

"HELL NO PART OF DIVINE REVELATION."

"AN article under the above title, by the Rev. W. E. Manley D.D., appeared in the *Arena*. The writer begins by laying down the proposition that there is no term in the Hebrew or Greek Scriptures which has the meaning of the English word hell, and continues: –

"When our late revision of the Bible was in progress, Canon Farrar (now Archdeacon and Doctor Farrar) said in substance as follows: – 'If the revisers do their whole duty, when their work is done our Bible will not contain the word hell, nor damnation, nor everlasting punishment.' This covers the whole ground of our proposition, and something more. The revisers, it seems, have not done their whole duty, though they have gone a good way in that direction. There are four words in the Bible that are translated hell, though not uniformly so translated. One of these is a Hebrew word, *sheol*, and is found in the Old Testament sixty-five times. In the old version it is rendered thirty-one times hell, thirty-one times grave, and three times pit. In the revision it is rendered hell fifteen times, grave fifteen times, pit five times, and is left untranslated thirty times. The revisers admit that the word does not mean hell, but say it is a place of departed spirits, good and bad, and must therefore embrace a hell and a paradise, though these places, and the separation between them, are nowhere mentioned or alluded to in that part of the Bible. With the views the revisers had of sheol, it was manifestly improper to render the word either hell or grave. There was but one consistent course to take, and that was to give the original in every instance, as they have done in nearly half of them, and as the New Testament revisers have done with the word hades. In passing, we may remark that Sheol was the proper name of the first king of the Hebrew nation, and of him who became the apostle to the Gentiles, with some difference of pronunciation – a pretty good evidence that their respective parents did not attach to the word the meaning of hell, unless it had to them a more musical sound than it has to some of us. The true meaning of *sheol* is grave, and the translators

of the old version have given their sanction to this view by so rendering the word in nearly half the instances in the ancient Scriptures; and if we add the three times it is rendered pit, often the synonym of grave, the rendering 'grave' will be in the majority. It should be borne in mind that the translators of the old or authorised version had but one word for the two renderings, 'grave' and 'hell,' and that the former was the sense of the term more often than the latter. It is as plain to us as anything well can be, that in the whole Hebrew Bible they could not find a word for the idea of hell. It is often affirmed by learned Hebrews that there is no such word in the Hebrew language, in the Bible, or in any other book. This is confirmed by the revisers, who confess that *sheol* has no such meaning; and they name no other word in the Hebrew language to fill the place. Finding no word for hell, they made use of the word *sheol*, grave, and attached to that the desired meaning when the connection would not betray the fraud. The meaning of hell was not in the word; but they could inject it, and then it would be there, and the Old Testament would not be obliged to bear the disgrace of having no hell. The people, having no knowledge of the Hebrew tongue, and not doubting that the translators, of high standing in the Church, were pious, good men, accepted the new version as an inestimable boon to the English people, as no doubt on the whole it is. The revisers confess that hell is a wrong translation; but they have not altogether rejected this rendering."

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We commend to colporteurs, and to all interested in serving the Truth, the booklet "What Say the Scriptures about Hell?" (See second page.) It is quite convincing to readers in general that God's Word has been misrepresented and misunderstood on this subject; and after reading it they are generally ready for the study of the divine plan of the ages.
