universalists seek to confuse the issue by pointing out that the organic meaning of certain Hebrew and Greek originals for "sin" is "to miss" or "to miss the mark." Hence man would be a "mark-misser" in *committing* moral wrong, but not God, for He had *planned* that man should "miss the mark" and so *hit* the mark by causing man to miss it. And so they seek to evade the conclusion that they have made God a sinner. But if man sinned, or *missed* the mark by committing moral *wrong* then the *mark* must be moral *right* - righteousness, holiness. Therefore, what if God did plan to have man miss the mark by committing moral wrong, does that mean that God *hit* the mark? Certainly He would have hit no *moral* bull's-eye! And is it not possible to *aim to miss* the bull's-eye *and miss it*? The Universalist may argue that in causing man to sin God hit where He aimed. Yes, but He still missed *the mark* - *holiness* - and therefore *sinned*, if the Universalist premise is correct. They cannot logically make Him the author of sin without making Him *the supreme sinner*.

In addition to passages of Scripture from which Universalists draw the *implication* that God is the author of sin, they frequently cite [Isa. 45:7](#), where God actually says: "*I make peace, and create evil*," asserting that this includes *moral* evil. But they are wrong here, for while it is true that the Hebrew word *ro* frequently does refer to moral evil or at least includes the thought, it often refers to inflicted evil too and certainly does in this case where it is set in contrast to "peace," not righteousness.

The whole Universalist argument, of course, champions the cause of the sinner against a holy *God*. It logically absolves man of all responsibility and lays sin, *all* sin, to the charge of God.

It makes one shudder to think that even wicked men, let alone professed believers, could associate the holy name of God with sin, or call Him the author, the creator, the originator of it. "*Sin is a reproach to any people*"; how much more would it be a reproach to God!

## WHAT DOES GOD HIMSELF SAY?

But what does God Himself say about all this? In saying that "all things are of God" and that He "worketh all things after the counsel of His own will," does *He* include sin?

To the contrary, we read in Gen. 6:5, 6:

**"And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.**

**"AND IT REPENTED THE LORD THAT HE HAD MADE MAN ON THE EARTH, AND IT GRIEVED HIM AT HIS HEART."**

Does this sound as though God *planned* sin and *introduced* it into the world for some gracious purpose? What can Universalists do with such a passage? Or what can they do with, say, Jer. 7:31, where God says of His people:

**"They have built the high places of Tophet . . . to burn their sons and their daughters in the fire; WHICH I COMMANDED THEM NOT, NEITHER CAME IT INTO MY HEART" (See also Jer. 32:35).**

One Universalist bluntly asks whether sin entered the world unwanted by God. The above passages sufficiently answer this question. Another answer is found in Eph. 5:6:

**"LET NO MAN DECEIVE YOU WITH VAIN WORDS FOR BECAUSE OF THESE THINGS COMETH THE WRATH OF GOD UPON THE CHILDREN OF DISOBEDIENCE."**

To say that the responsibility of man and the sovereignty of God *seem* incompatible is one thing. To say that they *are* is quite another. That is exalting human reason above divine revelation.

The next question these reasoners ask is: "Why, then, did God *permit* sin to enter the world or the universe?" Our answer is, we do not fully know. God says and does many things which we cannot understand, but if we *could* fully understand Him we would be equal with Him. The proper attitude for us is to bow in faith before His holy Word and say: "I believe."

There are several things which God says He does not wish, yet, in His sovereign wisdom permits: "HAVE I ANY PLEASURE AT ALL THAT THE WICKED SHOULD DIE? SAITH THE LORD" (Ezek. 18:23). And yet the wicked die. Again: "FOR HE DOTHT NOT AFFLICT WILLINGLY NOR GRIEVE THE CHILDREN OF MEN" (Lam. 3:33). Yet the children of men are afflicted and grieved.

Does this indicate that we question the sovereignty of God? The remainder of this volume will, we trust, give sufficient proof that this is by no means the case.

There are many questions, doubtless, which have entered all our minds with regard to the origin of sin, but the unscriptural solutions to which Universalists have resorted raise infinitely greater ones as they make light of sin and strike at the character of God - the very basis of our trust in Him.

## **SIN AND HUMAN RESPONSIBILITY**

The term "mark-missing" has an innocent sound, yet this, Universalists insist, is the true meaning of at least some of the originals rendered "sin" in our English Bible. But even if "mark-missing" were the organic meaning, the first derivation, of *all* the Hebrew and Greek words for "sin," that would still by no means prove that the word as *used in Scripture* denotes mere mark-missing. The derivation of a word does not necessarily decide its true meaning, for through years of usage words change their meanings.

Sir Robert Anderson wrote, with regard to this: "... it is the use of a word which decides its meaning: and to be guided only by its derivation is as unwise as it would be to accept a man of sixty on a character given to him when a schoolboy" (*Human Destiny*, P. 22).

Sin is far more than the mark-missing which Universalists like to call it. It is *moral wrong*, which the whole nature of God abhors. The Scriptures abound with

testimony concerning this fact. God hates sin. His holy nature is grieved and angered by it. His justice must condemn and punish it. Christ *died* for our sins. The lake of fire rages against it. And will men now tell us that God actually conceived it in His heart and produced it in His creatures for their good and His glory? And will they try to prove this by *the Bible*?

"Correcting" the *Authorized* rendering of Rom. 5:12 to suit his teachings,<sup>54</sup> Mr. Knoch argues: "... it is not true that sin is the source of death to Adam's descendants." "*Death* it was that made [man] a confirmed sinner." (*The Transmission of Sin*, Pp. 1, 2). Thus man is again relieved of the responsibility of his sin. He cannot help sinning because of his weakness, because of the "devitalizing process" of death. Yet it is common experience that men often become most presumptuous in their sin and rebellion when they are strongest and most self-confident. And who will deny the truth of God's Word to Paul: "*My strength is made perfect in weakness*," and of Paul's response: "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities... *for when I am weak then am I strong*"? (II Cor. 12:9, 10). Who of us has not experienced this? When we are strong we soon become self-confident; when we are weak we lean and pray the harder - and therein lies our true strength.

Imagine twisting Rom. 5:12 to teach that death causes sin rather than sin death; imagine teaching that sin is not the source of death to Adam's descendants, when the Scriptures so plainly teach that "*the wages of sin is death*" (Rom. 6:23); that "*sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death*" (Jas. 1:15) indeed, that "*Christ died for our sins*" (I Cor. 15:3)!

Universalism goes farther than this to absolve man of his guilt and place the responsibility for sin upon God. It argues that God deliberately set the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the garden to tempt man and *cause* him to sin. The answer to this is found in James 1:13:

**"Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for GOD CANNOT BE TEMPTED WITH EVIL, NEITHER TEMPTETH HE ANY MAN."**

God set the forbidden tree in the garden, not to tempt man to eat of it, but to emphasize man's relationship to Him as that of a creature to his Creator, of a servant to his Lord.

One thing is certain: if Adam might be legitimately excused for his first sin, then *all* men should be excused for all their sins and the great white throne judgment is uncalled for.

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<sup>54</sup> His *Concordant Version* renders the latter part of the verse: "And thus death came through into all mankind, on which all sinned." Thus he makes the verse teach that sin is the result of death, rather than that death is the result of sin. Of the twenty-five translations at hand as we write this, *not one* supports the *Concordant* perversion.

But neither Adam nor we may be so lightly absolved of our responsibility. Whatever arguments men may present in their own defense, the *Bible* says that in our unsaved state we were "the children of *disobedience*" and therefore "by nature the children of *wrath*" (Eph. 2:2, 3).<sup>55</sup> Now if God *meant* man to sin, and works all things according to His will in that respect, how could any one be *disobedient*? As the operator runs the loom, are not the shuttles that fly backward as obedient as those which fly forward? And why should there be any question of wrath? What reason would God have to be angry over sins He *willed* and *caused* men to commit?<sup>56</sup>

Further, if God willed and caused men to commit sin did not Adam have a perfect alibi when he blamed his sin on "*the woman whom thou gavest to be with me*";<sup>57</sup> likewise Eve, when she explained: "*The serpent beguiled me*" (Gen. 3:12, 13). And was not God then unjust in condemning them?

For the plain teachings of Scripture the Universalists have substituted human philosophies and will reap the condemnation of those whom they have led to "*turn away their ears from the truth . . . unto fables*" (II Tim. 4:4).

If there is *not* such a thing as moral wrong, then it is foolish to talk about guilt and grace, or condemnation and justification. But if there *is* such a thing as moral wrong in the world the question is, *who* is committing it? God says: *Man*; Universalism says: *God!* It does not blush to place the whole responsibility for sin upon Him.

Thus, as we have intimated, Universalism is already guilty of a twofold heresy, for in placing the whole responsibility for sin upon God, it defends and exonerates the sinner. Says Mr. Knoch in a note on John 12:39 (C.V.):

"Outside the Scriptures we hear much of human responsibility, and that those who reject the light deserve the judgment they have invited. This passage makes us pause. These men had heard the most powerful of all preachers and seen the most marvelous of all miracle workers, yet we are distinctly told that *they could not* believe. The reason is that *the Scriptures must be fulfilled*. God's purpose demands a measure of unbelief as well as of faith.... To damn these men who could not believe with irretrievable and irrevocable ruin is unthinkable of God."

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<sup>55</sup> The *two* Greek words rendered "children" here are, respectively: *huios*, a grown son, and *teknon*, a born one. Thus we were mature sons of disobedience, knowing full well what we were doing, and therefore the natural children of wrath.

<sup>56</sup> Universalism presents God's judgments as disciplinary and remedial, but this idea is certainly not conveyed by such words as "wrath," "vengeance," etc.

<sup>57</sup> Actually Adam's plea was worse than groundless. Had *Eve* been tempted by *Adam* it might have been different, for God had made her subject to him. But as it was his guilt was increased, for he was responsible to guide find protect her. Hence God's sentence upon him begins with the words: "*Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife*" (Gen. 3:17).

Here is an example of how Universalists bend and twist the Scriptures to make them conform to their own teachings.

We dare say that not a single ordinary reader would conclude from the above passage that God was *causing* these Jews to reject Christ in order that He might fulfill Isaiah's prophecy. The thought is rather that God's Word, being in the nature of the case, perfectly accurate in its predictions, the matter could not have turned out otherwise. This passage from John 12 certainly affords no support for charging God with man's rejection of Christ - and if it did it would contradict a whole volume of Scriptures like [John 3:36](#), which says: "He that believeth not the Son. . . *the wrath of God abideth on him.*"

What amazes us most is that the Universalists can continue to argue for man's innocence when the Law, which held sway for fifteen hundred years, was given with the specific purpose:

**"THAT EVERY MOUTH MAY BE STOPPED, AND ALL THE WORLD MAY BECOME GUILTY BEFORE GOD" (Rom. 3:19).**

In this connection let no reader blame *us* for the double talk of the Universalists, for it is acknowledged that the same writer who argues that death causes sin, rather than sin death, and ascribes the responsibility for *all* sin to God - this *same* writer *also* declares:

"Transgression is sin against a known law, entailing not only the usual penalties, but the added displeasure of God against the one who defies His precepts" (*Concordant Version*, at Gal. 3).

Why there should be displeasure or any penalties for sins which men were meant to commit we do not know. We only know that by such concessions, made doubtless because of Scriptures too plain to pervert, Mr. Knoch confuses the issue and gives superficial readers the impression that perhaps he is not so unsound after all.

But the great weight of Universalist argument lays sin directly at the door of God. It speaks of "the blessed results when grace grows in the fertile field of sin" and says: "Sin is . . . indirectly essential to the satisfaction of His love. Love cannot be lavished on those who are deserving" (*Concordant Version*, at John 4).

But, we ask, does not God love His Son? He never sinned.

The Universalist answer is: "The Father's fondness for the Son... is not the love which flows out to those least deserving of it.... It is liking rather than love" (*Concordant Version*, at John 5:20).



So God *loves* sinners but *likes* His Son! What blasphemy! And this when *both* the principal words for *love* (*agape* and *phileo*) are used to tell us that "*the Father loveth the Son*" (John 3:35; 5:20). This when the Scriptures emphasize in every possible way the fact that the Son is more precious than all else to the Father's heart.

Let Universalists try to rid mankind and themselves of the onus of sin and place the responsibility for its presence upon God, but *He* makes it crystal clear that He does not accept the charge. He hates sin and blames men for committing it (Eph. 2:1-3). He pronounces them *guilty* (Rom. 3:19). He exacts a *penalty* and declares they are "worthy of death" (Rom. 1:32; 6:23).

It is true, thank God, that in infinite grace He took the sinner's place in Christ so that we might be "*justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus*" (Rom. 3:24). But this priceless gift may be accepted by faith only after we have first acknowledged ourselves to be the guilty sinners He died to save.

## THE UNIVERSALIST CHALLENGE

### as to THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR SIN

We have seen that in their attempt to escape the guilt of sin the Universalists do not hesitate to charge *One Person* with the sole responsibility for all that takes place in the universe. God alone, they insist, is responsible.

One passage to which they keep returning for proof of this assertion is Eph. 1:11, where we read that God "*worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.*"

From *their* interpretation of this passage it would appear that God manipulates the affairs of men as one might run a machine, turning out saints, sinners, heroes, villains, preachers, drunkards, as it pleases Him, all to be reconciled later on.

This, of course, is far from the truth. Those who are so one-sided in their emphasis on the will of God, should remember that God made man in His own image and after His own *likeness* (Gen. 1:26). He created one who, like Himself, was possessed of a will; one with whom He might have *fellowship*, or, who could break that fellowship by disobedience and sin.

This image, to be sure, has been defaced, but not effaced, for in I Cor. 11:7 we still read that man is "*the image and glory of God.*" Compare him with the highest form of animal life and this will be seen to be true.

Thus we read that our Lord and His mighty angels will come *"in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ... because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved,"* while on the other hand He will be glorified in His saints, as He says: *"because our testimony among you was believed"* (II Thes. 1:7, 8, 10; 2:10).

Texts taken out of their contexts are frequently used as pretexts and this is certainly so with the Universalists' use of Eph. 1:11; for, taken *in its context* Eph. 1:11 proves a boomerang to Universalist theories.

The preceding context informs us that God's "chosen" ones have been *"PREDESTINATED . . . unto the adoption of children [Lit., placing as sons] . . . ACCORDING TO THE GOOD PLEASURE OF HIS WILL"* (Vers. 4, 5); that He has "made known . . . THE MYSTERY [SECRET] OF HIS WILL" that all in heaven and in earth (not "under the earth" as in Phil. 2:10) will be gathered together in Him (Vers. 9, 10) and that we, the "chosen" ones "have obtained an inheritance, BEING PREDESTINATED ACCORDING TO THE PURPOSE OF HIM WHO WORKETH ALL THINGS AFTER THE COUNSEL OF HIS OWN WILL" (Ver. 11).

Now, in its context, does Verse 11 sound like an argument that God is the author of all - even sin? Does it not rather emphasize His sovereign *control* over all for the carrying out of His own purposes? He does not bring all things to pass, but overrules, miraculously causing all to work out for the furtherance of His plans.

Thus we read in Rom. 8:28:

**"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."**

All things are not *in themselves* good for those who love God, but He overrules so that they *work together* for their good.

God's sovereignty, as distinguished from His alleged direct responsibility for all things, is set forth in many Old Testament passages--among them the following:

**Job 5:13: "HE TAKETH THE WISE IN THEIR OWN CRAFTINESS: AND THE COUNSEL OF THE FROWARD IS CARRIED HEADLONG."**

**Psa. 76:10: "SURELY THE WRATH OF MAN SHALL PRAISE THEE: THE REMAINDER OF WRATH SHALT THOU RESTRAIN."**

But are there not concrete proofs that God brings all things - even sin - to pass? Did He not, for example, create the devil and harden Pharaoh's heart?

### DID GOD CREATE THE DEVIL?

Universalism teaches that God created a wicked being especially to introduce sin into the world, so that He might rescue the victims and gain their affection. This is supposed to be a display of His grace. We have already cited several passages by leading Universalists to this effect.

As proof they advance such passages as John 8:44, where we read of "the devil" that "he was a murderer from the beginning." But who denies that *the devil* was a murderer from the beginning? Surely the beginning of Satan's career as the "devil" or "slanderer" was not the beginning of his personal existence. This would seem to be self-evident.

John 8:44 does not refer to the beginning of Satan's personal existence any more than Luke 1:2 or John 15:27 refer to the beginning spoken of in Gen. 1:1. The sense is simply that the devil was a murderer from the start, i.e., of his career *as such*.

That the devil was not created as such is clear from many passages of Scripture.

[Isa. 14:12-20](#) opens with an exclamation which could fit only Satan: "*How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!*" The passage then goes on to show how Lucifer's fall and judgment were the result of his ambition to exalt his throne "above the stars of God" and to "be like the most High."

This is doubtless what Paul, by the Spirit, refers to when he warns against appointing a novice as a bishop, "*lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation<sup>58</sup> of the devil*" (I Tim. 3:6).

[Ezek. 28:11-19](#), too, can finally apply only to Satan. Of what other created being could it be said: "*Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou has been in Eden, the garden of God .... Thou are the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God. . . THOU WAST PERFECT IN THY WAYS FROM THE DAY THAT THOU WAST CREATED, TILL INIQUITY WAS FOUND IN THEE.*"

The original fall of Satan may well be what our Lord referred to in [Luke 10:18](#), when He said: "*I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.*" Certain it is that Satan is presented in Scripture as a *fallen* being, not one who was *created* evil. Indeed, if Satan was created an evil being, how could there be any justice in his

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<sup>58</sup> Gr., *krima, judgment* i.e., the Judgment pronounced *upon him*, not *his* "condemnation" of the believer. He can *accuse* but cannot judge.

"judgment" (John 16:11) or in our Lord's "triumphing over" him and his hosts at Calvary? (Col. 2:15).

Thus "the devil" was originally created as "Lucifer" and was perfect until his fall, but when we remind Universalists that in the nature of the case any creation of God must be perfect, they reply: "Of course! In creating Satan God created a perfect devil!" Thus the evil one moves men to excuse him--and themselves--and lay the responsibility for sin at the feet of God Himself.

Certainly the devil is presented in Scripture as God's *enemy* - and *our* enemy. Were it not so it would be idle and dishonest of God to warn His people:

**"BE SOBER, BE VIGILANT; BECAUSE YOUR ADVERSARY THE DEVIL, AS A ROARING LION, WALKETH ABOUT, SEEKING WHOM HE MAY DEVOUR" (I Pet. 5:8).**

To issue such a warning after specially creating Satan to lead men into sin and trouble, would be as false as if I should unleash a vicious dog, signal him to charge at you and then cry: "*Look out for the dog!*"

Of course the Universalists are sure that God had only a good purpose in creating Satan to induce men to sin, but then why warn us against him? God does not indulge in double talk.

### **THE HARDENING OF PHARAOH'S HEART**

But do not the Scriptures say that God hardened Pharaoh's heart? Did not God tell Moses in *advance* that He would do so?

Yes, but do not conclude from this that "poor, dear Pharaoh" had a tender, trusting heart, which was then hardened by God.

The Universalist interpretation of Pharaoh's hardening implicates God in double dealing, for He is supposed to have sent Moses and Aaron to Pharaoh to say: "*Let My people go*"; then whispered in Pharaoh's ear, as it were: "*Don't you do it!*" Indeed it involves God in *both* dishonesty and injustice, for, according to this theory God sent Moses and Aaron to say to Pharaoh: "Let My people go"; then influenced Pharaoh *not* to let them go and *then* judged him for not letting them go!

The truth is that God hardened Pharaoh's heart only *indirectly* and *instrumentally*. He knew the haughty pride of the one who would say: "*Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go?*" (Ex. 5:2) and He was now to force him to a showdown. He knew that plague and respite, judgment and mercy, would but harden Pharaoh's arrogant heart, but He sent these 1.) to vindicate Himself (more could hardly have been done to *persuade* Pharaoh) 2.) to show to

the world what happens to those who resist Him and 3.) to demonstrate His power to deliver His own.

As a note on Page 75 of the *Scofield Reference Bible* well puts it: "*Instrumentally* God hardened Pharaoh's heart by forcing him to an issue against which he hardened his own heart in refusal." The hearts of many criminals have been similarly hardened by both judgment and mercy. Shall we then charge those who have used these measures with directly hardening the criminals' hearts?

Nor does Ex. 9:16 or Rom. 9:17 teach that God *brought Pharaoh into being* simply to harden him and thus to show His power to the world. He "*raised him up*" to show His power to the world, which is quite a different matter.

Three forms of speech are used with regard to the hardening of Pharaoh's heart: *God* hardened Pharaoh's heart, *Pharaoh* hardened his own heart and Pharaoh's heart *was hardened*. We take it that all three describe the same operation, for while Pharaoh hardened his own heart against God's demand, it was God who made the demand, thus bringing about the circumstances in which He knew Pharaoh's self-will would be asserted, and thus indirectly hardening Pharaoh's heart.

What, then, is the great lesson in the story of Pharaoh: that God hardens some people for their own eventual good? The record will be searched in vain for such a thought. Is it then that God hardens some people for the sake of others, in His overall plan, and that *both* are alike in His will? This is just as far from what the Bible teaches. It does not even teach what extreme Calvinism implies: that we are merely *fortunate* if God does not harden us. The great moral is that God is sovereign; that He wins in any contest, almighty both in judging His enemies and in delivering His own.

And there is the other lesson, that God can never be charged with injustice. Whereas the Universalist uses the case of Pharaoh to *incriminate* God, *He* uses it to *vindicate* Himself. Suppose God had *not* sent judgments upon Pharaoh in increasing severity. Suppose he had *not* shown mercy after each but the last of these judgments. Pharaoh would never have been so wholly without excuse.

We have a similar case in the hardening of Israel. God knew that that apostate generation would be hardened by the proofs and pleas of Pentecost and thus He hardened them indirectly by continuing to deal with them after their crucifixion of Christ. But suppose He had instead cut them off immediately. They would never have been so wholly without excuse for their rejection of Christ. *Now* their guilt was complete, for by judgment and mercy, by overwhelming proofs and impassioned pleas, He had stretched forth His hands all day long to a disobedient and gainsaying people ([Rom. 10:21](#)).

In the light of all this how unsound and slanderous is the Universalist argument as to the hardening of Pharaoh and its further argument regarding the unsaved, that: "They are not saved *because God has not saved them*, and for no other reason whatsoever" (*The Salvation of the Unbeliever*, by A. E. Knoch, P. 11).

We believe in divine and sovereign election, but not in arbitrary and unreasoned election, much less in universal reconciliation. In addition to, and consistent with, the sovereign will of God, there *is* another very important reason why men remain unsaved. Of those who will one day worship Antichrist we are told that "*BECAUSE they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved... FOR THIS CAUSE God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie; that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness*" (II Thes. 2:10-12).

### **THE HOLINESS OF GOD IMPUGNED**

We agree, of course, that God *willed to permit* sin to enter the universe and for that He takes the sole and full responsibility, but the Universalist argument that He conceived sin and brought it into the world through Satan in order to show grace is a slander against His holiness.

We read that in His presence the seraphim cry: "*Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts*" (Isa. 6:3). Habakkuk said: "*Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity*" (Hab. 1:13).

In I Pet. 1:15 we read: "*But as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation.*"

Paul, by the Spirit, exhorts us not to keep company with professing Christians who live in sin; "*with such . . . no not to eat*" (I Cor. 5:11). He exhorts us: "*Withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly*" and continues: "*Note that man, and have no company with him*" (II Thes. 3:6, 14).

How can such exhortations bear any weight if God Himself actually *conceived* sin in His heart, yes, and *commits* it day after day through men and angels whom He manipulates, until even the ungodly are nauseated by it? And how does it change basic facts to argue that He does this all as "a gracious means to a glorious end"? This would be the farthest thing from the grace which the Scriptures proclaim.

No, sin can never be justly attributed to God, and it is just this that so enhances the message of grace. It is grace, pure grace, that caused a holy God, in Christ, to *assume* the responsibility for sin by paying its penalty Himself, "*the just for the unjust.*" We should never cease to wonder that to the *guilty*, the *blameworthy*, far and wide, a thrice holy God offers "THE FORGIVENESS OF

SINS, ACCORDING TO THE RICHES OF HIS GRACE" (Eph. 1:7) and that we may now whisper into the ears of the vilest sinner that those who believe are "JUSTIFIED FREELY BY HIS GRACE THROUGH THE REDEMPTION THAT IS IN CHRIST JESUS" (Rom. 3:24).

## THE UNIVERSALIST CHALLENGE

### as to THE JUSTICE OF GOD IN EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT

One of the chief arguments of Universalists against everlasting punishment is that which is taken from their view of the justice of God.

A "God" who would punish unsaved sinners in the lake of fire eternally, when He Himself willed and planned sin - such a "God" would be a monster worse than the devil. So runs the blasphemous argument.

But this argument is by no means as strong as it may appear at first glance.

In the first place, both Scripture and reason tell us that it is untrue that a just God willed and planned sin.

Second, who are the fallen, depraved and condemned sons of Adam to pass upon the verdicts and sentences of a holy and infinite God? And shall one whose heart is "*deceitful above all things and desperately corrupt*" be called upon to appraise God's character?

Shall the condemned criminal be asked for an opinion of the justice of the judgments pronounced upon him? F. W. Grant, in his *Man And the Future State*, rightly answers: "Grant... that [man] has a will that perverts his judgment, lusts that seduce his intellect: grant that sin indulged dulls the conscience and depraves still further the heart (and these are lessons of every day experience); grant that an offender is not an unprejudiced judge in his own cause and you have abundant, over-abundant reason for distrusting the mere rational estimate of man's possible future" (P. 221).

But the Universalist even answers himself in this matter, for, if it is unjust for God to cause unsaved sinners to suffer eternally on the ground that He Himself willed and planned sin, then, on that same ground it is unjust to punish them *at all*. Why should they be punished or even chastened for fulfilling the irresistible will of God?<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> The Universalists themselves were forced to translate II Thes. 1:8 so that it presents the Lord Jesus "*in flaming fire dealing out vengeance to those who are not acquainted with God and those who are not obeying the evangel of our Lord Jesus Christ*" (II Thes. 1:8. C.V.).

## THE UNIVERSALIST CHALLENGE

### as to THE LOVE OF GOD IN EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT

But surely a God of *infinite love* would not punish any of His creatures forever, argues the Universalist, forgetting that it is the very fact that God's love *is infinite* that causes it to burn in outraged wrath against those who spurn it, and that even apart from considerations of love God must still be just.

"Do not such arguments," says Sir Robert Anderson, "remind us of a king's baby children in the royal nursery discussing the fate of some notorious criminal, and deciding that they knew their father so well as to be assured he could not and would not sign a death-warrant?" (*Human Destiny*, P. 42).

And again: "The dogma of Universalism," says the same writer, "depends solely on the assumption that the love of God is incompatible with the perdition of ungodly men - an assumption which may rest entirely on our own ignorance ..." (*Human Destiny*, P. 61).

Anderson's statements here are nearly, but not quite, correct for the Universalist assumption does not rest *entirely* upon human ignorance but also upon human *depravity*, for we are not exactly innocent children! Indeed, even the most devout saint, with a perfect standing in Christ, is yet in his present state wholly unfit to pass upon the justice or love of God in punishing the ungodly.

One fact is clear: the Scriptures do teach the everlasting punishment of the ungodly. We have already cited many Scripture passages that affirm this emphatically. But God has forever closed the mouths of those who would object to this, either on the grounds of justice or of love, by coming into the world to become *one of us*, to taste of our testings, sufferings and sorrows - and then to be tried and executed as a criminal *in our stead*.

Thus believers are "*justified freely by His grace, THROUGH THE REDEMPTION THAT IS IN CHRIST JESUS*" (Rom. 3:24).

Christ's blood and righteousness are now proclaimed "*THAT GOD MIGHT BE JUST, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus*" (Rom. 3:26).

And as to His love: "*Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends,*" but "*GOD commendeth His love toward us, in that WHILE WE WERE YET SINNERS, CHRIST DIED FOR US*" (Rom. 5:8). Indeed, "*WHEN WE WERE ENEMIES, WE WERE RECONCILED TO GOD BY THE DEATH OF HIS SON*" (Rom. 5:10).



Of course, Universalists in general do not believe that Christ *is* God - a more grievous heresy, even, than their teaching that all will finally be saved. But the Scriptures prove that Christ is God even where his death on Calvary is in question, for [Acts 20:28](#) refers to "*the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood.*"

## THE UNIVERSALIST CHALLENGE

### as to THE EFFICACY OF CALVARY

The Cross of Christ, argues the Universalist, will yet redeem all. Do not the Scriptures say: "*He died for all*" ([II Cor. 5:15](#)) and "*He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world*"? ([I John 2:2](#)).

Yes, they do, but this does not prove that all will be saved, for *after* declaring in II Cor. 5 that Christ died for all and that God made Him to be sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him, Paul, by the Spirit, goes on to say:

**"WE THEN, AS WORKERS TOGETHER WITH HIM, BESEECH YOU ALSO THAT YE RECEIVE NOT THE GRACE OF GOD IN VAIN.**

**"...BEHOLD, NOW IS THE ACCEPTED TIME; BEHOLD, NOW IS THE DAY OF SALVATION" (II Cor. 6:1, 2).**

But, it is further argued that if the majority, or even some of Adam's race, are lost, this would be a victory for Satan.

But does Christ's victory over Satan depend upon which has the larger following? The comparative fewness of the saved (among adults) far from constituting a victory for Satan, is his *defeat*. It was not his purpose that men should be cast into the lake of fire, much less that he himself should be cast there. He desired to occupy God's place, with men and angels under his sway.

Thus Paul, to whom was committed "the preaching of the cross," could say:

**"Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest the savor of His knowledge by us in every place.**

**"For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish:**

**"To the one we are the savor of death unto death; and to the other the savor of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?" (II Cor. 2:14-16).**

If the everlasting condemnation of some constituted a defeat for Christ, it would, of course, also constitute a defeat for Paul, who proclaimed Christ's death for all. Yet Paul, by the Spirit, distinctly affirms here that in preaching Christ he *always triumphed* and that in so doing he was unto God "a sweet savor of Christ," *both* "in them that are saved, and in them that perish," in *both* cases fully vindicating the justice and love of God.

Let the reader of these lines remember that much as we, in our fallen state, might yearn to find warrant for accepting some of the arguments of Universalism, it is only *what God says* that matters, and His Word declares, repeatedly and plainly, the great alternative:

**"HE THAT BELIEVETH ON THE SON HATH EVERLASTING LIFE: AND HE THAT BELIEVETH NOT THE SON SHALL NOT SEE LIFE: BUT THE WRATH OF GOD ABIDETH ON HIM" (John 3:36).**

## **THE MAIN STRING ON THE UNIVERSALIST HARP**

There is one argument which the Universalists use more than any other. It runs like this:

God says that all will finally be reconciled to Himself, and all means *all*, not *some*, so why reason about it any further? Why not just accept it by faith?

A good unabridged English dictionary will prove that at least in our language *all* does not always mean all *without exception*. Nor *can* it mean all *without distinction* unless qualified by some word like *kinds* or *manner*, or expressed in the contraction *alkin* (for *all kinds*, now obs., see *The Oxford Universal Dictionary*). It may mean all *without exception*, as in "They were all present." Or, it may mean *the greatest possible*, as in "Come with all haste." It may mean so *much*, as in "Why all the fuss?" It may be used in a figurative sense, as in "He was all nerves." Or, again, it may be used in a *general* way of any aggregate number, as in "All the ladies are out shopping." In none but the first of the above sentences does *all* mean all *without exception*, and even here it is qualified by the word "they."

And what of those words which are translated *all* in our English Bibles? Shall we go to the Universalist for his definitions of them? Shall we thoughtlessly accept his explanation that "all means all"? We shall not. We shall be Bereans and go straight to the Scriptures to see whether these things are so. There, as

we examine contexts and compare Scripture with Scripture, we learn the Spirit's own meaning in each case.

Let us turn, then, to those Scripture passages which are involved here and most of which Universalists themselves quote to prove that all will finally be saved.

### **Matthew 17:11**

**"And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things."**

While this passage was used by the advocates of Universal Restorationism years ago, it is no longer generally used by Universalists. Why not?

In Col. 1:20 we read that God will reconcile "all things" to Himself. The *Concordant Version* renders this "the universe," commenting in the notes that this passage teaches universal reconciliation. Yet in Matt. 17:11, where we read that Elias will come and restore "all things," the same version renders it simply "all" and connects it with Acts 3:21, where we find the explanation: "It has no reference to individual destiny ..." But why not? If the reconciliation of "all things" in Col. 1:20 teaches universal reconciliation, why does not the restoration of "all things" in Matt. 17:11 teach universal restoration?

The editors of the *Concordant Version* were forced to this inconsistency since otherwise Matt. 17:11 would teach the restoration of all things, without exception, *through Elias*, and that *before* the return of Christ, the millennium and the great rebellion which is to follow!

### **John 12:32**

**"And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me."**

First, this passage does not teach that our Lord will draw all men unto Him in *salvation*. Those who depart this life unsaved will stand before Him at the great white throne.

Evidently *all* is used here in a general way of an aggregate number. In [John 6:44](#) we read that no man can come to Christ except the Father "draw" him. And it is by Christ, lifted up on the cross, that He draws them. It does not follow from this, however, that all who are drawn respond. Only those who in faith *receive* His death as the payment for their sins are saved.

### Acts 3:21

**"Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things."**

This is another passage which was used by the advocates of universal restoration, but the verse goes on to read: *"restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began."*

How many of the prophets had predicted the restoration or reconciliation of all? Not one! How, then, could *this* restitution or restoration, spoken of by *all* the prophets, refer to a universal restoration of men to God? Indeed, *this* "restitution" is to be marked by the *destruction* of those who rebel (Ver. 23). How then could it refer to the *salvation of all*.

This passage refers to the "restitution" or setting right, of those things which had gone wrong through Israel's unbelief and apostasy--and this is the *theme* of prophecy.

### Romans 11:26

**"And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob."**

This passage is also used by some Universalists. The "all" here, they say, clearly teaches that not one who has ever been a member of the chosen race will be lost.

It should be observed here that this salvation of "all Israel" will take place when "there shall come out of Sion the Deliverer." This is closely related to what we read in Acts 3:20-23 with regard to the "restitution of all things" at Christ's return. And there it is explicitly stated that *"every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people."*

How then could Rom. 11:26 teach the salvation or reconciliation of all Israelites who have ever lived? What it does teach is the salvation of Israel, as a nation, all Israel at the time when Christ appears out of Sion to "turn away ungodliness from Jacob."

Our Lord on earth warned His rejectors: *"He that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness"* (Mark 3:29) and the record of Acts shows how many did commit that unpardonable sin. Again, of Judas our Lord said: *"It had been good for that man if he had not been born"* (Matt. 26:24) on another occasion calling him *"THE SON OF PERDITION"* (John 17:12). How then could Rom. 11:26 teach the salvation of all Israelites who have ever lived?

## I Corinthians 15:22,28

**"For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."**

**"... that God may be all in all."**

Verse 22 seems to Universalists to clinch their teachings completely. The notes in the *Concordant Version* read: "The universality of death, through Adam, is beyond question. 'Thus' we are told, 'in Christ shall all be made alive.'"

But their problem is that while the Scriptures clearly teach that all men were "in Adam" and came from him, they do not at all teach that all come to be "in Christ."

If I Cor. 15:22 refers merely to physical resurrection, then the word "in" has the instrumental sense. All died on account of Adam: all will be raised on account of Christ. This neither the Universalists nor we deny.

But I Cor. 15:22 too clearly concerns the resurrection as it affects *those in Christ*, for Verse 23 goes on to say: "*But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward THEY THAT ARE CHRIST'S at His coming.*" Mark well, the passage does not go on to speak of the resurrection of those who are not Christ's. It deals only with the resurrection of those "that are Christ's." They were "in Christ," they "sleep in Jesus" and will be "made alive" *in Him*.

Thus the sense of Verse 22 is as follows: "As in Adam all [who are in him] die, so in Christ all [who are in Him] shall be made alive." We are not thus adding words to the Scriptures, but explaining the sense, for if anything is clear it is that while on the one hand we have the death of those who are in Adam, on the other we have the making alive of those who "*are Christ's*," who are *in Him*. This latter cannot be said of those who are raised to stand before the great white throne.

It is "*then*" (Vers. 24-28) *after* the making alive of those who are Christ's, that God is made "all in all," and this by judgment, not reconciliation. God is made "*all in all*" only after "all things shall be SUBDUED unto Him [Christ]."

## Philippians 2:9-11

**"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."**

The word "every" in each of the above verses is from the same Greek word so often rendered "all" elsewhere. The Universalists are sure it teaches that all will finally be saved.

Does not [Rom. 10:9](#) teach, they argue, that "if thou shalt confess with thy mouth Jesus as Lord . . . thou shalt be saved"? And does not **Phil. 2:11** teach that "every tongue" will one day "confess that Jesus Christ is Lord"?

The answer is, *No*. In Rom. 10:9,10 confession is coupled with *heart faith*. In Phil. 2:9-11 this is not so. Here it is rather coupled with the bowing of all, including even infernal beings, to Christ. When this is brought to pass believing with the heart that God has raised Christ from the dead will no longer be a factor, for His resurrection will then be a self-evident fact.

Rom. 10:9,10 is clearly a *proposition*. Phil. 2:9-11 is a *prediction*. Confess Christ as Lord in true faith *now*, and according to Rom. 10:9,10 you will be saved. Decline to do so, and according to Phil. 2:9-11 you will some day be *forced* to do so.

Thus Phil. 2:9-11 teaches universal *subjugation*, not universal reconciliation.

### **Ephesians 1:9, 10**

**"Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself:**

**"That in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him."**

This passage, like the preceding ones, fails to prove universal reconciliation, for the phrase "gather together in one" simply means *to head up*. In [Rom. 13:9](#), where several of the commandments are summed up in one sentence, this same phrase (really one word in the original) is rendered "briefly comprehended" and even the *Concordant Version* renders it "head up" in Eph. 1:10.

The fact that even now our Lord is Head over all principality and power ([Col. 2:10](#)) including those principalities and powers in the heavenlies against which believers now wrestle ([Eph. 6:12](#)) should be proof enough that the future heading up of all things in Christ does not entail the reconciliation of all.

Eph. 1:10, then, teaches simply that one day God will head up all things in Christ. In any case, only things "in heaven" and "on earth" are included, as in the next passage we are to consider.

## Colossians 1:19, 20

**"For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell;**

**"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."**

Here the *emphasis* in the passage must be carefully observed. From Universalist interpretations one would almost suppose that the words "all things" were twice repeated, while in fact this is so of the words "*by Him.*"

This passage does not state that the Father will reconcile all to Christ, but rather that it *pleased the Father*, having made peace through the blood of His Cross, to reconcile all to Himself "*by Him,*" and to emphasize His point He repeats the words "*by Him.*"

In other words, there is but one way of reconciliation for all: *by Christ*. There is no other way, for it is through the blood of His cross that the Father has made peace.

It is true that Verse 16, twice using the term *ta panta*, insists that "all things" were created by Him, but the term *ta panta* in itself does not necessarily mean *all* as e.g., in I Cor. 15:27, for there the passage itself states that it is perfectly obvious that God *is* excepted. Indeed, the definite article, in this term, "*the* all" bears this out again and again. Nor is the emphasis in Col. 1:20 on the universality of reconciliation, but rather on the Father's pleasure as to the *only* way of reconciliation: "*by Him . . . by Him, I say.*"

## I Timothy 2:4-6

**"Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.**

**"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."**

The Universalist argument here is that if God desires<sup>60</sup> the salvation of all, but *cannot* achieve it, He is not omnipotent, and that if Christ gave Himself a ransom for all but all are not saved, He is defeated.

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<sup>60</sup> The word *thelo* here means *to wish, to desire*, as in Matt. 19:21; 20:21,26, 27, 32 and many other passages.

This argument may sound convincing until we realize that salvation here is *from sin*, not from some mere misfortune. Thus the "cannot" takes on new significance. He cannot *morally* save unbelievers and, though His heart's desire is to save them, He *will not*.

Conversely there are things which God says He does *not* desire, yet which do indeed take place, as we have seen. "*Have I any pleasure at all that the 'wicked should die? saith the Lord God*" (Ezek. 18:23). And yet the wicked die. Again: "*For He doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men*" (Lam. 3:33). Yet the children of men are afflicted and grieved.

Special attention should be given to the *position* of I Tim. 2:4-6 in its context. An exhortation to prayer for all men is followed by the assertion that God would have all to be saved and that Christ gave Himself a ransom for all. Since God desires the salvation of all and since Christ gave Himself a ransom for all we, His people, should surely have a like desire and should *pray* for all.

### **I Timothy 4:10**

**"... God, who is the Savior of all men, specially of those that believe."**

It is always difficult for us to understand how Universalists can use the Spirit's words here to try to prove that all will eventually be saved. If God is *specially* the Savior of those who believe, then He is *not* the Savior of believers and unbelievers in the same sense.

If He were specially the Savior of those who do *not* believe, the Universalist argument from this passage might hold, for it might indeed seem a greater marvel that He should some day save even unbelievers. But it is distinctly stated that He is specially the Savior of those *who believe*. The meaning, then, is obviously that while He is *potentially* the Savior of all, He is *actually* the Savior of those who believe, much as the life guard at the shore is potentially the savior of all who are there, but actually and specially of that man who almost drowned.

### **ALL WILL NOT BE SAVED BUT YOU MAY STILL BE SAVED**

In the light of all this the contention that "all means all" appears worse than trifling.

God offers abundant grace to all who will accept it, but let none presume that He will eventually save all regardless of their attitude toward His Son and His finished work. Let men reason as they will, the solemn Word of God still stands that there *are* those - and alas, too *many* - "*whose end is destruction,*" (Phil. 3:19) yea, "*what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?*" (I Pet. 4:17).



To our unsaved friends, then, we say:

**"WE THEN AS WORKERS TOGETHER WITH HIM, BESEECH YOU ALSO THAT YE RECEIVE NOT THE GRACE OF GOD IN VAIN.**

**"...BEHOLD, NOW IS THE ACCEPTED TIME; BEHOLD, NOW IS THE DAY OF SALVATION" (II Cor. 6:1, 2).**

**"BELIEVE ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST, AND THOU SHALT BE SAVED" (Acts 16:31).**

## **WHOLESALE HERESY**

We believe that we have already demonstrated that modern Universalism is not merely unsound on one or two points of doctrine; it is *wholesale heresy*. It denies practically every fundamental of the faith either by definite statement or direct implication. Among the great doctrines of Scripture which, actually or in effect, it repudiates are the following:

*The Holiness of God.* One of the foremost exponents of Universalism today does not hesitate to declare that *God alone* is ultimately responsible for sin since He originated it. In his notes on John 8 and 9 in the *Concordant Version* he says: "God has introduced it into the world." "His purpose demands the presence of sin. He makes a medium--the Slanderer--to inject the virus into creation. He rescues His creatures and gains their affection."

Thus oppression, greed, hate, lust, etc., were originally conceived, not in Satan's heart but in *God's* and God, rather than Satan, becomes "the father of lies." Could there be a viler thrust at the holiness of God? Yet we are charged with "blasphemy" for denying that "all," in the absolute, "is of God" (See *Unsearchable Riches*, Jan., 1956).

*The Defection of Satan.* This too is denied. A phrase in [I John 3:8](#) which states that "the devil sinneth from the beginning" is used to prove that God deliberately created a wicked being in order to introduce sin into the world.

*Human Responsibility.* The denial of this fact follows logically. In a note on John 12:39 the *Concordant Version* argues that "Outside the Scriptures we hear much of human responsibility," but that there were at least some who "*could not believe*," since "God's purpose demands a measure of unbelief." "To damn these men who *could not believe*," we are told, "is unthinkable of God."

The passage in question, as we have shown, by no means teaches that God *caused* these Jews to reject Christ, but rather that His inspired predictions about them *could not be wrong*.

*Human Guilt.* This too is in effect denied. If sin originated in the heart and mind of God and He created a wicked being especially to "inject the virus" into the human race, and He only is ultimately responsible for its presence, how can man be held guilty? Why, then, was Adam wrong for pleading that it was "the woman whom Thou gavest to be with me"? or Eve, for answering: "The serpent beguiled me"? And why might not Satan have replied: "*Thou* hast *created* me thus"? And would not God, in such a case, have been utterly unjust for pronouncing curses upon all three?

In Mr. Knoch's *Transmission of Sin* there is further implied denial of human guilt as he argues: "... it is not true that sin is the source of death to Adam's descendants . . . *death* it was that made [man] a sinner" (Pp. 1, 2). Referring to the "devitalizing process" of *death*, not sin, he contends: "They are born to die, and this it is which debars them from acts of righteousness." "Sin is a by-product of mortality" (*Ibid.* Pp. 2, 3).

To such attempts to escape the guilt of sin God's Word replies that the Law was especially given to *stop* every mouth and bring all the world in *guilty before God* (Rom. 3:19). Rom. 8:33 reads: "Who shall lay anything to the charge of *God's elect*?" If the Universalist argument were correct, it should read: "Who shall lay anything to the charge of *anybody*?"

*Sin.* Even the force of the word *sin* itself is neutralized by the Universalists. Pointing only to its organic meaning rather than to what is said about it, sin is supposed to be simply missing the mark. While insisting that so-called "moral evil" should be given its true name, "sin" (*Evil*, P. 7), Mr. Knoch soon shows what his conception of moral evil is, for he goes on to say: "Failure to conform to any standard," even that of a natural law, "is sin" (*Ibid.*, P. 9). Calling sin "a miss, an error, a failure" (*Ibid.* Pp. 10, 11) he describes an occasion on which he sought to throw a line over a tree branch, and concludes: "We confess that we *sinned* many times before the task was accomplished" (*Ibid.* P. 10). "Mature reflection," he says, "does not deny that some sins are much more than a mere mistake but these are only aggravated forms of the central thought. When God charges all with sin, He does not insist that all are guilty of heinous offenses . . . but that all are mistaken" (*Ibid.* P. 10).

This is his conception of sin. Little wonder he wants the term "moral" to be "discarded in this discussion" (*Evil*, P. 7) and is offended at us for insisting upon its use (*Unsearchable Riches*, Jan., 1956).

*Disobedience.* In Eph. 2:2 unbelievers are called "the children of *disobedience*," but Universalism waters this down by explaining that "all is out of

God," that God is "operating the universe in accord with the counsel of His will" and by asking: "Has anyone withstood His intention?" But if these passages bear the Universalist interpretation how can there be such a thing as *disobedience* or how can anyone be out of the will of God, for is not the murderer, as well as the man of God, fulfilling both the intention and the will of God? Indeed, was not the *act* of murder itself of God?

*Grace.* Universalists have much, very much, to say about grace, but, as with them sin is not the sin which the Bible condemns, so grace is not the grace which the Bible offers. As we have seen from Eph. 2:2-5, grace is God's great mercy and love to the *guilty*, the *blameworthy*. If God *meant* and *caused* us to sin it is only *just* that He deliver us from its effects. There is not one drop of grace in this.

*Forgiveness.* Eph. 1:7 assures believers that they have "*the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace.*" But if Universalist theories are true, the unbeliever might well exclaim: "Forgiveness! For what? God *intended* I should sin; He *caused* me to sin. He is working sin through me to bring about His plans. And now He should offer me forgiveness?!"

*Justification* is another Bible doctrine which, though in word proclaimed, is in effect denied by Universalism. If God *intended* that man should sin and now works sin through him why does *man* need to be justified? Might he not then rather reply to God: "How can I justify *Thee* for dragging me down to sin and iniquity so as to be able to save me from it?"

*Salvation by Grace through Faith.* "After the eons," says Knoch, "faith will not be essential to Salvation" (*Eternal Torment or Universal Reconciliation*, P. 13). "Those who believe are saved by His grace . . . those who do not believe are saved through His judgments . . ." (*The Salvation of the Unbeliever*, P. 1). "The salvation of the unbeliever will be by *sight*, not by faith" (*Ibid.* P. 5).

This, though Heb. 11:6 declares that "without faith it is *impossible* to please God" and though [John 3:36](#) warns that he who does not believe "*shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.*"

*The Essential Distinction Between the Saved and the Lost.* To the Universalists all are potentially saved. It may take some a bit longer than others to come into the possession of salvation, but God is leading them inevitably toward it.

But then why does not Rom. 8:28 say that God is working all things together for good "*to all men*"? And why does Rom. 8:30 tell us that "whom He *predestinated*... *them* He also glorified"? Why does it not say He will glorify *all*?

*Prayer.* What point, under Universalist philosophy, would there be to prayer? What would one pray for? Should he pray for that unconverted drunkard? Why,

when God has him in that condition for His own gracious purpose? Shall he pray that he will be saved before he dies? Why, when he will be saved anyway and enjoy salvation the more if he remains longer in sin? This philosophy must, in the nature of the case, undermine one's prayer life and leave him scarcely any reason to pray.

*Evangelism.* The Apostle Paul gave himself to a life of suffering, toil and tears to win men to Christ, but why? Why send missionaries to the heathen if more sin and sorrow will eventually and inevitably bring greater blessing and joy? Seriously, we ask, why not rather let them go to Christless graves and to the great white throne so that their salvation at last will be the more glorious?

*The Wrath of God.* Again and again we read in Scripture of God's wrath upon sin and sinners, but why? If He *intended* and *caused* man to sin, would it not be unreasonable of Him to be angry about it?

*The Judgments of God.* These, the Universalists tell us, are mostly *disciplinary* and *remedial*. But why any *judgment* at all, then, for discipline is a family matter? "Whom the Lord *loveth* He chasteneth, and scourgeth *every son whom He receiveth*," but no court session is called for in such cases.

It is significant that Universalists generally also deny those fundamentals of the faith which relate to the Holy Spirit and the person and work of Christ. Mr. Knoch and those associated with him deny that the Holy Spirit is a distinct member of the Godhead, they deny the deity of Christ and speak of a "mythical Trinity." They do not deny Christ's virgin birth, His vicarious death or His bodily resurrection but their philosophy denies the *significance* of all this, for of what significance, for example, is His death for sin if He is not God? How could a man or even an angel pay for the sins of the world?

In closing this section on Universalism we plead with the saved and the unsaved alike, not to be deceived. The great question of human destiny cannot be resolved by determining the organic meanings of a few words like *all*, *eon*, and *hell*. Sentences and paragraphs have meanings too and in Scripture heaven and the lake of fire are presented as *alternatives* and the destinies of the saved and the unsaved are set the one over against the other. "*God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him SHOULD NOT PERISH, BUT HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE*" (John 3:16). "*He that believeth on the Son HATH EVERLASTING LIFE; and he that believeth not the Son SHALL NOT SEE LIFE, but the wrath of God abideth on him*" (John 3:36).

But since the very words of Scripture do have their importance, let us heed how God uses the word *telos*, or *end*, in connection with unbelievers:

**"... WHOSE END SHALL BE ACCORDING TO THEIR WORKS" (II Cor. 11:15).**

**"WHOSE END IS DESTRUCTION . . ." (Phil. 3:19).**

**"... WHOSE END IS TO BE BURNED" (Heb. 6:8).**

**"... WHAT SHALL THE END BE OF THEM THAT OBEY NOT THE GOSPEL OF GOD?" (I Pet. 4:17).**

If Universalist arguments were sound one would expect the Scriptures to close with a glorious scene in which all are saved, but this is far from the case. It closes rather with a warning and an urgent plea:

**"... BEHOLD, I MAKE ALL THINGS NEW.... BUT THE FEARFUL [COWARDS] AND UNBELIEVING . . . SHALL HAVE THEIR PART IN THE LAKE WHICH BURNETH WITH FIRE AND BRIMSTONE" (Rev. 21:5-8).**

**"BLESSED ARE THEY THAT DO HIS COMMANDMENTS.... FOR WITHOUT ARE DOGS . . ." (22:14, 15).**

**"AND THE SPIRIT AND THE BRIDE SAY, COME. AND LET HIM THAT HEARETH SAY, COME. AND LET HIM THAT IS ATHIRST COME. AND WHOSOEVER WILL, LET HIM TAKE THE WATER OF LIFE FREELY" (22:17).**

The Apostle Paul, also, clearly implying that there will come a day which will *not* be accepted as a time to be saved, pleads:

**"BEHOLD, NOW IS THE ACCEPTED TIME: BEHOLD, NOW IS THE DAY OF SALVATION" (II Cor. 6:2).**

## Chapter XI

# CONDITIONAL IMMORTALITY

### WILL THE WICKED DEAD CEASE TO EXIST?

We have already considered those phases of the doctrines of *Conditional Immortality* and *Annihilation* which relate to the soul, life, death, the *cons*, etc. In these they have much in common with *Universalism*. Both deny conscious existence in death. Both deny the accepted meaning of those terms rendered "everlasting" and "for ever and ever" in the *Authorized Version*. Both argue that God would be unjust to punish the wicked forever. But *neither* have concluded *from the Scriptures* that everlasting punishment is not taught there. They have concluded this from their own reasoning and *then* have sought to prove their conclusions from certain Scriptures. In doing so, however, they have been forced to ignore the *Holy Spirit's* usage of the terms in question and to pervert the plainest statements of the Word of God.

### THE WIDE DISAGREEMENT AMONG THOSE WHO HOLD THAT THE UNGODLY WILL CEASE TO EXIST

In the camp of those who hold that the ungodly will finally cease to exist there are wide differences of opinion. Most of those who hold to *Conditional Immortality*, believe that man, being mortal, is destined, *in the nature of the case*, to pass out of existence and that only through union with Christ can he obtain so-called "immortality." Those who hold to *Annihilation*, on the other hand, believe that the ungodly will be exterminated or *put* out of existence. This, however, is only a very general distinction for, as we say, the differences of opinion in this school of thought are many and great.

Some believe that there will be a *single act* of annihilation, others a *process* of destruction; some, that it will be a *punishment*, others, a merciful *deliverance* from punishment; some, that the ungodly cease to exist at the *first* death, others, that this does not take place until the *second* death. But these last are disagreed again as to whether the second death will annihilate its victims *immediately* or *sooner or later* after sufficient punishment. Again, some believe that in the case of the unsaved the man *as such* will cease to exist at death but will be brought into existence again to be tried and destroyed in the second death, while others hold that since (according to their theory) the ungodly cease to exist at death there can be no resurrection for them. Still others hold that "the soul survives the death of the body until judgment day, when God will destroy both soul and body of the wicked in the lake of fire."

## WHY THESE TEACHINGS APPEAL TO THE UNSAVED

To the unregenerate man the doctrines of *conditional immortality* and *annihilation* doubtless hold a greater appeal than does that of *universal reconciliation*.

First, these teachings appeal more to his sense of justice. He knows he is a sinner. A sense of his blameworthiness has haunted him all his life and the Universalist theory that God meant him to be this way does not ring true. But in causing or permitting the ungodly to pass out of existence God at least seems to place the blame where it belongs and - suppose there is punishment to be borne at first, will not every day of torment bring him nearer to final deliverance from it?

Secondly, the unregenerate man does not *wish* to be in the presence of God. Like his father, Adam, he flees and hides from God. Indeed, Col. 1:21, referring to our former unregenerate state, says: "*You . . . were . . . alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works.*" The unsaved are unhappy and out of place in gatherings of believers; how much more would they be so in *heaven!* Thus most unregenerate men prefer to continue in sin if they can but be assured that, whatever punishment may lie ahead, they will finally pass out of existence.

In connection with all these theories, and that of *Universalism* as well, the sad fact is that in so many cases what men feel the Scriptures *ought* to teach blinds them to what they *do* so plainly teach.

## THE ETHICAL QUESTION

The great question in the minds of all who deny everlasting punishment is how a just and loving God could allow any of His creatures to suffer forever, indeed, how He could allow evil to have a place in the universe forever.

We have already discussed the former part of this question. God's love and justice are not on trial before fallen man, whose conceptions of sin and righteousness must necessarily be subject, not merely to his limitations, but to his moral depravity. But God forever shut the mouths of all who would question His justice and love when, at Calvary, He demonstrated beyond all doubt that He is infinite in both; nor can He who is essentially infinite in all His attributes quench or lower one of them - His wrath against sin - to accommodate the sinner.

As to the latter part of this question: that God should allow evil to have a place in the universe forever is no more difficult a question, ethically, than that He should permit it to have a place at all, as it has had for so many centuries.

The theory that the ungodly will finally pass out of existence does not solve these problems; it only creates additional ones.

If God is to annihilate the wicked anyway, would it not be senseless cruelty to punish them at all? Further, if, as some believe, annihilation is the *penalty* for sin, then Christ cannot have paid the penalty, for He suffered untold agony to pay our debt. But if, on the other hand, annihilation is a merciful *deliverance* from further payment, why need Christ have paid for *all* man's sins? If God can overlook some sins for the Christ-rejector, how much more for Christ Himself? Of course some believe that annihilation is neither the penalty for sin nor a merciful deliverance from its further payment. They hold that *after* the unbeliever has fully paid for his sins he will be annihilated. Sir Robert Anderson gives the answer to this in his *Human Destiny*, P. 108:

"We are thus asked to believe in a God who puts forth His power solely to keep His creatures in existence until 'the uttermost farthing' of penalty has been exacted, and who then, when every question of righteous claim is settled, and love might pity and save, turns away to leave them to their fate. And this, too, on the plea that God is a God of love!"

Among those who hold the above theories there is always the tendency to view sin through the sinner's eyes and so to minimize it. Indeed, none of us, in our present state, can view sin as God views it. Furthermore, apart from the character or quality of the sin itself, sin becomes the more "exceeding sinful" in proportion to the position of the one sinned against. To smite my brother unprovoked would be an offense; to smite my mother would be a greater; to smite the ruler of the land, still a greater. It is evident, then, that any sin against God immediately takes on *infinite* proportions.

It should be noted, however, that there is a difference between the commission of sins and the rejection of grace. God has made provision for the former, but not for the latter. At least today, and among those to whom God's revelation has come, it is no longer the *sin* question but the *Son* question upon which salvation hinges.

**"... GOD COMMENDETH HIS LOVE TOWARD US. IN THAT, WHILE WE WERE YET SINNERS, CHRIST DIED FOR US" (Rom. 5:8).**

**"IN WHOM WE HAVE REDEMPTION, THROUGH HIS BLOOD, THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS, ACCORDING TO THE RICHES OF HIS GRACE" (Eph. 1:7).**

To yield to sin is one thing, then; to spurn redeeming grace is quite another.



## WHAT ABOUT THE HEATHEN?

But this leads us to another ethical question which the proponents of *conditional immortality* and *annihilation* both profess, but fail, to answer: What about the teeming millions of heathen who have never heard of Christ? What will be their fate?

First, let it be said that the Bible was not written merely to gratify our curiosity. It was written to bring us God's plan and offer of salvation and, whatever the case of the heathen, we become responsible for accepting or rejecting that offer the moment it reaches *us*, and he who does not accept that offer thereby rejects it.

Thus, when God says that "*He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him*" (John 3:36) it is obvious that those *to whom this message comes* will be judged upon this basis.

With the heathen who have not heard, this, of course, is not so. They have *neither accepted nor rejected* this offer because *it did not reach them*. As Rom. 10:14 puts it:

**"... How shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?"**

But we must not conclude from this that the heathen are not accountable to God for *anything*, for while it is doubtless appropriate that we, redeemed sinners, often unfaithful in our responsibility toward the lost, should refer to those in pagan darkness as "poor heathen," the Scriptures describe their condition as not merely pitiable but *reprehensible*.

**"FOR THE WRATH OF GOD IS REVEALED FROM HEAVEN AGAINST ALL UNGODLINESS AND UN-RIGHTEOUSNESS OF MEN, WHO HOLD [LIT., HOLD DOWN] THE TRUTH IN UNRIGHTEOUSNESS;**

**"BECAUSE THAT WHICH MAY BE KNOWN OF GOD IS MANIFEST IN THEM; FOR GOD HATH SHOWED IT UNTO THEM.**

**"FOR THE INVISIBLE THINGS OF HIM FROM THE CREATION OF THE WORLD ARE CLEARLY SEEN, BEING UNDERSTOOD BY THE THINGS THAT ARE MADE, EVEN HIS ETERNAL POWER AND GODHEAD; SO THAT THEY ARE WITHOUT EXCUSE" (Rom. 1:18-20).**

Hence, of the heathen who have not heard of Christ, yea, who "have not the law," we read:

**"FOR AS MANY AS HAVE SINNED WITHOUT LAW SHALL ALSO PERISH WITHOUT LAW"<sup>61</sup> (Rom. 2:12).**

And this will take place, says Paul:

**"IN THE DAY WHEN GOD SHALL JUDGE THE SECRETS OF MEN BY JESUS CHRIST ACCORDING TO MY GOSPEL" (Ver. 16).**

Now the gospel committed to Paul is unique. It is called "the mystery" or "the secret." One phase of this secret is the great truth, unfolded in the Pauline epistles, that men never were or could be saved by religion or works *as such* and that now and always the redeemed have been saved by grace through faith in what God revealed *to them*<sup>62</sup> (Rom. 3:19-28; cf. Heb. 11:4, 5, 6, 7, 39).

That the heathen multitudes have not accepted the revelation given to them is clear from Romans 1. Yet they will not share the greater guilt of those who have been offered and have rejected "the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." Our Lord expounded this principle when He said:

**"FOR UNTO WHOMSOEVER MUCH IS GIVEN, OF HIM SHALL BE MUCH REQUIRED" (Luke 12:48).**

This same principle is brought out in Matt. 11:20-24, Rev. 20:12, 13 and other Scripture passages.

There is much that we do not know about the fate of the heathen, but there are basic facts of which we may be absolutely certain:

1. They will not be condemned unheard (Rev. 20:11-15).
2. They will be judged "every man according to their works" (Rev. 20:13).
3. They will be justly dealt with: "*Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?*" (Gen. 18:25).

Beyond this little is told us. In this connection Sir Robert Anderson says:

"What concerns us is not to theorize about the penalty of *sin*, but to take heed that we escape the 'sorer punishment' of despising grace. It were otherwise if Christianity gave those who reject it the alternative of falling back on the position held by all whom the revelation has never reached. But no such choice is ours" (*Human Destiny*, P. 160).

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<sup>61</sup> I. e., the Mosaic law.

<sup>62</sup> Now, of course, through faith in the finished work of Christ.

## ARGUMENTS FROM SCRIPTURE

With regard to *Conditional Immortality* and *Annihilation* it is significant that the arguments which their champions draw from *Scripture* have to do, almost exclusively, with the interpretation of individual words and phrases. We have already considered some of these, but there are others also directly involved.

### "LIFE"

Among those who hold that the unsaved will finally pass out of existence there is much confusion and misunderstanding about the various words rendered "*life*" in our Bibles.

Some, recalling the creation of man, point out that God "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" ([Gen. 2:7](#)). This life, they argue, has been forfeited through sin, so that God withdraws it at death and the only way it can be recovered is by faith in Christ. There are, however, several variations to this theory,

But the life that God breathed into man's nostrils is not the same as that received by faith in Christ. Indeed, we have already seen that in the Greek there are two words for *life* which mark the distinction between these two. The one is *psuche*, or *breath of life*. This is obviously what God breathed into man's nostrils, and all living mankind, including those who have never trusted Christ, possess *this life*. The other is *zoe*, or *active life*, which, while it sometimes is also used of this temporal life, is the *only* word used for the life received by faith in Christ.

This is why Mr. Otis Q. Sellers has been so wrong in teaching that the life of I John 5:12 ("He that hath the Son hath life") is identical with that which God breathed into man's nostrils (*Word of Truth*, Vol. VI, P. 135). This life, he says, "comes to us with every breath we draw" (P. 136). In death, he further argues, "the breath of life returns to God from whence it came," adding that "in the matter of death, man is not superior to the beast" (*Vol. IX, P. 95*).<sup>63</sup>

But the life of I John 5:12 does *not* come to us with every breath; it comes to us by faith in Christ alone. Using this very word (*zoe*) our Lord said:

**"THE WORDS that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and THEY ARE LIFE" (John 6:63).**

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<sup>63</sup> He is equally wrong when he argues that, since animals are also called "living souls" (Heb. of Gen. 1:24) they do not differ from us in the matter of life. Scripture nowhere tells us that God breathed into the nostrils of animals to give them life. Herein lies the great difference between man and the brute creation. By the divine inbreathing man has a link with God which the animals have not. Divine inbreathing and human respiration, then, are not the same.

**"AND THIS IS LIFE ETERNAL, THAT THEY MIGHT KNOW THEE THE ONLY TRUE GOD, AND JESUS CHRIST, WHOM THOU HAST SENT" (John 17:3).**

Using this same word regarding unsaved people who did indeed possess *the breath of life*, He said: "*Ye have no life in you*" (John 6:53) and concerning those who believed, He said:

**"HE THAT HEARETH MY WORD AND BELIEVETH ON HIM THAT SENT ME, HATH EVERLASTING LIFE, AND SHALL NOT COME INTO CONDEMNATION, BUT IS PASSED FROM DEATH UNTO LIFE" (John 5:24).**

How can *this* life, then, be that which we draw with every breath?

## **"IMMORTALITY"**

I Tim. 6:16, where we read that God alone "hath immortality," is frequently used to disprove the so-called "immortality of the soul." It is argued that since God alone is immortal, immortality may be obtained only by union with Him, through Christ.

But here again our friends confuse immortality with the eternal life imparted only to the redeemed.

The original word, *athanasia*, simply means *deathlessness*. It is used twice more in the New Testament Scriptures, in I Cor. 15:53, 54, where we are told that "this mortal" will "put on immortality." But here the reference is clearly to the change to take place in our *bodies* at the rapture. "The dead shall be raised," says the apostle, "and we shall be changed" (Ver. 52). And, completing a parallelism, he continues: "For this corruptible [referring to the dead] must put on incorruptibility, and this mortal [referring to the living] must put on immortality" (Ver. 53). It is our *bodies* that will then become incorruptible and immortal. Indeed, in all six cases where the counterpart, "mortal," is used, the body is clearly referred to, as in "*mortal body*," "*mortal flesh*," etc. But the soul is never called mortal. It does not die as the body dies. It is immortal in the sense that it continues in conscious existence.

True, God alone is *essentially* immortal. It is "in Him" that "we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28) but this no more proves that the soul dies than that the angels die. God's immortality is *inherent* and *essential*; that of the soul, *derived* and *dependent*, but the soul *is* immortal in the sense described above. They that "kill the body... are not able to kill the soul" (Matt. 10:28).

It is on the basis of I Tim. 6:16 that some argue that *in the nature of the case* unregenerate men must finally pass out of existence. Yet most who hold this view also teach that the wicked dead will be raised again to appear before the

great white throne and suffer the second death. But that which does not exist cannot be raised again, nor is the *second* death a natural law; it is a divine judgment.

Others, to escape this dilemma, insist that the lost cease forever to exist at the first death. But these are caught in a worse dilemma and are forced to do the most brazen violence to those passages which predict the resurrection of the wicked dead. Referring to the great white throne ([Rev. 20:11-15](#)) one of them says: "*Evidently* a judgment of believers is in progress here" (*TFT*, Aug., 1953). Think of it! As though there could be any thought of believers being cast into the lake of fire! This same writer denies that the unsaved will "have to give an account of their works before God," since then "they would have to have a resurrection of some sort" (*TFT*, May, 1954).

According to this theory Rom. 8:1 would have to read: "There is therefore now no judgment to them that are *out* of Christ Jesus" and the wicked could go on in sin with no fear of judgment to come after this life is over. How contrary is all this to the plain words of Scripture:

**"... IT IS APPOINTED UNTO MEN ONCE TO DIE, BUT AFTER THIS THE JUDGMENT" (Heb. 9:27).**

## **"DESTROY" AND "PERISH"**

But do not such words as "destroy" and "perish," used in connection with the ungodly, imply that the lost will finally cease to exist?

Some insist that they do, that they indicate "absolute cessation of being." One argues that "the word *perish* is defined for us in I Cor. 15:18" where "it says that those who do not rise from the dead have perished."

An examination of the usages of this very word rendered "perish" in I Cor. 15:18, will show how fallacious these statements are. Did the bottles of Matt. 9:17 cease to exist? Did Christ come to save those who did not exist? ([Matt. 18:11](#)). Did the woman of [Luke 15:9](#) find a coin which did not exist? In each of these passages the word is *apollumi*, translated "perish" in [I Cor. 15:18](#).

Several Old Testament words rendered "destroy" and "destruction" in our Bibles are further supposed by these teachers to support the doctrine of annihilation, but those words which *they* say describe the final doom of the wicked are also used to describe *temporal* judgments. Indeed, only in exceptional cases could they relate unquestionably to *final* judgment.

Nor do the various New Testament words rendered "destroy" at all bear the meaning of annihilation. The thief of John 10:10 does not come "to steal, and to kill, and to annihilate." Eating meat before a weak brother will not annihilate him

([Rom. 14:15](#)). The man of sin will not be annihilated at Christ's coming ([II Thes. 2:8](#)) for after that he will suffer torment in the lake of fire ([Rev. 19:20](#)).

The active English word "destroy" basically means *to ruin, to do irreparable injury, to render permanently unfit for intended use*. The passive word "perish" simply means *to be destroyed or ruined*. The various Hebrew and Greek synonyms rendered by these two words are generally close to this in meaning and do *not* mean "annihilate" any more than do their English equivalents.

The book of Ecclesiastes is perhaps the stronghold of those who teach that the dead do not exist. Interestingly, however, even those passages which are singled out to prove this (e.g., 9:5) actually imply the very opposite - that the dead *do* exist. Furthermore the great conclusion of [Eccl. 12:13,14](#), is that man should fear God and obey Him, since He will bring every work into judgment. Surely this conclusion was not drawn from declarations that death is cessation of being.

## "ETERNAL" AND "FOREVER"

It is true that *literally* the word *aion* means *age*, but some *finite* word necessarily had to be used to describe *infinite* duration of time; hence the idiomatic usage of *aion* in the Scriptures.

The idiomatic usage of *aion* is not inconsistent with its literal usage in passages where *particular aions* are clearly referred to. Where no particular *aion* is referred to *aionian* describes *endless duration*. It is used of persons and things which in their nature are endless, as God ([Rom. 16:26](#)) His glory ([I Pet. 5:10](#)) the Holy Spirit ([Heb. 9:14](#)) the redemption wrought by Christ ([Heb. 9:12](#)) etc. In [II Cor. 4:18](#) it is set in contrast with that which is "*temporal*." But the phrase "*to the aions of the aions*" most certainly describes *endless duration*. If the punishment of the wicked were temporary God would hardly have described its duration by using the words "to the ages of the ages" ([Rev. 14:11](#); [Rev. 20:10](#)) *the very words* used to describe His own endless existence ([Rev. 10:6](#)).

And how else, we ask, could endlessness be *described*? What better expression could be used ?

## THE DAY OF SALVATION

We do not know all of God's purposes in the everlasting punishment of the ungodly. As "in a great house" there are all sorts of vessels, "and some to honor, and some to dishonor," but all put to some use, perhaps this will be so in the universe in the ages to come.

Sir Robert Anderson, from whose *Human Destiny* we have quoted several passages points out that:

"... nowhere has [God] said that it is for punishment alone [the ungodly] shall exist. If throughout creation, and even in the world which the microscope reveals to us, every creature seems to have its mission, why should we assume it will be otherwise in hell? It were but folly to press the matter further, and theorize about the possible employment of the lost; but may we not suppose that in the infinite wisdom of God there are purposes to the accomplishment of which even they will be made to minister?" (Pp. 173, 174).

It is one of the devices of Satan to seize upon the popular, but often degrading conceptions of hell and to demand whether such fiendish cruelty is not unthinkable of God. But the popular conception of hell is no more Scriptural than the popular conception of heaven.

We do know, however, that whatever their character, the flame and torment which await the ungodly are presented in Scripture in terms of the most solemn warning. Indeed, the very thought of "the wrath of God" is terrible to contemplate.

We thank God that as we write these lines He is still manifesting His love and mercy and grace. This is still the "accepted time," the "day of salvation." Hence we beg those who are as yet unsaved to trust Christ as Savior before it is too late. We too, were once "children of disobedience" and "children of wrath even as others."

**"BUT GOD, WHO IS RICH IN MERCY, FOR HIS GREAT LOVE WHEREWITH HE LOVED US,**

**"EVEN WHEN WE WERE DEAD IN SINS, HATH QUICKENED US TOGETHER WITH CHRIST . . .**

**"AND HATH RAISED US UP TOGETHER AND MADE US SIT TOGETHER IN HEAVENLY PLACES IN CHRIST JESUS:**

**"THAT IN THE AGES TO COME HE MIGHT SHOW THE EXCEEDING RICHES OF HIS GRACE IN HIS KINDNESS TOWARD US THROUGH CHRIST JESUS" (Eph. 2:2-7).**

And what He has done for the writer He is willing to do for the reader of this book. He is *"not willing that any should perish"* (II Pet. 3:9).

**"BELIEVE ON THE LORD JESUS CHRIST AND THOU SHALT BE SAVED" (Acts 16:31).**

## Chapter XII

# THE FINAL DESTINY OF THE SAVED

As we consider the final destiny of the saved our minds go back to the opening passage of the divine Revelation:

**"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Gen. 1:1).**

As we proceed from this to study all the Scriptures until we reach the new heaven and the new earth at their close, it is evident that God has a two-fold purpose for the universe:<sup>64</sup> one part related to the *earth*, the other to *heaven*: one to the *kingdom* of Christ, the other to the *Body* of Christ; one "*spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began*" (Acts 3:21) the other "*kept secret since the world began,*" until made known by revelation to and through the Apostle Paul (Rom. 16:25).

Glorious prospects await the saved in *both* parts of this twofold purpose, though, in both cases their *final* destinies are not reached all at once.

## THE KINGDOM SAINTS

We have seen, for example, that the saved of bygone ages await a resurrection "*to everlasting life*" (Dan. 12:12) or what John, by inspiration, calls "*the resurrection of life*" (John 5:29).

We know too, that this resurrection will be more than a revivification or resuscitation of the body. There will be a glorious *change*. The worn, broken body that was buried in the earth in sorrow and humiliation will rise in glory fit for the presence of God.

This is why Job, referring to his own resurrection, spoke of waiting "till my *change* come" (Job 14:14). And this is why he further wrote:

**"For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:**

**"And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet IN MY FLESH SHALL I SEE GOD:**

**"WHOM I SHALL SEE FOR MYSELF . . ." (Job 19:25-27).**

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<sup>64</sup> See the author's book: The Twofold Purpose of God.



It should be carefully noted here that Job looked for all this in connection with the return of Christ *to earth*, as did the believers of the nation Israel later on.<sup>65</sup>

David, whose prospect too was the glorious reign of his "Seed," declared:

**"As for me, I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness" (Psa. 17:15).**

Daniel also looked for a resurrection "to everlasting life" after the world's "time of trouble," and before the return of Messiah, and predicted that at that time the "wise" shall "shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" (Dan. 12:3).

Certainly the twelve apostles looked forward to the reign of Christ and to a prominent part in it, for as we hear them ask: "*Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?*" (Acts 1:6) we cannot forget that only a short time previous our Lord had promised them "twelve thrones" in the kingdom ([Matt. 19:28](#)).

Even those saints who shall live during the coming tribulation period, whether they live through it or die during it, will have as their prospect the glorious reign of Christ *on earth*. Thus we read in Rev. 2:26, 27:

**"And he that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:**

**"And he shall rule them with a rod of iron . . . even as I received of My Father."**

Thus also we read of the tribulation martyrs in Rev. 20:4:

**"... and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God . . . and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."**

And thus we hear the "new song" of Rev. 5:9, 10:

**"Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof; for Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;**

**"And has made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth."**

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<sup>65</sup> We take it that the Book of Job was written prior to the giving of the Law.

Obviously any part in "the kingdom of heaven" will require a great transformation in those involved and, while it is true that *our* humiliated bodies will be transformed and fashioned "like unto the body of His glory" (Phil 3:21) and that this will take place when we see our Lord at the rapture, we do not doubt that as an apostle of the circumcision John, in I John 3:2, wrote specially for those believers who shall live *on earth* after the members of the Body have been caught away, for they too "shall be like Him" when He returns to reign and they "see Him as He is."

All these believers belong to the prophetic purpose and await positions and blessings *on earth*. To them our Lord will then, in the fullest sense, be "Immanuel"--"God *with us*," and with His return will come the long-promised "*times of refreshing*" (Acts 3:19, 20).

Indeed, it appears that even after one thousand years of His beneficent reign these will still have their place on earth, for Rev. 21 opens with "a new heaven and a new earth" and "a voice from heaven saying":

**"... Behold, THE TABERNACLE OF GOD IS WITH MEN, and HE WILL DWELL WITH THEM, and they shall be His people and God Himself shall be with them and be their God" (Ver. 3).**

Heaven and earth, however, will then evidently be open to each other, for in Verse 2 of this passage we find the holy city, New Jerusalem, "coming down from God out of heaven."

That the saints of heaven and of earth will then enjoy intimate association is further implied in Paul's epistles, where we read that it is God's purpose. . .

**"... 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 ON EARTH, OR THINGS IN HEAVEN"<sup>66</sup> (Col. 1:20).**

**"That in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might GATHER TOGETHER IN ONE ALL THINGS IN CHRIST, BOTH WHICH ARE IN HEAVEN, AND WHICH ARE ON EARTH, even in Him" (Eph. 1:10).**

## THE MEMBERS OF CHRIST'S BODY

For those who have accepted Christ during this age of His rejection the epistles of Paul present an even more glorious prospect - a *heavenly* prospect, for in varied language the apostle speaks of "*the hope which is laid up for you in heaven*" (Col. 1:5).

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<sup>66</sup> Note: *Infernal* beings are not included here as in Phil. 2:10, 11, where universal *subjugation* is in view.

As we have already seen, our immediate prospect is the coming of "the Lord Himself" to catch us away to be with *Him* forever ([I Cor. 15:51-53](#); [I Thes. 4:13-18](#)). With regard to this event the apostle declares:

**"Behold, I show you a mystery [Lit., I tell you a secret]: We shall not all sleep, but WE SHALL ALL BE CHANGED" (I Cor. 15:51).**

This "change" is further referred to in Phil. 3:20, 21, where the apostle declares:

**"For our citizenship is in heaven; from whence also we wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: WHO SHALL FASHION ANEW THE BODY OF OUR HUMILIATION, THAT IT MAY BE CONFORMED TO THE BODY OF HIS GLORY, according to the working whereby He is able even to subject all things unto Himself" (R.V.).**

Again in I Cor. 15 he describes this change as it will affect those who have died in Christ:

**"So also is the resurrection of the dead. IT IS SOWN IN CORRUPTION; IT IS RAISED IN INCORRUPTION:**

**"IT IS SOWN IN DISHONOR; IT IS RAISED IN GLORY: IT IS SOWN IN WEAKNESS; IT IS RAISED IN POWER:**

**"IT IS SOWN A NATURAL BODY; IT IS RAISED A SPIRITUAL BODY . . ." (Vers. 42-44).**

**"AND AS WE HAVE BORNE THE IMAGE OF THE EARTHY, WE SHALL ALSO BEAR THE IMAGE OF THE HEAVENLY" (Ver. 49).**

To be sure, our circumstances will then also be changed, but best of all, we shall be changed, never again to wrestle with our evil, fallen natures; never again to fail or disgrace our blessed Lord!

After this will come the "judgment seat of Christ" and the granting of rewards for Christian service acceptable to Him. Though on this occasion some will "suffer loss," the revealed character of our Lord assures us that He will lavishly reward the humblest service sincerely and intelligently undertaken for Him, as well as every desire, prayer and effort to live honoring to Him, and any suffering in His behalf. If the giver of "a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple... shall in no wise lose his reward" in the kingdom to come ([Matt. 10:42](#)) how generously will the Head of the Body reward His saints for testimonies earnestly, if falteringly, given to win the lost to Christ, for Bible study literature prayerfully distributed, for service rendered in spite of weariness of body, for sacrifices made and sufferings patiently borne!

After this "meeting in the air" and the great tribulation on earth our Lord will return to earth to reign on David's throne ([Jer. 23:5](#); [Matt. 24:29, 30](#)). Will we, His heavenly people, be separated from Him at this time? By no means!

Queen Elizabeth now occupies the throne of England, but by this we do not mean that she sits, constantly and without interruption, upon the physical seat which is called her throne. Neither will our Lord occupy one spot in Jerusalem for one thousand years!

But will we, the members of His Body, reign with Him at this time? Not, surely, in the capacity in which the twelve and other kingdom saints will reign with Him, for our prospect is heavenly in sphere as well as in character. Yet we must not forget that Satan and his heavenly hosts now rule the world behind the scenes. As "the god of this age" he "blinds the minds of them that believe not" ([II Cor. 4:4](#)). As "the prince of the powers of the air" he "now worketh in the children of disobedience" ([Eph. 2:2](#)) and the principalities and powers under him are called "the rulers of the darkness of this age" ([Eph. 6:12](#)). Indeed, [I John 5:19](#) tells us, literally, that "*the whole world lieth in the lap of the wicked one.*"

Does the reader ask what this has to do with the question? The answer is that the "cold war" which has been waged in heaven for so many centuries (See [Job 1:6-12](#), etc.; [Dan. 10:12, 13, 20, 21](#); [Eph. 6:10-17](#); et al) will one day be terminated as God expels Satan and his hosts from heaven forever ([Rev. 12:7-9](#)).<sup>67</sup> We, the members of the Body of Christ, will then take our place and will reign with Christ, not merely over each other and over angels, but over the earth - only behind the scenes, much as the evil principalities and powers in the heavenlies do now. Thus we will indeed have a part - an important part - in the millennial reign of Christ.

Writing to the Corinthians about their own future the apostle declares not only that they will "judge angels," but asks:

**"Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? . . . the world shall be judged by you" (I Cor. 6:2).**

Direct rulership with Christ over angels and men will, however, not be the portion of all believers; it will rather be a reward for faithfulness to Him. Thus the apostle says:

**"If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him . . ." (II Tim. 2:12; cf. [Rom. 8:17](#); [Phil. 1:29](#)).**

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<sup>67</sup> As we have seen, this will probably take place during our "meeting in the air," the judgment seat of Christ.

Beyond this? How could God describe to mortal man, even regenerated men, the glories of His presence and that of the blessed One who loved us and left His majesty on high to bear the shame and disgrace - yea, the penalty, for our sins? How, in our present state, could we possibly take in the blessedness of heaven and our association with the angels, or the perfect fellowship with redeemed sinners gone before? We can only *believe* God's Word that it is His purpose:

**"THAT IN THE AGES TO COME HE MIGHT SHOW THE EXCEEDING RICHES OF HIS GRACE IN HIS KINDNESS TOWARD US THROUGH CHRIST JESUS" (Eph. 2:7).**

And this *forever!* As we contemplate it, our hearts rejoice and sing with Newton:

"When we've been there ten thousand years,  
Bright shining as the sun,  
We've no less days to sing His praise  
Than when we'd first begun."

Yet, as we contemplate the glory and praise that is *due* our blessed Lord for all this we rather sing with Addison:

"Through all eternity to Thee  
A grateful song I'll raise,  
For, oh, eternity's too short  
To utter all Thy praise?"