

EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT.

THE EVERLASTINGNESS of the punishment being thus established, only one point is left open for discussion; namely, the nature of the punishment. Take your Concordance and search out what saith the great Judge regarding the punishment of wilful sinners who despise and reject all his blessed provisions for them through Christ. What do you find? Does God there say – All sinners shall live in torture forever? No; we find not a single text where life in any condition is promised to that class.

God's declarations assure us that ultimately he will have a clean universe, free from the blight of sin and sinners, – because "All the wicked will he destroy." – Psa. 145:20.

But while we do not find one verse of the Bible saying that this class can have *life* in torment, or in any other condition, we do find numerous passages teaching the reverse. Of these we give a few merely as samples – "The wages of sin is *death*" (Rom. 6:23.) "The soul that sinneth, *it shall die.*" (Ezek. 18:4,20.) [R2607 : page 104] "The wicked shall perish." (Psa. 37:20.) "Yet a little while and the wicked shall not be." (Psa. 37:10.) Thus God has told us plainly the nature of the everlasting punishment of the wicked – that it will be death, destruction.

The false ideas of God's plan of dealing with the incorrigible, taught ever since the great "falling away," which culminated in Papacy, and instilled into our minds from childhood, are alone responsible for the view generally held, that the everlasting *punishment* provided for wilful sinners is a life of torment. This view is held, notwithstanding the many clear statements of God's Word that their punishment is to be *death*. Hear Paul state very explicitly what the punishment is to be. Speaking of the same Millennial Day, and of the same class, who, despite all the favorable

opportunities and the fulness of knowledge then, will not come into harmony with Christ, and hence will "know not God," in the true sense and "obey not," he says – "Who *shall be punished.*" Ah, yes! but *how* punished? He tells us how: They "shall be punished with *everlasting destruction* [a destruction from which there shall be no recovery, no redemption or resurrection – Heb. 10:26-29] from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his power." (2 Thes. 1:9.) This destruction is represented in the parable as the everlasting "*fire*" prepared for the devil and his angels: it is "the lake of fire and brimstone," which is the Second death (Rev. 20:14), into which the "goat" class of this parable are sent. – Matt. 25:41.

Thus the meaning and reasonableness of this statement concerning everlasting punishment are readily seen when looked at from the correct standpoint. [R2608 : page 104] The fire of the parable, by which the punishment (destruction) is to be accomplished, will not be literal fire, for the "fire" is as much a symbol as the "sheep" and "goats" are symbols. Fire here, as elsewhere, symbolizes destruction, and not in any sense preservation.

We might well leave this subject here, and consider that we have fully shown that the everlasting punishment of the "goat" class will be destruction; but we direct attention to one other point which clinches the truth upon this subject. We refer to the Greek word *kolasin*, translated "punishment," in verse 46. This word has not in it the remotest idea of torment. Its primary signification is *to cut off*, or prune, or lop off, as in the pruning of trees; and a secondary meaning is *to restrain*. The wicked will be everlastingly restrained, cut off from life in the Second death. Illustrations of the use of *kolasin* can easily be had from Greek classical writings. The Greek word for "torment" is *basinos*, a word totally unrelated to the word *kolasin*.

Kolasin, the word used in Matt. 25:46, occurs in but one other place in the Bible, viz., 1 John 4:18, where it is improperly rendered "torment" in the common version, whereas it should read, "Fear hath

restraint." Those who possess a copy of Young's Analytical Concordance will see from it (page 995) that the definition of the word *kolasis* is "pruning, restraining, restraint." And the author of the Emphatic Diaglott, after translating *kolasin* in Matt. 25:46 by the words "cutting off," says in a foot note:

"The common version and many modern ones render *kolasin aionion* 'everlasting punishment,' conveying the idea, as generally interpreted, of *basinos*, torment. *Kolasin* in its various forms occurs in only three other places in the New Testament: Acts 4:21; 2 Pet. 2:9; 1 John 4:18. It is derived from *kolazoo*, which signifies, 1. *To cut off*; as lopping off branches of trees, to prune. 2. *To restrain, to repress*. The Greeks write – 'The charioteer restrains [*kalazei*] his fiery steeds.' 3. *To chastise, to punish*. To cut off an individual from life, or from society, or even to restrain, is esteemed as a punishment; hence has arisen this third or metaphorical use of the word. The primary signification has been adopted [in the Diaglott], because it agrees better with the second member of the sentence, thus preserving the force and beauty of the antithesis. The righteous go to *life*, the wicked to the *cutting off* from life, *death*. – 2 Thes. 1:9."

Now consider carefully the text, and note the antithesis, the contrast, shown between the reward of the "sheep" and the reward of the "goats," which the correct idea of *kolasin* gives – the one class goes into everlasting *life*, while the other is everlastingly *cut off* from life – forever *restrained* in death. And this exactly agrees with what the Scriptures everywhere else declare concerning the wages or penalty of wilful sin.

Consider for a moment the words of verse 41: "Depart from me, ye cursed [once redeemed by Christ from the Adamic curse or condemnation to death, but now condemned or cursed, as worthy of the Second death, by the One who redeemed them from the first curse], into everlasting fire [symbol of *everlasting destruction*], prepared for the devil and his messengers [servants]."

Remember that this is the final sentence at the close of the final trial – at the close of the Millennium; and that none will then be *servants* of Satan ignorantly or unwillingly, as so many now are; for the great Deliverer, Christ, will remove outside temptations, and provide assistance toward self-improvement, which will enable all who will to overcome inherent weaknesses and to attain perfection. These "goats," who love evil and serve Satan, are the messengers ("angels") of Satan. For these and Satan, and for no others, God has prepared Second death – the everlasting destruction. Fire will come from God out of heaven and *consume them*. Consuming fire and devouring fire all can appreciate, unless their eyes are holden by false doctrine and prejudice. No one ever knew of a *preserving fire*; and as fire never preserves, but always *consumes*, God uses it as a symbol of utter destruction. – Rev. 20:9.

"THE LAKE OF FIRE AND BRIMSTONE, WHICH IS THE SECOND DEATH."

– REV. 19:20; 20:10,14,15; 21:8. –

"The lake of fire and brimstone" is several times mentioned in the book of Revelation, which all Christians admit to be a book of symbols. However, they generally think and speak of this particular symbol as a literal statement giving strong support to the torment doctrine, notwithstanding the fact that the symbol is clearly defined as meaning the Second death: "And death and hell were cast into *the lake of fire. This is the Second Death,*" etc. (Rev. 20:14.) It is sometimes spoken of as "a lake of fire burning with brimstone" (Rev. 19:20), the element brimstone being [R2608 : page 105] mentioned to intensify the symbol of destruction, the Second death: burning brimstone being one of the most deadly elements known. It is destructive to all forms of life.

The symbolism of this lake of fire is further shown by the fact that the symbolic "beast" and the symbolic "false prophet," and death

and hell [*hades*], as well as the devil and his followers, are destroyed in it. – Rev. 19:20; 20:10,14,15; 21:8.

This destruction or death is called the Second death in contradistinction to the First or Adamic death, and not to signify that everything which goes into it dies a second time. For instance, death (the first or Adamic death), and *hades*, the grave, are to be cast into it; – this work will require the entire Millennium to accomplish it; and in no sense will they ever have been destroyed before. So also "the devil," "the beast," and "the false prophet," will never have been destroyed before.

From the first, or Adamic death, a resurrection has been provided. All that are in their graves shall therefore come forth. The Revelator prophetically declares: "The sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and hell [*hades*, the grave] gave up the dead which were in them....And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books were opened." (Rev. 20:13,12.) It was in view of God's plan for redeeming the race from Adamic death that in both the Old and New Testaments it is called a "*sleep*." In Israel's history of the good and the wicked it is repeatedly stated that they "slept with their fathers." The Apostles used the same symbol, and our Lord also. But no such symbol is used in reference to the Second death. On the contrary, the strongest figures of total and utter ***destruction*** are used to symbolize it; viz., "fire and brimstone;" because that will be a destruction from which there will be no recovery.

Blessed thought! the Adamic death (which claimed the whole race for the sin of their progenitor) shall be forever swallowed up, and shall cease in this Second death into which it is to be cast by the great Redeemer who bought the whole world with the sacrifice of himself. Thus God tells us through the Prophet, "I will ransom them from the power of the grave [*sheol*]. I will redeem them from death....O grave [*sheol*] I will be thy destruction." (Hos. 13:14.) The first or Adamic death shall no longer have liberty or power over men, as it has

had for the past six thousand years; no longer shall any die for Adam's sin. (Rom. 5:12; Jer. 31:29,30; Ezek. 18:2.) Thenceforth the New Covenant, sealed with the precious blood, shall be in force, and only *wilful* transgressions will be counted as sin and punished with the wages of sin – death – the Second death. Thus will the Adamic death be cast into and swallowed up by the Second death.

And *hades* and *sheol* – the dark, secret condition, the grave, which in the present time speaks to us of a *hope* of future life by God's resurrection power in Christ – shall be no more; for the Second death will devour no being fit for life – none for whom there remains a shadow of hope, but such only as, by the unerring Judge, have been fully, impartially and individually found worthy of *destruction*. And Satan, that lying tempter who deceived and ruined the race, and who, with persistent energy and cunning, has sought continually to thwart the purpose of God for our salvation through Christ, and with him all who are of his spirit, "his angels," shall be *destroyed*, and shall never awake from death to trouble the world again. Here he is said to be cast into "the lake of fire," – the Second death; and Paul in Heb. 2:14, referring to the same thing, calls it destruction – "that he might *destroy* death, and him that hath the power of death, that is the devil." And "the beast and the false prophet," the great false systems which have long oppressed and misled nominal Christendom, shall never escape from it. These systems are said to be cast "alive" (that is, while they are still organized and operative) into the lake of fire burning with brimstone. – Rev. 19:20.

The great time of trouble, the Lord's judgment, which will utterly destroy these systems, will undoubtedly cause great social, financial and religious difficulty and pain to all those identified with these deceived and deceiving systems, before they are utterly destroyed. These systems will be cast in, destroyed, at the beginning of the Millennium, while Satan's destruction is reserved until its close, when all the "goats" shall have been separated from the "sheep," and they shall perish with Satan in the Second death, as "his angels,"

messengers or servants. None of those abominable characters among men, who, knowing the truth, yet love unrighteousness – none of "the fearful and unbelieving" – those who will not trust God after all the manifestations of his grace afforded during the Millennial reign of Christ; nor the abominable, who, at heart are murderers and whoremongers [R2609 : page 105] and sorcerers and idolaters and liars: none of these shall escape from the Second death, to defile the earth again. All such, after a full and abundant opportunity for reformation, will be judged unworthy of life, and will be forever cut off in the Second death, symbolized by the lake of fire and brimstone.

Several prophetic pen pictures of the Millennial age and its work, in chapters 20 and 21 of Revelation, clearly show the object and result of that age of trial, in harmony with the remainder of the Scriptures already noted.

Chapter 20, verses 2,4,11, with verses 1,2,10,11 of chapter 21, show the beginning of that Age of Judgment, and the restraining of blinding errors and misleading systems. The "beast" and the "false prophet" are the chief symbols, and represent the organizations or systems of error which, together, constitute "Babylon." This judgment against the "thrones" of the present time, and against "the beast and the false prophet" *systems* follows speedily upon the introduction of this Millennial judgment reign. The thrones of the present dominion of earth will be "cast down," and the dominion transferred to the great Prophet, Priest, King and Judge, "whose right it is." (Compare Dan. 7:14,22; Ezek. 21:27.) Then the systems of error will be speedily judged worthy of *destruction*, "the lake of fire," "the Second death." – Rev. 19:20.

Thus the *second* destruction (or death) begins quite early in the new judgment: it begins with the false systems symbolized by the beast, false prophet, etc., but it will not reach the world of mankind, as individuals, until they have first had full trial, with full opportunity to choose life and live forever. Chapters 20:12,13, and 21:3-7, indicate

the blessed, favorable [R2609 : page 106] trial in which all, both dead and living (except the Church, who, with Jesus Christ, are kings, priests, joint-heirs and judges), will be brought to a full knowledge of the truth, relieved from sorrow and pain, and freed from every blinding error and prejudice, and tried "according to their *works*."

The grand outcome of that trial will be a clean universe. As the Revelator expresses it, "*Every creature* which is in heaven and on the earth...heard I saying, Blessing and honor and glory and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever." But this result will be accomplished in harmony with all God's dealings past and present, which have always recognized man's freedom of will to choose good or evil, life or death.

We cannot doubt then that in the close of the Millennial age, God will again for a "little season" permit evil to triumph, in order thereby to test his creatures (who will by that time have become thoroughly acquainted with both good and evil, and the consequences of each, and will have had his justice and love fully demonstrated to them), that those who finally prefer and choose evil may be cut off – destroyed. Thus God will for all eternity remove all who do not love righteousness and hate iniquity.

We read, regarding that testing, that Satan will endeavor to lead astray all mankind, whose numbers will then be as the sand of the sea for multitude; but that many of them will follow Satan's evil example and choose evil and disobedience, with past experience before them, and unhampered by present weaknesses and blinding influences, we need not suppose. However, when God does not tell us either the number or the proportion of those to be found worthy of life, and those to be judged worthy of death (the Second death), we may not dogmatize. Of one thing we may be confident, God willeth not the death of the wicked, but would that all should turn to him and live; and no one will be destroyed in that "lake of fire and brimstone" (figurative of utter destruction, – *Gehenna*) who is worthy of life, whose living

longer would be a blessing to himself or to others in harmony with righteousness.

That utter and hopeless destruction is intended only for *wilful* evil doers, who, like Satan, in pride of heart and rebellion against God, will love and do evil notwithstanding the manifestations of God's disapproval, and notwithstanding their experience with its penalties. Seemingly the goodness and love of God in the provision of a ransom, a restitution, and another opportunity of life for man, instead of leading all to an abhorrence of sin, will lead some to suppose that God is too loving to cut them off in the Second death, or that if he did so he would give them other, and yet other future opportunities. Building thus upon a supposed weakness in the divine character, these may be led to try to take advantage of the grace (favor) of God, as a license for wilful sin. But they shall go no further, for their folly shall be made manifest. Their utter destruction will prove to the righteous the harmony and perfect balance of Justice, Wisdom, Love and Power in the Divine Ruler.

REVELATION 21:8

The true character of the goat class is portrayed. "The fearful and unbelieving [who will not trust God], the abominable, murderers [brother-haters], whoremongers, sorcerers, idolaters [such as misappropriate and misuse divine favors, who give to self or any other creature or thing that service and honor which belong to God], and all liars" – "whosoever loveth and maketh a lie" [in a word, all who do not love the truth and seek it, and at any cost defend and hold it] "shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone [*Gehenna*, symbol of utter destruction], which is the Second death." Such company would be repulsive to any honest, upright being. It is hard to tolerate them now, when we can sympathize with them, knowing that such dispositions are now in great measure the result of inherited weakness of the flesh. We are moved to a measure of sympathy by the remembrance that in our own cases, often,

when we would do good, evil is present with us. But in the close of the Millennial judgment, when the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall have given every advantage and opportunity of knowledge and ability, this class will be an abhorrence and detestation to all who are in harmony with the King of Glory. And the righteous will be glad when, the trial being ended, the *gift of life* of which these shall have proved themselves unworthy, shall be taken from them, and when the corrupters of the earth, and all their work and influence, shall be destroyed.

THE DEVIL, THE BEAST AND THE FALSE PROPHET TORMENTED.

Rev. 20:9 tells of the destruction of those individuals who join with Satan in the last rebellion; and verse 15 tells of that same destruction in other words, using the symbol "lake of fire." They are *devoured* or *consumed* in fire. This being the case, the torment of verse 10 cannot refer to these *human beings* who are consumed, destroyed. Hence the question narrows down to this, Will Satan and a false prophet and a beast be tortured forever? and does this verse so teach?

We answer in God's own words, "All the wicked will he destroy." Concerning Satan, the arch enemy of God and man, God expressly advises us that he will be destroyed, and not preserved in any sense or condition. – Heb. 2:14.

The beast and false prophet *systems*, which during the Gospel age have deceived and led astray, will be cast into a great, consuming trouble in the close of this Gospel age. The torment of those systems will be *aionion, i.e.*, lasting. It will continue as long as *they* last, until they are utterly consumed. So also the system of error, which will suddenly manifest itself at the end of the Millennial age and lead the "goats" to destruction, will be consumed. (Rev. 20:7-10.) That deceiving system (not specified as to kind, but merely called Satan, after its instigator) will be cast into the same sort of trouble and

destruction, in the end of the Millennial age, as the beast and false prophet systems are now being cast into, in the end of the Gospel age.

Rev. 19:3, speaking of one of these systems, says, "Her *smoke* rose up forever and ever." That is to say, the remembrance ("smoke") of the *destruction* of these systems of deception and error will be lasting, the lesson will never be forgotten – as smoke, which continues to ascend after a destructive fire, is testimony that the fire has done its work. – See also Isa. 34:8-10.

Of Rev. 14:9-11 we remark, incidentally, that all will at once concede that if a *literal* worshiping of a [R2609 : page 107] beast and image were meant in verse 9, then few, if any, in civilized lands are liable to the penalty of verse 11; and if the beast and his image and worship and wine and cup are symbols, so also are the *torments* and *smoke* and *fire* and *brimstone*.

The casting of death and the grave into utter destruction, the Second death, during the Millennial age, is a part of the utter destruction which will include every improper, injurious and useless thing. (Isa. 11:9; Psa. 101:5-8.) The Second death, the sentence of that individual trial, will be final: it will never be destroyed. And let all the lovers of righteousness say, Amen; for to destroy the Second Death, to remove the sentence of that just and impartial trial, would be to let loose again not only Satan, but all who love and practice wrong and deception, and who dishonor the Lord with their evil institutions – to oppose, offend and endeavor to overthrow those who love and desire to serve him and enjoy his favor. We rejoice that there is no danger of this, but that divine justice unites with divine wisdom, love and power, to bring in everlasting righteousness on a permanent basis. [R2610 : page 107]

TURNED INTO HELL.

"The wicked shall be turned into hell, and the nations that forget God." – Psa. 9:17.

This statement of the Lord recorded by the Psalmist we find without any qualification whatever, and we must accept it as a positive fact. If the claims of "Orthodoxy" respecting hell were true, this would be, indeed, a fearful message.

But let us substitute the true meaning of the word *sheol*, and our text will read: "The wicked shall be turned into *the condition of death*, and all the nations that forget God." This we believe; but next, who are the wicked? In one sense all men are wicked, in that all are violators of God's law; but in the fullest sense the wicked are those who, with full knowledge of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the remedy provided for their recovery from its baneful effects, *wilfully* persist in sin.

As yet few – only consecrated believers – have come to a true knowledge of God. The world knows him not, and the nations cannot forget God until they are first brought to a knowledge of him. The consecrated have been enlightened, led of the Spirit through faith to understand the deep and hidden things of God, which reveal the glory of God's character, but which, though expressed in his Word, appear only as foolishness to the world.

As we have hitherto seen, this will not be so in the age to come, for then "The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." (Isa. 11:9.) Much that we now receive by faith will then be demonstrated to the world. When he who has ransomed man from the power of the grave (Hos. 13:14) begins to gather his purchased possessions back from the prison-house of death (Isa. 61:1), when the sleepers are awakened under the genial rays of the Sun of Righteousness, they will not be slow to realize the truth of the hitherto seemingly idle tale, that "Jesus Christ, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man."

We have also seen that the gradual ascent of the King's Highway of Holiness in that age will be possible to all, and comparatively easy, because all the stones – stumbling-blocks, errors, etc. – will have been

gathered out, and straight paths made for their feet. It is in that age that this text applies. Those who ignore the favoring circumstances of that age, and will not be obedient to the righteous Judge or Ruler – Christ – will truly be the wicked. And every loyal subject of the Kingdom of God will approve the righteous judgment which turns such an one *again* into *sheol* – the condition of death. Such an one would be unworthy of life; and, were he permitted to live, his life would be a curse to himself and to the rest of mankind, and a blemish on the work of God.

This will be the *Second Death*, from which there will be no resurrection. Having been ransomed from the grave (*sheol*) by the sacrifice of Christ, if they die again on account of their own sin, "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin." (Heb. 10:26.) "Christ dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him." (Rom. 6:9.) The Second death should be dreaded and shunned by all, since it is to be the end of existence to all those deemed unworthy of life. But in it there can be no suffering. Like Adamic death, it is the extinction of life.

It is because through sin mankind had become subject to death (*sheol, hades*) that Christ Jesus came to deliver us and save us from death. (1 John 3:8; Heb. 2:14.) Death is a cessation of existence, the absence of life. There is no difference between the *conditions* in the Adamic and Second deaths, but there is hope of a release from the first, while from the second there will be no release, no return to life. The first death sentence passed upon all on account of Adam's sin, while the Second death can be incurred only by wilful, individual sin.

That the application of our text belongs to the coming age is evident, for both saints and sinners go into *sheol* or *hades* now. This scripture indicates that, in the time when it applies, *only the wicked* shall go there. And the nations that forget God must be nations that have known him, else they could not forget him; and never yet have the nations been brought to that knowledge, nor will they be until

the coming time, when the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the whole earth, and none shall need to say unto his neighbor, Know thou the Lord, for all shall know him, from the least to the greatest of them. – Isa. 11:9; Jer. 31:34.

The Hebrew word *goi*, rendered "nations" in this verse, is elsewhere used by the same writer and rendered "heathen," "Gentiles" and "people." The thought seems to be, – any who do not become God's covenant people, even though they be not *openly wicked*. The nations (Gentiles, all who under that full knowledge do not become Israelites indeed) who are forgetful or negligent of God's favors enjoyed, and of their duties and obligations to him, shall share the fate of the *wilfully* "wicked," and be cast into the Second death.

In further proof of this, we find that the Hebrew word *shub*, which in our text is translated "turned," signifies *turned back*, as to a previous place or condition. Those referred to in this text have been either in *sheol* or liable to enter it, but being redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, will be brought out of *sheol*. If then they are *wicked*, they, and all who forget God, shall be *turned back* or *returned* to *sheol*. [R2610 : page 108]

DID THE JEWS BELIEVE IN EVERLASTING TORMENT?

Noting that we teach that the doctrine of everlasting torment was engrafted upon the doctrines of the Christian Church during the period of the apostasy, the great falling away which culminated in Papacy, some have inquired whether it does not seem, according to the works of Josephus, that this doctrine was firmly held by the Jews; and, if so, they ask, does it not seem evident that the early Christians, being largely converts from Judaism, brought this doctrine with them, in the very outstart of Christianity?

We answer, No; the doctrine of everlasting torment sprang naturally from the doctrine of human immortality, which as a philosophic question was first promulgated in anything like the

present form by the Platonic school of Grecian philosophy. These first affirmed that each man contained a fragment of deity, and that this would prevent him from ever dying. This foundation laid, it was as easy to describe a place for evil-doers as for well-doers. But to the credit of those heathen philosophers be it recorded that they failed to develop, or at least to manifest, that depth of degradation from benevolence and reason and pity, necessary to paint, by word and pen and brush, such details of horrors and agonies as were soon incorporated into their doctrine, and a belief thereof declared "necessary to salvation" in the professed church of Christ.

To appreciate the case, it is necessary to remember that, when the Christian Church was established, Greece stood at the head of intelligence and civilization. Alexander the Great had conquered the world, and had spread respect for Greece everywhere; and though, from a military point of view, Rome had taken her place, it was otherwise in literature. For centuries, Grecian philosophers and philosophies led the intellectual world, and impregnated and affected everything. It became customary for philosophers and teachers of other theories to claim that their systems and theories were nearly the same as those of the Grecians, and to endeavor to remove differences between their old theories and the popular Grecian views. And some sought to make capital by claiming that their system embraced all the good points of Platonism with others which Plato did not see.

Of this class were the teachers in the Christian Church in the second, third and fourth centuries. Conceding the popularly accepted correctness of the philosophers, they claimed that the same good features of philosophy were found in Christ's teachings, and that he was one of the greatest philosophers, etc. Thus a blending of Platonism and Christianity took place. This became the more pronounced as kings and emperors began to scrutinize religious teachings, and to favor those most likely to awe the people and make them law-abiding. While heathen teachers were truckling to such imperial scrutiny, and teaching an everlasting punishment for those who violated the laws of

the emperors (who ruled as divinely appointed), we cannot suppose otherwise than that the ambitious characters in the church at that time, who were seeking to displace heathenism and to become the dominant religious power instead, would make prominent such doctrines as would in the eyes of the emperors seem to have an equal hold upon the fears and prejudices of the people. And what could be more to the purpose than the doctrine of the endless torment of the refractory?

The same motives evidently operated with Josephus when writing concerning the belief of the Jews. His works should be read as apologies for Judaism, and as efforts to exalt that nation in the eyes of Rome and the world. It should be remembered that the Jews had the reputation of being a very rebellious people, very unwilling to be ruled even by the Caesars. They were hoping, in harmony with God's promises, to become the chief nation. Many rebellious outbreaks had occurred among them, and their peculiar religion, different from all others, came in for its share of blame for favoring too much the spirit of liberty.

Josephus had an object in writing his two principal works, "Antiquities" and "Wars of the Jews." He wrote them in the Greek language while living at Rome, where he was the friend and guest successively of the Roman emperors Vespasian, Titus and Domitian, [R2611 : page 108] and where he was in constant contact with the Grecian philosophers. These books were written for the purpose of showing off the Jewish people, their courage, laws, ethics, etc., to the best advantage before the Grecian philosophers and Roman dignitaries. This object is covertly admitted in his preface to his "Antiquities," in which he says:

"I have undertaken the present work as thinking it will appear to all the Greeks worthy of their study. ...Those that read my book may wonder that my discourse of laws and historical facts contains so much of *philosophy*....However, those that have a mind to know the reasons of everything may find here a very curious philosophical theory."

In a word, as a shrewd man who himself had become imbued with the spirit of the Grecian philosophers then prevailing, Josephus drew from the Law and the Prophets, and from the traditions of the elders and the theories of the various sects of the Jews, all he could find that in the most remote degree would tend to show: –

First, that the Jewish religion was not far behind popular Grecian philosophy; but that *somewhat* analogous theories had been drawn from Moses' Law, and held by some Jews, long before the Grecian philosophers broached them.

Secondly, that it was not their religious ideas which made the Jews as a people hard to control or "rebellious," as all liberty-lovers were esteemed by the Caesars. Hence he attempts to prove, at a time when virtue was esteemed to consist mainly in submission, that Moses' Law "taught first of all that God is the Father and Lord of all things, and bestows a happy life upon those that follow him, but plunges such as do not walk in the paths of virtue into inevitable miseries." And it is in support of this idea, and for such purposes, evidently, that Josephus, after saying: "There are three philosophical sects among the Jews; first, the Pharisees; second, the Sadducees, and third, the Essenes," proceeds to give an account of their three theories; especially detailing any features which resembled Grecian philosophy. And because the last and least, the Essenes, most resembled the doctrines of the Stoics and leading Grecian theories, Josephus devotes nearly ten times as much space to their views as to the views of both Sadducees **[R2611 : page 109]** and Pharisees combined. And yet the Essenes were so insignificant a sect that the New Testament does not even mention them, while Josephus himself admits they were few. Whatever views they held, therefore, on any subject, cannot be claimed as having Jewish sanction, when the vast majority of Jews held contrary opinions. The very fact that our Lord and the apostles did not refer to them is good evidence that the Essenes' philosophy by no means represented the Jewish ideas. This small sect probably grew up later and probably absorbed from Grecian philosophy its ideas

concerning immortality and the everlasting torment of the non-virtuous. It should be remembered that Josephus was not born until three years after our Lord's crucifixion, and that he published his "Wars" A.D. 75 and "Antiquities" A.D. 93 – at a time when he and other Jews, like all the rest of the world, were eagerly swallowing Grecian philosophy and science falsely so called, against which Paul warned the church. – Col. 2:8; 1 Tim. 6:20.

Josephus directed special attention to the Essenes because it suited his object to do so. He admits that the Sadducees, next to the largest body of Jewish people, did not believe in human immortality. And of the Pharisees' views he makes a blind statement, calculated to mislead, as follows: "They also believe that souls have an *immortal vigor* in them [this might be understood to mean that the Pharisees did not believe as the Sadducees that death ended all existence, but believed in a vigor or life beyond the grave – by a resurrection of the dead], and that under the earth there will be rewards and punishments, according as they have lived virtuously or viciously in this life; and that the latter are to be detained in an everlasting *prison* [death – not torture], but that the former [the virtuous] shall have *power to revive and live again.*"

Is it not apparent that Josephus has whittled and stretched the views of the Pharisees, as much as his elastic conscience would allow, to show a harmony between them and the philosophies of Greece? Paul, who had been a Pharisee, contradicts Josephus. While Josephus says they believed "that only the virtuous would revive and *live again* [Does not this imply *a resurrection*, and imply also that the others would not *live* again, but remain *dead*, in the great prison – the tomb?]" Paul, on the contrary, says: "I have hope toward God, which they themselves also allow, that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust." – Acts 24:15.

We have no hesitancy about accepting the testimony of the inspired Apostle Paul, not only in regard to what the Jews believed,

but also as to what he and the early Church believed; and we repeat, that the theory of the everlasting *torment* of the wicked, based upon the theory that the human soul cannot die, is contrary to both the Old and the New Testament teachings, and was introduced among Jews and Christians by Grecian philosophers. Thank God for the purer philosophy of the Scriptures, which teaches that the death of the soul (being) is the penalty of sin (Ezek. 18:20); that all souls condemned through Adam's sin were redeemed by Christ's soul (Isa. 53:10); and that only for wilful, individual sin will any die the Second death – an everlasting *punishment*, but not an everlasting torment.

CHOOSE LIFE THAT YE MAY LIVE.

"I have set before thee this day life and good, death and evil." "I have set before thee life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live." – Deut. 30:15,19.

We come now to the consideration of other Scripture statements in harmony with the conclusions set forth in the preceding articles.

The words here quoted are from Moses to Israel. To appreciate them we must remember that Israel as a people, and all their covenants, sacrifices, etc., had a typical significance.

God knew that they could not obtain life by keeping the Law, no matter how much they would *choose* to do so, because they, like all others of the fallen race, were weak, depraved through the effect of the "sour grape" of sin which Adam had eaten, and which his children had continued to eat. (Jer. 31:29.) Thus, as Paul declares, the Law given to Israel could not give them life because of the weaknesses or depravity of their fallen nature. – Rom. 8:3; Heb. 7:19; 10:1-10.

Nevertheless, God foresaw a benefit to them from even an unsuccessful attempt to live perfectly; namely, that it would develop them, as well as show them the need of the *better* sacrifice (the ransom which our Lord Jesus gave) and a *greater* deliverer than Moses. And

with all this their trial furnished a pattern or shadow of the individual trial insured to the whole world (which Israel typified) and secured by the better sacrifices for sin, which were there prefigured, to be accomplished by the great prophet of whom Moses was but a type.

Thus seeing that the trial for life or death presented to Israel was but typical of the individual trial of the whole world, and its issues of life and death (of eternal life or the Second death), may help some to see that the great thousand-year-day of trial, of which our Lord Jesus has been appointed the Judge, contains the *two* issues, life and death. All will then be called upon to decide, under that most favorable opportunity, for righteousness and life or sin and death, and a choice must be made. And, although there will be rewards and "stripes" according to the deeds of the present life, as well as according to their conduct under that trial (John 3:19; Matt. 10:42; Matt. 11:20-24), the verdict in the end will be in harmony with the choice expressed by the conduct of each during that age of trial.

The second trial, its sentence and its result, are also shown in the words of Moses quoted by Peter (Acts 3:22,23): "A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me. Him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass that every soul [being] which will not hear [obey] that Prophet [and thus choose *life*] shall be ***destroyed*** from among the people." In few words this calls attention to the world's great trial, yet future. It shows the great Prophet or Teacher raised up by God to give a new judgment or trial to the condemned race which he has redeemed from the condemnation which came upon it through its progenitor, Adam. It shows, too, the conditions of eternal life to be righteous obedience, and that with the close of that trial some will be **[R2611 : page 110]** judged worthy of that life, and some worthy of destruction – the Second death.

Our Lord Jesus, having redeemed all by his perfect and precious sacrifice, is the Head of this great Prophet; and during the Gospel age

God has been selecting the members of his body, who, with Christ Jesus, shall be God's agents in judging the world. Together they will be that Great Prophet or Teacher promised. "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" – 1 Cor. 6:2.

The first trial was of mankind only, and hence its penalty or curse, the first death, was only upon man. But the second trial is to be much more comprehensive. It will not only be the trial of fallen and imperfect mankind, but it will include every other thing and principle and being out of harmony with [R2612 : page 110] Jehovah. "God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing."

The "judgment to come" will include the judgment to condemnation of all false *systems* – civil, social and religious. These will be judged, condemned and banished early in the Millennial day, the light of truth causing them to come into disrepute and therefore to pass away. This judgment comes first, in order that the trial of man may proceed unhindered by error, prejudice, etc. It will also include the trial of "the angels which sinned" – those angels "which kept not their first estate" of purity and obedience to God. Thus it is written by the Apostle of the members of the body of the great Prophet and High Priest, who is to be Judge of all – "Know ye not that the saints shall judge angels?" – 1 Cor. 6:3.

This being the case, the condemnation of the Millennial trial (destruction, second death) will cover a wider range of offenders than the penalty or curse for the sin of Adam, which "passed upon *all men*." In a word, the destruction at the close of the trial will be the utter destruction of *every being* and *every thing* which will not glorify God and be of use and blessing to his general creation.
