

WHAT SAY THE SCRIPTURES CONCERNING HELL?

"To the Law and to the Testimony: If they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no Light in them."

– Isa. 8:20.

ACORRECT understanding of this subject has become almost a necessity to Christian steadfastness. For centuries it has been the teaching of "orthodoxy," of all shades, that God, before creating man, had created a great abyss of fire and terrors, capable of containing all the billions of the human family which he purposed to bring into being; that this abyss he had named "hell;" and that all of the promises and threatenings of the Bible were designed to deter as many as possible (a "little flock") from such wrong-doing as would make this awful place their perpetual home.

As knowledge increases and superstitions fade, this monstrous view of the divine arrangement and character is losing its force; and thinking people cannot but disbelieve the legend, which used to be illustrated on the church walls in the highest degree of art and realism, samples of which are still to be seen in Europe. Some now claim that the place is literal, but the fire symbolic, etc., etc., while others repudiate the doctrine of "hell" in every sense and degree. While glad to see superstitions fall, and truer ideas of the great, and wise, and just, and loving Creator prevail, we are alarmed to notice that the tendency with all who abandon this long revered doctrine is toward doubt, skepticism, infidelity.

Why should this be the case, when the mind is merely being delivered from an error, – do you ask? Because Christian people have so long been taught that the foundation for this awful

blasphemy against God's character and government is deep-laid, and firmly fixed, in the Word of God – the Bible – and, consequently, to whatever degree that belief in "hell" is shaken, to that extent their faith in the Bible, as the revelation of the true God, is shaken also; – so that those who have dropped their belief in a "hell," of some kind of endless torment, are often open infidels, and scoffers at God's Word.

Guided by the Lord's providence to a realization that the Bible has been slandered, as well as its divine Author, and that, rightly understood, it teaches nothing on this subject derogatory to God's character nor to an intelligent reason, we will attempt to lay bare the Scripture teaching on this subject, that thereby faith in God and his Word may be re-established, in the hearts of his people, on a better, a reasonable foundation. Indeed, it is our opinion that whoever shall hereby find that his false view rested upon human misconceptions and misinterpretations, will, at the same time, learn to trust hereafter less to his own and other men's imaginings, and, by faith, to grasp more firmly the Word of God, which is able to make wise unto salvation.

That the advocates of the doctrine of eternal torment have little or no faith in it is very manifest from the fact that it has no power over their course of action. While all the denominations of Christendom sustain the doctrine that eternal torment and endless, hopeless despair will constitute the punishment of the wicked, they are mostly quite at ease in allowing the wicked to take their course, while they pursue the even tenor of their way. Chiming bells and pealing organs, artistic choirs, and costly edifices, and upholstered pews, and polished oratory which more and more avoids any reference to this alarming theme, afford rest and entertainment to fashionable congregations that gather on the Lord's day and are known to the world as churches of Christ and representatives of his doctrines. But they seem little concerned about the eternal welfare of the multitudes, or even of themselves

and their own families, though one would naturally presume that with such awful *possibilities* in view they would be almost frantic in their efforts to rescue the perishing.

The plain inference is that they do not believe it. The only class of people that to any degree show their faith in it by their works is the Salvation Army; and these are the subjects of ridicule from almost all other Christians, because they are somewhat consistent with their belief. Yet their peculiar, and often absurd, methods, so strikingly in contrast with those of the Lord of whom it was written, "He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street" (Isa. 42:2), are very mild compared with what might be expected if they were fully convinced of the doctrine. We cannot imagine how sincere believers of this terrible doctrine go from day to day about the ordinary affairs of life, or meet quietly in elegance every Sunday to hear an essay from the pulpit on the peculiar subjects often advertised. Could they do so while really believing all the time that fellow mortals are dying at the rate of one hundred a minute, and entering

"That lone land of deep despair," where
"No God regards their bitter prayer"?

If they really *believed* this few saints could complacently sit there and think of those hurrying every moment into that awful state described by that good, well-meaning, but greatly deluded man, Isaac Watts (whose own heart was immeasurably warmer and larger than that he ascribed to the great Jehovah), when he wrote the hymn –

"Tempests of angry fire shall roll
To blast the rebel worm,
And beat upon the naked soul
In one eternal storm."

People often become frantic with grief when friends have been caught in some terrible catastrophe, as a fire, or a wreck, though they know they will soon be relieved by death; yet they pretend to believe that God is less loving than themselves, and that he can look with indifference, if not with delight, at billions of his creatures enduring an eternity of torture far more terrible, which he prepares for them and prevents any escape from forever. Not only so, but they expect that they will get literally into Abraham's bosom, and will then look across the gulf and see and hear the agonies of the multitudes (some of whom they now love and weep over); and they imagine that they will be so changed, and become so like their present idea of God, so hardened against all pity, and so barren of love and sympathy, that they will delight in such a God and in such a plan.

It is wonderful that otherwise sensible men and women, who love their fellows, and who establish hospitals, orphanages, asylums, and societies for the prevention of cruelty even to the brute creation, are so unbalanced mentally that they can believe and subscribe **[R2759 : page 26]** to such a doctrine, and yet be so indifferent about investigating its authority!

Only one exception can we think of – those who hold the ultra-Calvinistic doctrine; who believe that God has *decreed it thus*, that all the efforts they could put forth could not alter the result with a single person; and that all the prayers they could offer would not change one iota of the awful plan they believe God has marked out for his and their eternal pleasure. These indeed could sit still, so far as effort for their fellows is concerned: but why sing the praises of such a scheme for the damnation of their neighbors whom God has told them to love as themselves?

Why not rather begin to doubt this "doctrine of devils," this blasphemy against the great God, hatched in the "dark ages,"

when a crafty priesthood taught that it is right to do evil that good may result?

The doctrine of eternal torment was undoubtedly introduced by Papacy to induce pagans to join her and support her system. It flourished at the same time that "bull fights" and gladiatorial contests were the public amusements most enjoyed; when the Crusades were called "holy wars," and when men and women were called "heretics" and were often slaughtered for thinking or speaking contrary to the teachings of the Papacy; at a time when the sun of gospel truth was obscure; when the Word of God had fallen into disuse and was prohibited to be read by any but the clergy, whose love of their neighbors was often shown in torturing "heretics" to induce them to recant and deny their faith and their Bibles – to save them, if possible, they explained, from the more awful future of "heretics," – eternal torture. They did not borrow this doctrine from the heathen, for no heathen people in the world have a doctrine so cruel, so fiendish and so unjust. Find it, whoever can, and show it up in all its blackness, that, if possible, it may be shown that the essence of barbarism, malice, hate and ungodliness has not been exclusively appropriated by those whom God has most highly favored with light from every quarter, and to whom he has committed the only oracle – his Word. Oh! the shame and confusion that will cover the faces of many, even good men, who verily thought that they did God service while propagating this blasphemous doctrine, when they awake in the resurrection, to learn of the love and justice of God, and when they come to know that the Bible does not teach this God-dishonoring, love-extinguishing, truth-beclouding, saint-hindering, sinner-hardening, "damnable heresy" of eternal torment. – 2 Pet. 2:1.

But we repeat that, in the light and moral development of this day, sensible people do not believe this doctrine. However, since they think that the Bible teaches it, every step they progress

in real intelligence and brotherly kindness, which hinders belief in eternal torment, is in most cases a step away from God's word, which is falsely accused of being the authority for this teaching. Hence the second crop of evil fruit, which the devil's engraftment of this error is producing, is skepticism. The intelligent, honest thinkers are thus driven from the Bible into vain philosophies and sciences, falsely so-called, and into infidelity. Nor do the "worldly" really believe this doctrine, nor is it a restraint to crime, for convicts and the lower classes are the firmest believers in it.

But, says one, Has not the error done some good? Have not many been brought into the churches by the preaching of this doctrine in the past?

No error, we answer, ever did real good, but always harm. Those whom error brings into a church, and whom the truth would not move, are an injury to the church. The thousands terrorized, but not at heart converted, which this doctrine forced into Papacy, and which swelled her numbers and her wealth, diluted what little truth was held before, and mingled it with their unholy sentiments and errors so that, to meet the changed condition of things, the "clergy" found it needful to add error to error, and resorted to methods, forms, etc., not taught in the Scriptures and useless to the truly converted whom the truth controls. Among these were pictures, images, beads, vestments, candles, grand cathedrals, altars, etc., to help the unconverted heathen to a form of godliness more nearly corresponding to their former heathen worship, but lacking all the power of vital godliness.

The heathen were not benefited, for they were still heathen in God's sight, but deluded into aping what they did not understand or do from the heart. They were added "tares" to choke the "wheat," without being profited themselves. The Lord tells who sowed the seed of this enormous crop. (Matt. 13:39).

The same is true of those who assume the name "Christian" today, who are not really at heart converted by the truth, but merely frightened by the error, or allured by promised earthly advantages of a social or business kind. Such add nothing to the true Church: by their ideas and manners they become stumbling blocks to the truly consecrated, and by their inability to digest the truth, the real food of the saints, they lead even the few true pastors to defraud the true "sheep" in order to satisfy the demands of these "goats" for something pleasing to their unconverted tastes. No: in no way has this error accomplished good except in the sense that God is able to make even the wrath of man to praise him. So also he will overrule this evil thing eventually to serve his purposes. When by and by all men (during the Millennium) shall come to see through this great deception by which Satan has blinded the world to God's true character, it will perhaps awaken in them a warmer, stronger love for God.

Seeing, then, the unreasonableness of man's view, let us lay aside human opinions and theories and come to the Word of God, the only authority on the subject, remembering that

"God is His own interpreter, and He will make it plain."

"HELL," AS AN ENGLISH WORD.

In the first place bear in mind that the Old Testament Scriptures were written in the Hebrew language, and the New Testament in the Greek. The word "hell" is an English word sometimes selected by the translators of the English Bible to express the sense of the Hebrew word *sheol* and the Greek words *hades*, *tartaroo* and *gehenna*, – sometimes rendered "grave" and "pit."

The word "hell" in old English usage, before Papal theologians picked it up and gave it a new and special significance to suit their own purposes, simply meant to *conceal*,

to *hide*, to *cover*; hence the *concealed*, [R2759 : page 27] *hidden* or *covered place*. In old English literature records may be found of the *helling* of potatoes – putting potatoes into pits; and of the *helling* of a house – covering or thatching it. The word *hell* was therefore properly used synonymously with the words "grave" and "pit," to translate the words *sheol* and *hades* as signifying the secret or hidden condition of death. However, the same spirit which was willing to twist the word to terrorize the ignorant is willing still to perpetuate the error; – presumably saying – "Let us do evil that good may follow."

If the translators of the Revised Version Bible had been thoroughly disentangled from the Papal error, and thoroughly honest, they would have done more to help the English student than merely to substitute the Hebrew word *sheol* and the Greek word *hades* as they have done. They should have translated the words. But they were evidently afraid to tell the truth, and ashamed to tell the lie; and so gave us *sheol* and *hades* untranslated, and permitted the inference that these words mean the same as the word "hell" has become perverted to mean. Their course, while it for a time shields themselves, dishonors God and the Bible, which the common people still suppose teaches a "hell" of torment in the words *sheol* and *hades*. Yet anyone can see that if it was proper to translate the word *sheol* thirty-one times "grave" and three times "pit," it could not have been improper to have so translated it in every other instance.

A peculiarity to be observed in comparing these cases, as we will do shortly, is that in those texts where the torment idea would be an absurdity the translators of the King James version have used the words "grave" or "pit"; while in all other cases they have used the word "hell;" and the reader, long schooled in the Papal idea of torment, reads the word "hell" and thinks of it as signifying a place of torment, instead of the grave, the hidden or

covered place or condition. For example, compare Job 14:13 with Psa. 86:13. The former reads, – "Oh, that thou wouldst hide me in the grave [sheol] etc.," while the latter reads, – "Thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest *hell* [sheol]." The Hebrew word being the same in both cases, there is no reason why the same word "grave" should not be used in both. But how absurd it would have been for Job to have prayed to God to hide him in a hell of eternal torture! The English reader would have asked questions and the secret would have gotten out speedily.

While the translators of the Reformation times are somewhat excusable for their mental bias in this matter, as they were just breaking away from the old Papal system, our modern translators, specially those of the recent Revised Version, are not entitled to any such consideration. Theological professors and pastors of congregations consider that they are justified in following the course of the revisers in not explaining the meaning of either the Hebrew or Greek words *sheol* or *hades* and by their use of the words they also give their confiding flocks to understand that a place of torture, a lake of fire, is meant. While attributing to the ignorant only the best of motives, it is manifestly only duplicity and cowardice which induces educated men, who know the truth on this subject, to prefer to continue to teach the error inferentially.

But not all ministers know of the errors of the translators, and deliberately cover and hide those errors from the people. Many, indeed, do not know of them, having merely accepted, without investigation, the theories of their seminary professors. It is the professors and learned ones who are most blameworthy. These have kept back the truth about "hell" for several reasons. First, there is evidently a sort of understanding or etiquette among them, that if they wish to maintain their standing in the "profession" they "must not tell tales out of school;" *i.e.*, they must not divulge professional secrets to the "common people,"

the "laity." Second, they all fear that to let it be known that they have been teaching an unscriptural doctrine for years would break down the popular respect and reverence for the "clergy," the denominations and the theological schools, and unsettle confidence in their wisdom. And, oh, how much depends upon confidence and reverence for men, when God's Word is so generally ignored! Third, they know that many of the members of their sects are not constrained by "the love of Christ" (2 Cor. 5:14), but merely by the fear of hell, and they see clearly, therefore, that to let the truth be known now would soon cut loose the names and the dollars of many in their flocks; and this, to those who "desire to make a fair show in the flesh" (Gal. 6:12) would seem to be a great calamity.

But what will be the judgment of God, whose character and plan are traduced by the blasphemous doctrine which these untranslated words help to support? Will he commend these unfaithful servants? Will he justify their course? Will the Chief Shepherd call these his beloved friends, and make known to them his further plans (John 15:15) that they may misrepresent them also to preserve their own dignity and reverence? Will he continue to send forth "things new and old," "meat in due season," to the household of faith, by the hand of the unfaithful servants? No, such shall not continue to be his mouthpieces or to shepherd his flock. (Ezek. 34:9,10.) He will choose instead, as at the first advent, from among the laity – "the common people" – mouthpieces, and will give them words which none of the chief priests shall be able to gainsay or resist. (Luke 21:15.) And, as foretold, "the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid." – Isa. 29:9-19.

"HELL" IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

The word "hell" occurs thirty-one times in the Old Testament, and in every instance it is *sheol* in the Hebrew. It does

not mean a lake of fire and brimstone, nor anything at all resembling that thought: *not in the slightest degree!* Quite the reverse: instead of a place of blazing fire it is described in the context as a state of "darkness" (Job 10:21); instead of a place where shrieks and groans are heard, it is described in the context as a place of "silence" (Psa. 115:17); instead of representing in any sense pain and suffering, or remorse, the context describes it as a place or condition of forgetfulness. (Psa. 88:11,12.) "There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, in the *grave* [*sheol*] whither thou goest." – Eccles. 9:10.

The meaning of *sheol* is "*the hidden state*," as applied to man's condition in death, in and beyond which all is hidden, except to the eye of faith; hence, [**R2759 : page 28**] by proper and close association, the word was often used in the sense of *grave* – the *tomb*, the hidden place, or place beyond which only those who have the enlightened eye of the understanding can see resurrection, restitution of being. And be it particularly noted that this identical word *sheol* is translated "grave" thirty-one times and "pit" three times in our common version by the *same translators* – more times than it is translated "hell"; and twice, where it is translated "hell," it seemed so absurd, according to the present accepted meaning of the English word "hell," that scholars have felt it necessary to explain in the margin of modern Bibles, that it means *grave*. (Isa. 14:9 and Jonah 2:2.) In the latter case, the hidden state, or grave, was the belly of the fish in which Jonah was buried alive, and from which he cried to God.

ALL TEXTS IN WHICH "SHEOL" IS TRANSLATED "HELL."

(1) Amos 9:2. – "Though they dig into *hell*, thence shall mine hand take them." [A figurative expression; but certainly pits of the earth are the only hells men can *dig* into.]

(2) Psa. 16:10. – "Thou wilt not leave my soul in *hell*; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." [This refers to our Lord's three days in the tomb. – Acts 2:31; 3:15.]

(3,4) Psa. 18:5 and 2 Sam. 22:6 – margin. – "The cords of *hell* compassed me about." [A figure in which trouble is represented as hastening one to the tomb.]

(5) Psa. 55:15. – "Let them go down quick into *hell*" – margin, "the grave."

(6) Psa. 9:17. – "The wicked shall be turned into *hell*, and all the nations that forget God." This text will be treated later, under a separate heading.

(7) Psa. 86:13. – "Thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest *hell*" – margin, "the grave."

(8) Psa. 116:3. – "The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of *hell* gat hold upon me." [Sickness and trouble are the figurative hands of the grave to grasp us.]

(9) Psa. 139:8. – "If I make my bed in *hell*, behold, thou art there." [God's power is unlimited: even over those in the tomb he can and will exert it and bring forth all that are in the graves. – John 5:28.]

(10) Deut. 32:22. – "For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn into the lowest *hell*." [A figurative representation of the destruction, the utter ruin, of Israel as a nation – "wrath to the uttermost," as the Apostle called it, God's anger burning that nation to the "lowest *deep*," as Leeser here translates the word *sheol*. – 1 Thes. 2:16.]

(11) Job 11:8. – "It [God's wisdom] is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than *hell* [than any pit]; what canst thou know?"

(12) Job 26:6. – "**Hell** [the tomb] is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering."

(13) Prov. 5:5. – "Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on **hell** [*i.e.*, lead to the grave]."

(14) Prov. 7:27. – "Her house is the way to **hell** [the grave], going down to the chambers of death."

(15) Prov. 9:18. – "He knoweth not that the dead are there, and that her guests are in the depths of **hell**." [Here the harlot's guests are represented as dead, diseased or dying, and many of the victims of sensuality in premature graves from diseases which also hurry off their posterity to the tomb.]

(16) Prov. 15:11. – "**Hell** and destruction are before the Lord." [Here the **grave** is associated with **destruction** and not with a life of torment.]

(17) Prov. 15:24. – "The path of life (leadeth) upward for the wise, that he may depart from **hell** beneath." [This illustrates the hope of resurrection from the tomb.]

(18) Prov. 23:14. – "Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from **hell**" [*i.e.*, wise correction will save a child from vicious ways which lead to premature death, and may also possibly prepare him to escape the "**Second Death**"].

(19) Prov. 27:20. – "**Hell** [the grave] and destruction are never full: so the eyes of man are never satisfied."

(20) Isa. 5:14. – "Therefore **hell** hath enlarged herself and opened her mouth without measure." [Here the **grave** is a symbol of **destruction**.]

(21,22) Isa. 14:9,15. – "**Hell** [margin, grave] from beneath is moved for thee, to meet thee at thy coming." ... "Thou shalt be brought down to **hell**" [the grave – so rendered in verse 11].

(23) Isa. 57:9. – "And didst debase thyself even unto **hell.**" [Here figurative of **deep** degradation.]

(24,25) Ezek. 31:15-17. – "In the day when he went down to the grave,...I made the nations to shake at the sound of his fall, when I cast him down to **hell** with them that descend into the pit.... They also went down into **hell** with him, unto them that be slain with the sword." [Figurative and prophetic description of the fall of Babylon into destruction, silence, the grave.]

(26) Ezek. 32:21. – "The strong among the mighty shall speak to him out of the midst of **hell** with them that help him." [A continuation of the same figure representing Egypt's overthrow as a nation to join Babylon in **destruction** – buried.]

(27) Ezek. 32:27. – "And they shall not lie with the mighty that are fallen of the uncircumcised, which are gone down to **hell** with their weapons of war: and they have laid their swords under their heads; but their iniquities shall be upon their bones, though they were the terror of the mighty in the land of the living." [The grave is the only "hell" where fallen ones are buried and lie with their weapons of war under their heads.]

(28) Hab. 2:5. – "Who enlargeth his desire as **hell** [the grave] and as death, and cannot be satisfied."

(29) Jonah 2:1,2. – "Then Jonah prayed unto the Lord his God, out of the fish's belly, and said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the Lord, and he heard me; out of the belly of **hell** cried I, and thou heardest my voice." [The belly of the fish was for a time his **grave** – see margin.]

(30,31) Isa. 28:15-18. – "Because ye have said, We have made a covenant with death, and with hell [the grave] are we at agreement; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, it shall not come unto us, for we have made lies our refuge, and under falsehood have we hid ourselves: Therefore, saith the Lord, ...Your covenant with death shall be disannulled, and your agreement with *hell* [the grave] shall not stand." [God thus declares that the present prevalent [R2759 : page 29] idea, by which death and the grave are represented as friends, rather than enemies, shall cease; and men shall learn that death is the *wages of sin*, now and that it is in Satan's power (Rom. 6:23; Heb. 2:14,) and not an angel sent by God.]

ALL OTHER TEXTS WHERE "SHEOL" OCCURS – RENDERED "GRAVE" AND "PIT."

Gen. 37:35. – "I will go down into the *grave* unto my son."

Gen. 42:38. – "Then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the *grave*." [See also the same expression in 44:29,31. The translators did not like to send God's servant, Jacob, to *hell* simply because his sons were evil.]

1 Sam. 2:6. – "The Lord killeth, and maketh alive: he bringeth down to the *grave*, and bringeth up."

1 Kings 2:6,9. – "Let not his hoar head go down to the *grave* with peace....His hoar head bring thou down to the *grave* with blood."

Job 7:9. – "He that goeth down to the *grave*."

Job 14:13. – "Oh, that thou wouldst hide me in the *grave*, that thou wouldst keep me secret until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldst appoint me a set time, and remember me [resurrect me]!"

Job 17:13. – "If I wait, the **grave** is mine house: I have made my bed in the darkness." [Job waits for resurrection – "in the morning."]

Job 17:16. – "They shall go down to the bars of the **pit** [grave], when our rest together is in the dust."

Job 21:13. – "They spend their days in mirth, and in a moment go down to the **grave.**"

Job 24:19,20. – "Drought and heat consume the snow waters: so doth the **grave** those which have sinned." [All have sinned, hence "Death passed upon all men," and all go down to the **grave**. But all have been redeemed by "the precious blood of Christ"; hence all shall be awakened and come forth again in God's due time – "in the morning," Rom. 5:12,18,19.]

Psa. 6:5. – "In death there is no remembrance of thee; in the **grave** who shall give thee thanks?"

Psa. 30:3. – "O Lord, thou hast brought up my soul from the **grave**: thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit." [This passage expresses gratitude for recovery from danger of death.]

Psa. 31:17. – "Let the wicked be ashamed; let them be silent in the **grave.**"

Psa. 49:14,15, margin. – "Like sheep they are laid in the **grave**: death shall feed on them; and the upright [the saints – Dan. 7:27] shall have dominion over them in the morning [the Millennial morning]; and their beauty shall consume, the **grave** being an habitation to every one of them. But God will redeem my soul from the power of the **grave.**"

Psa. 88:3. – "My life draweth nigh unto the **grave.**"

Psa. 89:48. – "Shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the *grave*?"

Psa. 141:7. – "Our bones are scattered at the *grave's* mouth."

Prov. 1:12. – "Let us swallow them up alive as the *grave*: and whole, as those that go down into the pit" [*i.e.*, as of an earthquake, as in Num. 16:30-33].

Prov. 30:15,16. – "Four things say not, it is enough: the *grave*," etc.

Eccl. 9:10. – "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the *grave*, whither thou goest."

Song of Solomon 8:6. – "Jealousy is cruel as the *grave*."

Isa. 14:11. – "Thy pomp is brought down to the *grave*."

Isa. 38:10. – "I shall go to the gates of the *grave*: I am deprived of the residue of my years."

Isa. 38:18. – "The *grave* cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee: they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth."

Num. 16:30-33. – "If...they go down quick into the *pit*, then shall ye understand....The ground clave asunder that was under them, and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods. They and all that appertained to them went down alive into the *pit*, and the earth closed upon them: and they perished from among the congregation."

Ezek. 31:15. – "In the day when he went down to the *grave*."

Hosea 13:14. – "I will ransom them from the power of the *grave*; I will redeem them from death. O death, I will be thy plagues; O *grave*, I will be thy destruction. Repentance shall be hid from mine eyes." [The Lord did not ransom any from a place of fire and torment, for there is no such place; but he did ransom all mankind from the *grave*, from *death*, the penalty brought upon all by Adam's sin, as this verse declares.]

The above list includes every instance of the use of the English word "hell" and the Hebrew word *sheol* in the Old Testament. From this examination it must be evident to all readers that God's revelations for four thousand years contain not a single hint of a "hell," such as the word is now understood to signify.

"HELL" IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

In the New Testament, the Greek word *hades* corresponds exactly to the Hebrew word *sheol*. As proof see the quotations of the Apostles from the Old Testament, in which they render it *hades*. For instance, Acts 2:27, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in *hades*," is a quotation from Psa. 16:10, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in *sheol*." And in 1 Cor. 15:54,55, "Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave [*hades*], where is thy victory?" is an allusion to Isa. 25:8, "He will swallow up death in victory," and to Hos. 13:14, "O death, I will be thy plagues; O *sheol*, I will be thy destruction."

"HELL" FROM THE GREEK WORD "HADES."

Matt. 11:23. – "And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to *hell*;" Luke 10:15: "Shall be thrust down to *hell*." [In privileges of knowledge and opportunity the city was highly favored, or, figuratively, "exalted unto heaven;" but because of misuse of God's favors, it would be debased, or, figuratively, cast down to *hades*, overthrown,

destroyed. It is now so thoroughly *buried* in oblivion, that even the site where [R2759 : page 30] it stood is a matter of dispute. Capernaum is certainly *destroyed*, thrust down to *hades*.]

Luke 16:23. – "In *hell* he lifted up his eyes, being in torments." [A parabolic figure explained further along, under a separate heading.]

Rev. 6:8. – "And behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and *Hell* followed with him." [Symbol of destruction or the *grave*.]

Matt. 16:18. – "Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of *hell* shall not prevail against it." [Although bitter and relentless persecution, even unto death, should afflict the Church during the Gospel age, it should never prevail to her utter extermination; and eventually, by her resurrection, accomplished by her Lord, the Church will prevail over *hades* – the *tomb*.]

CHRIST IN "HELL" (HADES) AND RESURRECTED FROM "HELL" (HADES). – ACTS 2:1,14,22-31.

"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, ...Peter...lifted up his voice and said,...Ye men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you,...being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God ['He was delivered for our offenses'], ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains [or bands] of death, because it was not possible that he should be holden of it [for the Word of Jehovah had previously declared his resurrection]; for David speaketh concerning him [personating or speaking for him], 'I [Christ] foresaw the Lord [Jehovah] always before my face; for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved. Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope, because thou wilt not

leave my soul in *hell* [*hades*, the tomb, the state of death], neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou [Jehovah] hast made known to me [Christ] the ways of life." Here our Lord, as personified by the prophet David, expresses his faith in Jehovah's promise of a resurrection and in the full and glorious accomplishment of Jehovah's plan through him, and rejoices in the prospect.

Peter then proceeds, saying – "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulcher is with us unto this day [so that this prophecy could not have referred to himself personally; for David's soul was left in "hell" – [*hades*, the tomb, the state of death – and his flesh did see corruption]: Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he, seeing this before [prophetically], spake of the resurrection of Christ [out of "hell" – *hades*, the tomb – to which he must go for our offenses], that his soul was *not left in hell* [*hades* – the death state], neither his flesh did see corruption." Thus Peter presents a strong, logical argument, based on the words of the prophet David – showing first, that Christ, who was delivered by God for our offenses, went to "hell," the grave, the condition of death, destruction (Psa. 16:10;) and, second, that according to promise he had been delivered from *hell*, the grave, death, destruction, by a *resurrection* – a raising up to life; being created again, the same identical being, yet more glorious, and exalted even to "the express image of the Father's person." (Heb. 1:3.) And now "this same Jesus" (Acts 2:36), in his subsequent revelation to the Church, declares –

Rev. 1:18. – "I am he that liveth, and was dead, and, behold, I am alive forevermore, Amen; and have the keys of *hell* [*hades*, the grave] and of death."

Amen! Amen! our hearts respond; for in his resurrection we see the glorious outcome of the whole plan of Jehovah to be accomplished through the power of the Resurrected One who now holds the keys of the tomb and of death and in due time will release all the prisoners who are, therefore, called the "prisoners of hope." (Zech. 9:12; Luke 4:18.) No craft or cunning can by any possible device wrest these Scriptures *entire* and pervert them to the support of that monstrous and blasphemous Papal tradition of eternal torment. Had that been our penalty, Christ, to be our vicarious sacrifice, must still, and to all eternity, endure such torment, which no one will claim. But death was our penalty, and "Christ died for our sins," and "also for the sins of the whole world." – 1 Cor. 15:3; 1 John 2:2.

Rev. 20:13,14. – "And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and *hell* [the grave] delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged, every man, according to their works. And death and *hell* [the grave] were cast into the lake of fire: this is the Second Death." [The lake of fire is the *symbol* of final and everlasting destruction. Death and *hell* [the grave] both go into it. There shall be no more death; "the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." – 1 Cor. 15:26; Rev. 21:4.]

OTHER OCCURRENCES OF THE WORD "HELL."

Having examined the word *sheol*, the only word in the Old Testament rendered "hell," and the word *hades*, most frequently in the New Testament rendered "hell" we now notice every remaining instance in Scripture of the English word "hell." In the New Testament two other words are rendered "hell;" namely, *gehenna* and *tartaroo*, which we will consider in the order named.

"GEHENNA" RENDERED "HELL."

This word occurs in the following passages – in all twelve times: – Matt. 5:22,29,30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15,33; Mark 9:43-47; Luke 12:5; Jas. 3:6. It is the Grecian mode of spelling the Hebrew words which are translated "Valley of Hinnom." This valley lay just outside the city of Jerusalem, and served the purpose of sewer and garbage burner to that city. The offal, garbage, etc., were emptied there, and fires were kept continually burning to *consume* utterly all things deposited therein, brimstone being added to assist combustion and insure complete destruction. But no living thing was ever permitted to be cast into *Gehenna*. The Jews were not allowed to *torture* any creature.

When we consider that in the people of Israel God was giving us object lessons illustrating his dealings and plans, present and future, we should expect [R2759 : page 31] that this Valley of Hinnom, or *Gehenna*, would also play its part in illustrating things future. We know that Israel's priesthood and temple illustrated the Royal Priesthood, the Christian Church as it will be, the true temple of God; and we know that their chief city was a figure of the New Jerusalem, the seat of kingdom power and center of authority – the city (government) of the Great King, Immanuel. We remember, too, that Christ's government is represented in the book of Revelation (Rev. 21:10-27) under the figure of a city – the New Jerusalem. There, after describing the class permitted to enter the privileges and blessings of that Kingdom – the honorable and glorious, and all who have right to the trees of life – we find it also declared that there shall *not enter into it* anything that defileth, or that worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; but only such as the Lamb shall write as worthy of life. This city, which thus will represent the entire saved world in the end of the Millennium, was typified in the earthly city, Jerusalem; and the defiling, the abominable, etc., the class unworthy of life everlasting, who do not enter in, were

represented by the refuse and the filthy, lifeless carcasses cast into *Gehenna* outside the city, – whose utter destruction was thus symbolized – the Second Death. Accordingly, we find it stated that those not found worthy of life are to be cast into the "lake of fire" (Rev. 20:15) – fire here, as everywhere, being used as a symbol of *destruction*, and the symbol, lake of fire, being drawn from this same *Gehenna*, or Valley of Hinnom.

Therefore, while *Gehenna* served a useful purpose to the city of Jerusalem as a place for garbage burning, it, like the city itself, was typical, and illustrated the future dealings of God in refusing and committing to destruction all the impure elements, thus preventing them from defiling the holy city, the New Jerusalem, after the trial of the Millennial age of judgment shall have fully proved them and separated with unerring accuracy the "sheep" from the "goats."

So, then, *Gehenna* was a type or illustration of the Second Death – final and complete destruction, from which there can be no recovery; for after that, "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins," but only "fiery indignation which shall *devour* the adversaries." – Heb. 10:26.

Let us remember that Israel, for the purpose of being used as types of God's future dealing with the race, was typically treated as though the ransom had been given before they left Egypt, though only a typical lamb had been slain. When Jerusalem was built, and the Temple – representative of the true temple, the Church, and the true kingdom as it will be established by Christ in the Millennium – that people typified the world in the Millennial age. Their priests represented the glorified Royal Priesthood, and their Law and its demands of perfect obedience represented the law and conditions under the New Covenant, to be brought into operation for the blessing of all the obedient, and for the condemnation of all who, when granted fullest

opportunity, will not heartily submit to the righteous ruling and laws of the Great King.

Seeing then, that Israel's polity, condition, etc., prefigured those of the world in the coming age, how appropriate that we should find the valley or abyss, *Gehenna*, a figure of the Second Death, the utter destruction in the coming age of all that is unworthy of preservation; and how aptly, too, is the symbol, "lake of fire burning with brimstone" (Rev. 19:20), drawn from this same *Gehenna*, or Valley of Hinnom, burning continually with brimstone. The expression, "burning with brimstone," adds force to the symbol, "fire," to express the utter and irrevocable destructiveness of the Second Death; for burning brimstone is the most deadly agent known. How reasonable, too, to expect that Israel would have courts and judges resembling or prefiguring the judgments of the next age; and that the sentence of those (figurative) courts of that (figurative) people under those (figurative) laws to that (figurative) abyss, outside that (figurative) city, would largely correspond to the (real) sentences of the (real) court and judges in the next age. If these points are kept in mind, they will greatly assist us in understanding the words of our Lord in reference to *Gehenna*; for though the literal valley just at hand was named and referred to, yet his words carry with them lessons concerning the future age and the antitypical *Gehenna* – the Second Death.

SHALL BE IN DANGER OF GEHENNA.

MATTHEW 5:21,22.

"Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, 'Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be amenable to the judges:' but I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause *shall* [future – under the regulations of the real Kingdom] be amenable to the judges; and whosoever shall say to his brother, 'Raca' [villain], shall be in danger of the

high council; but whosoever shall say, 'Thou fool,' shall be in danger of *hell [Gehenna] fire.*"

To understand these references to council and judges and *Gehenna*, all should know something of Jewish regulations. The "Court of Judges" consisted of seven men (or twenty-three, – the number is in dispute), and had power to judge some classes of crimes. The High Council, or Sanhedrin, consisted of seventy-one men of recognized learning and ability. This constituted the highest court of the Jews, and its supervision was over the gravest offenses. The most serious sentence was *death*; but certain very obnoxious criminals were subjected to an indignity after death, being refused burial and cast with the carcasses of dogs, the city refuse, etc., into *Gehenna*, there to be consumed. The object of this burning in *Gehenna* was to make the crime and the criminal detestable in the eyes of the people, and signified that the culprit was a hopeless case. It must be remembered that Israel hoped for a resurrection from the tomb, and hence they were particular in caring for the corpses of their dead. Not realizing fully God's power, they apparently thought he needed their assistance to that extent. (Exod. 13:19; Heb. 11:22; Acts 7:15,16.) Hence the destruction of the body in *Gehenna* after death (figuratively) implied the loss of hope of future life by a resurrection. Thus to such *Gehenna* represented the Second Death in the same figurative way that they as a people represented or illustrated a future order of things under the New Covenant.

Notice that our Lord, in the above words, pointed out to them that their construction of the Law, severe though it was, was far below the real import [**R2759 : page 32**] of that Law, as it shall be interpreted under the real Kingdom and Judges, which theirs only typified. He shows that the command of their Law, "Thou shalt not kill," reached much farther than they supposed; that *malicious anger* and vituperation "shall be" considered a violation of God's Law, under the New Covenant; and that such

as, under the favorable conditions of that new age, will not reform so thoroughly as to fully observe God's Law will be counted worthy of that which the *Gehenna* near them typified – the Second Death. However, the strict severity of that Law will be enforced only in proportion as the discipline, advantages and assistance of that age, enabling each to comply with its laws, shall be disregarded.

The same thought is continued in

MATTHEW 5:22-30.

"Ye have heard," etc., "but I say unto you...it is better for thee to lose one of thy members, than that thy whole body should be cast into *Gehenna*."

Here again the operation of God's Law under the New Covenant is contrasted with its operation under the Old or Jewish Covenant, and the lesson of self-control is urged by the statement that it is far more profitable that men should refuse to gratify depraved desires (though they be dear to them as a right eye, and apparently indispensable as a right hand) than that they should gratify these, and lose, in the Second Death, the future life provided through the atonement for all who will return to perfection, holiness and God.

These expressions of our Lord not only serve to show us the *perfection* (Rom. 7:12) of God's Law, and how fully it will be defined and enforced in the Millennium, but they served as a lesson to the Jews also, who previously saw through Moses' commands only the crude exterior of the Law of God. Since they found it difficult in their fallen state to keep inviolate even the surface significance of the Law, they must now see the impossibility of their keeping the finer meaning of the Law revealed by Christ. Had they understood and received his teaching fully, they would have cried out, Alas! if God judges us

thus, by the very thoughts and intents of the heart, we are all unclean, all undone, and can hope for naught but condemnation to *Gehenna* (to *utter destruction*, as brute beasts). They would have cried, "Show us a greater priesthood than that of Aaron, a High Priest and Teacher able fully to appreciate the Law, and able fully to appreciate and sympathize with our fallen state and inherited weaknesses, and let him offer for us 'better sacrifices,' and apply to us the needed greater forgiveness of sin, and let him as a great physician heal us and restore us, so that we *can* obey the perfect Law of God from our hearts." Then they would have found Christ.

But this lesson they did not learn, for the ears of their understanding were "dull of hearing;" hence they knew not that God had already prepared the very priest and sacrifice and teacher and physician they needed, who in due time redeemed those under the typical Law, as well as all not under it, and who also "in due time," shortly, will begin his restoring work – restoring sight to the blind eyes of their understanding, and hearing to their deaf ears. Then the "vail shall be taken away" – the vail of ignorance, pride and human wisdom which Satan now uses to blind the world to God's true law and true plan of salvation in Christ.

And not only did our Lord's teaching here show the Law of the New Covenant, and teach the Jew a lesson, but it is of benefit to the Gospel Church also. In proportion as we learn the exactness of God's Law, and what would constitute perfection under its requirements, we see that our Redeemer was perfect, and that we, totally unable to commend ourselves to God as keepers of that Law, can find acceptance with the Father only in the merit of our Redeemer, while none can be of that "body," covered by the robe of his righteousness, except the consecrated who endeavor to do only those things well pleasing to God, which includes the avoidance of sin to the extent of ability. Yet their acceptability

with God rests not in their perfection, but upon the perfection of Christ, so long as they abide in him. These, nevertheless, are benefited by a clear insight into the perfect Law of God, even though they are not dependent on the perfect keeping of it. They delight to do God's will to the extent of their ability, and the better they know his perfect Law, the better they are able to rule themselves and to conform to it. So, then, to us also the Lord's words have a lesson of value.

The point, however, to be specially noticed here is that *Gehenna* which the Jews knew, and of which our Lord spoke to them, was not a lake of fire to be kept burning to all eternity, into which all would be cast who get "angry with a brother" and call him a "fool." No; the Jews gathered no such extreme idea from the Lord's words. The eternal torment theory was unknown to them. It had no place in their theology, as will be shown. It is a comparatively modern invention, coming down, as we have shown, from Papacy – the great apostasy. The point is that *Gehenna* symbolizes the Second Death – utter, complete and everlasting destruction. This is clearly shown by its being contrasted with *life* as its opposite. "It is better for thee to enter into *life* halt, or maimed, than otherwise to be cast into *Gehenna*." It is better that you should deny yourselves sinful gratifications than that you should lose all future life, and perish in the Second Death.

ABLE TO DESTROY BOTH SOUL AND BODY IN GEHENNA.

MATTHEW 10:28; LUKE 12:5.

"Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to *destroy* both soul and body in *hell [Gehenna]*." See also another account of the same discourse by Luke – 12:4,5.

Here our Lord pointed out to his followers the great cause they had for courage and bravery under the most trying circumstances. They were to expect persecution, and to have all manner of evil spoken against them falsely, for his sake, and for the sake of the "good tidings" of which he made them the ministers and heralds; yea, the time would come, that whosoever would kill them would think that he did God a service. Their consolation or reward for this was [R2759 : page 33] to be received, not in the present life, but in the life to come. They were assured, and they believed, that he had come to give his life a ransom for many, and that all in their graves must in consequence, in due time, hear the Deliverer's voice and come forth, either to reward (if their trial had been passed in this life successfully), future trial, or judgment, as must be the case with the great majority who do not, in this present life, come to the necessary knowledge and opportunity essential to a complete trial.

Under present conditions men are able to kill our bodies, but nothing that they can do will affect our future being (soul),* which God has promised shall be revived or restored by his power in the resurrection day – the Millennial age. Our revived souls will have new bodies (spiritual or natural – "to each 'seed' his own [kind of] body"), and these none will have liberty to kill. God alone has power to destroy *utterly* – soul and body. He alone, therefore, should be feared, and the opposition of men even to the death is not to be feared, if thereby we gain divine approval. Our Lord's bidding then is, Fear not them which can terminate the present (dying) life in these poor dying bodies. Care little for it, its food, its clothing, its pleasures, in comparison with that future existence or being which God has provided for you, and which, if secured, may be your portion forever. Fear not the threats, or looks, or acts of men, whose power can extend no farther than the present existence; who can harm and kill these bodies, but can do no more. Rather have respect and deference to

God, with whom are the issues of *life everlasting* – fear him who is able to *destroy* in *Gehenna*, the Second Death, both the present dying existence and all hope of future existence.

*We will supply free on application a tract on "*What is the Soul?*"

UNDYING WORMS AND QUENCHLESS FIRES.

MATTHEW 18:8,9; MARK 9:43-48.

Here it is conclusively shown that *Gehenna* as a figure represented the Second Death – the utter destruction which must ensue in the case of all who, after having fully received the opportunities of a future being or existence through our Lord's sacrifice, prove themselves unworthy of God's gift, and refuse to accept it, by refusing obedience to his just requirements. For it does not say that God will preserve soul or body in *Gehenna*, but that in it he can and will "destroy" both. Thus we are taught that any who are condemned to the Second Death are hopelessly and forever blotted out of existence.

[Since these two passages refer to the same discourse, we quote from Mark – remarking that verses 44 and 46, and part of 45, are not found in the oldest Greek MSS., though verse 48, which reads the same, is in all manuscripts. We quote the text as found in these ancient and reliable MSS.] "If thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into *Gehenna*, into the fire that never shall be quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into *Gehenna*. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the Kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into *Gehenna*, where the worm dies not and the fire is not quenched."

After reading the above, all must agree with the prophet that our Lord opened his mouth in figures and obscure sayings. (Psa. 78:2; Matt. 13:35.) No one for a moment supposes that our Lord advised the people to mutilate their bodies by cutting off their limbs, or gouging out their eyes. Nor does he mean us to understand that the injuries and disfigurements of the present life will continue beyond the grave, when we shall "enter into life." The Jews, whom the Lord addressed, having no conception of a place of everlasting torment, and who knew the word *Gehenna* to refer to the valley outside their city, which was not a place of torment, nor a place where any living thing was cast, but a place for the utter destruction of whatever might be cast into it, recognizing the Lord's expression regarding limbs and eyes to be figurative, knew that *Gehenna* also was used in the same figurative sense, to symbolize utter destruction.

The Lord meant simply this: The future life, which God has provided for redeemed man, is of inestimable value, and it will richly pay you to make any sacrifice to receive and enjoy that life. Should it even cost an eye, a hand or a foot, so that to all eternity you would be obliged to endure the loss of these, yet life would be cheap at even such a cost. That would be better far than to retain your members and lose all in *Gehenna*. Doubtless, too, the hearers drew the lesson as applicable to all the affairs of life, and understood the Master to mean that it would richly repay them to deny themselves many comforts, pleasures and tastes, dear to them as a right hand, precious as an eye, and serviceable as a foot, rather than by gratification to forfeit the life to come and be utterly destroyed in *Gehenna* – the Second Death.

But what about the undying worms and the unquenchable fire?

We answer, In the literal *Gehenna*, which is the basis of our Lord's illustration, the bodies of animals, etc., frequently fell

upon ledges of rocks and not into the fire kept burning below. Thus exposed, these would breed worms and be destroyed by them, as completely and as surely as those which burned. No one was allowed to disturb the contents of this valley; hence the worm and the fire together completed the work of *destruction* – the fire was not quenched and the worms died not. This would not imply a never-ending fire, nor everlasting worms. The thought is that the worms did not die off and leave the carcasses there, but continued and completed the work of destruction. So with the fire: it was not quenched, it burned on until all was consumed. Just so if a house were ablaze and the fire could not be controlled or quenched, but burned until the building was destroyed, we might properly call such an "unquenchable fire."

Our Lord wished to impress the thought of the completeness and finality of the Second Death, symbolized in *Gehenna*. All who go into the Second Death will be thoroughly and completely and forever destroyed; no ransom will ever again be given for any (Rom. 6:9); for none worthy of life will be cast into the Second Death, or lake of fire, but only those who **[R2759 : page 34]** *love* unrighteousness after coming to the knowledge of the truth.

Not only in the above instances is the Second Death pointedly illustrated by *Gehenna*, but it is evident that the same Teacher used the same figure to represent the same thing in the symbols of Revelation, – though there it is not called *Gehenna*, but a "lake of fire."

The same valley was once before used as the basis of a discourse by the Prophet Isaiah. (Isa. 66:24.) Though he gives it no name, he describes it; and all should notice that he speaks, not as some with false ideas might expect, of billions alive in flames and torture, but of the *carcasses* of those who transgressed

against the Lord, who are thus represented as utterly destroyed in the Second Death.

The two preceding verses show the time when this prophecy will be fulfilled, and it is in perfect harmony with the symbols of Revelation: it appertains to the new dispensation, the Millennium, the "new heavens and new earth" condition of things. Then all the righteous will see the justice as well as the wisdom of the utter destruction of the incorrigible, wilful enemies of righteousness, as it is written: "They shall be an abhorring unto all flesh."

MATTHEW 23:15,33.

The class here addressed was not the heathen who had no knowledge of the truth, nor the lowest and most ignorant of the Jewish nation, but the Scribes and Pharisees, outwardly the most religious, and the leaders and teachers of the people. To these our Lord said, "How can ye escape the judgment of *Gehenna*?" These men were hypocritical: they were not true to their convictions. Abundant testimony of the truth had been borne to them, but they refused to accept it, and endeavored to counteract its influence and to discourage the people from accepting it. And in thus resisting the holy spirit of light and truth, they were hardening their hearts against the very agency which God designed for their blessing. Hence they were wickedly resisting his grace, and such a course, if pursued, must eventually end in condemnation to the Second Death, *Gehenna*. Every step in the direction of wilful blindness and opposition to the truth makes return more difficult, and makes the wrongdoer more and more of the character which God abhors, and which the Second Death is intended to utterly destroy. The Scribes and Pharisees were progressing rapidly in that course: hence the warning inquiry of our Lord, "How can ye escape?" etc. The sense is this,

– Although you boast of your piety, you will surely be destroyed in *Gehenna*, unless you change your course.

SET ON FIRE OF GEHENNA.

JAMES 3:6.

"So [important] is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature, and [or when] it is set on fire of *Gehenna*."

Here, in strong, symbolic language, the Apostle points out the great and bad influence of an evil tongue – a tongue set on fire (figuratively) by *Gehenna* (figuratively). For a tongue to be set on fire of *Gehenna* signifies that it is set going in evil by a perverse disposition, self-willed, selfish, hateful, malicious, the sort of disposition which, in spite of knowledge and opportunity, unless controlled and reformed, will be counted worthy to be *destroyed* – the class for whom the "Second Death," the real "lake of fire," the real *Gehenna*, is intended. One in that attitude may by his tongue kindle a great fire, a destructive disturbance, which, wherever it has contact, will work evil in the entire course of nature. A few malicious words often arouse all the evil passions of the speaker, engender the same in others and react upon the first. And continuance in such an evil course finally corrupts the entire man, and brings him under sentence as utterly unworthy of life.

"TARTAROO" RENDERED "HELL."

The Greek word *tartaroo* occurs but once in the Scriptures, and is translated *hell*. It is found in 2 Pet. 2:4, which reads thus:

"God spared not the angels who sinned, but *cast [them] down to hell [tartaroo], and* delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment."

Having examined all other words rendered "hell," in the Bible, and all the texts in which they occur, we conclude the examination with this text, which is the only one in which the word *tartaroo* occurs. In the above quotation, all the words shown in *Italic* type are translated from the one Greek word *tartaroo*. Evidently the translators were at a loss to know how to translate the word, but concluded they knew where the evil angels ought to be, and so they made bold to put them into "hell," though it took six words to twist the idea into the shape they had pre-determined it must take.

The word *tartaroo*, used by Peter, very closely resembles *tartarus*, a word used in Grecian mythology as the name for *a dark abyss or prison*. But *tartaroo* seems to refer more to an act than to a place. The fall of the angels who sinned was from honor and dignity, into dishonor and condemnation, and the thought seems to be – "God spared not the angels who sinned, but *degraded them*, and delivered them into chains of darkness."

This certainly agrees with the facts known to us through other Scriptures; for these fallen spirits frequented the earth in the days of our Lord and the apostles. Hence they were not down in some place, but "down" in the sense of being degraded from former honor and liberty, and restrained under darkness, as by a chain. Whenever these fallen spirits, in spiritualistic seances, manifest their powers through mediums, pretending to be certain dead human beings, they must always do their work in the dark, because darkness is the chain by which they are bound until the great Millennial day of judgment. Whether this implies that in the immediate future they will be able to materialize in daylight is difficult to determine. If so, it would greatly increase Satan's power to blind and deceive for a short season – until the Sun of Righteousness has fully risen and Satan is fully bound.

Thus we close our investigation of the Bible use [R2759 : page 35] of the word "hell." Thank God, we find no such place of everlasting torture as the creeds and hymn-books, and many pulpits, erroneously teach. Yet we have found a "hell," *sheol*, *hades*, to which all our race were condemned on account of Adam's sin, and from which all are redeemed by our Lord's death; and that "hell" is the tomb – the death condition. And we find another "hell" (*Gehenna* – the Second *Death* – utter destruction) brought to our attention as the final penalty upon all who, after being redeemed and brought to the full knowledge of the truth, and to *full* ability to obey it, shall yet choose death by choosing a course of opposition to God and righteousness. And our hearts say, Amen! True and righteous are thy ways, thou King of nations! Who shall not venerate thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? For thou art entirely holy. And all nations shall come and worship before thee, because thy righteous dealings are made manifest. – Rev. 15:3,4.

PARABLE OF THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS.

– LUKE 16:19-31. –

The great difficulty with many in reading this scripture is that, though they regard it as a parable, they reason on it and draw conclusions from it as though it were a literal statement. To regard it as a literal statement involves several absurdities; for instance, that the rich man went to "hell" because he had enjoyed many earthly blessings and gave nothing but crumbs to Lazarus. Not a word is said about his wickedness. Again, Lazarus was blessed, not because he was a sincere child of God, full of faith and trust, not because he was good, but simply because he was poor and sick. If this be interpreted literally, the only logical lesson to be drawn from it is, that unless we are poor beggars full of sores, we will never enter into future bliss; and that if now we wear any fine linen and purple, and have plenty to eat every day, we are sure of future torment. Again, the coveted place of favor

is "Abraham's bosom;" and if the whole statement be literal, the bosom must also be literal, and it surely would not hold very many of earth's millions of sick and poor.

But why consider absurdities? As a parable, it is easy of interpretation. In a parable the thing said is never the thing meant. We know this from our Lord's own explanations of his parables. When he said "wheat," he meant "children of the kingdom;" when he said "tares," he meant "the children of the devil;" when he said "reapers" his servants were to be understood, etc. (Matt. 13.) The same classes were represented by different symbols in different parables. Thus the "wheat" of one parable correspond to the "faithful servants," and the "wise virgins" of others. So, in this parable, the "rich man" represents a *class*, and "Lazarus" represents another *class*.

In attempting to expound a parable such as this, an explanation of which the Lord does not furnish us, modesty in expressing our opinion regarding it is certainly appropriate. We therefore offer the following explanation without any attempt to force our views upon the reader, except so far as his own truth-enlightened judgment may commend them as in accord with God's Word and plan. To our understanding, Abraham represented God, and the "rich man" represented the Jewish nation. At the time of the utterance of the parable, and for a long time previous, the Jews had "fared sumptuously every day" – being the especial recipients of God's favors. As Paul says: "What advantage, then, hath the Jew? Much every way: chiefly, because to them were committed the oracles of God [Law and Prophecy]." The promises to Abraham and David and their organization as a typical Kingdom of God invested that people with royalty, as represented by the rich man's "purple." The typical sacrifices of the Law constituted them, in a typical sense, a holy (righteous) nation, represented by the rich man's "fine linen," – symbolic of righteousness. – Rev. 19:8.

Lazarus represented the outcasts from divine favor under the Law, who, sin-sick, hungered and thirsted after righteousness. "Publicans and sinners" of Israel, seeking a better life, and truth-hungry Gentiles who were "feeling after God" constituted the Lazarus class. These, at the time of the utterance of this parable, were entirely destitute of those special divine blessings which Israel enjoyed. They lay at the gate of the rich man. No rich promises of royalty were theirs; not even typically were they cleansed; but, in moral sickness, pollution and sin, they were companions of "dogs." Dogs were regarded as detestable creatures in those days, and the typically clean Jew called the outsiders "heathen" and "dogs," and would never eat with them, nor marry, nor have any dealings with them. – John 4:9.

As to how these ate of the "crumbs" of divine favor which fell from Israel's table of bounties, the Lord's words to the Syro-Phoenician woman give us a key. He said to this Gentile woman – "It is not meet [proper] to take the children's [Israelites'] bread and to cast it to dogs [Gentiles];" and she answered, "Truth, Lord, but the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their master's table." (Matt. 15:26,27.) Jesus healed her daughter, thus giving the desired crumb of favor.

But there came a great dispensational change in Israel's history when as a nation they rejected and crucified the Son of God. Then their typical righteousness ceased – then the promise of royalty ceased to be theirs, and the kingdom was taken from them to be given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof – the Gospel Church, "a holy nation, a peculiar people." (Titus 2:14; 1 Pet. 2:7,9; Matt. 21:43.) Thus the "rich man" *died* to all these special advantages, and soon he (the Jewish nation) found himself in a cast-off condition, – in tribulation and affliction. In such condition that nation has suffered from that day to this.

Lazarus also died: the condition of the humble Gentiles and the God-seeking "outcasts" of Israel underwent a great change, being carried by the angels (messengers – apostles, etc.) to Abraham's bosom. Abraham is represented as the father of the faithful, and receives all the children of faith, who are thus recognized as the heirs of all the promises made to Abraham; for the children of the flesh are not the children of God, "but the children of the promise are counted for the *seed*" (children of Abraham); "which seed is Christ;" – and "if ye be Christ's, then are ye [believers] Abraham's seed [children], and heirs according to the [Abrahamic] promise." – Gal. 3:29.

Yes, the termination of the condition of things [R2759 : page 36] then existing was well illustrated by the figure, death – the dissolution of the Jewish polity and the withdrawal of the favors which Israel had so long enjoyed. There they were cast off and have since been shown "no favor," while the poor Gentiles, who before had been "aliens from the commonwealth [the polity] of Israel and strangers from the covenant of promise [up to this time given to Israel only] having no hope and without God in the world," were then "made nigh by the blood of Christ" and reconciled to God. – Eph. 2:12,13.

To the symbolisms of death and burial used to illustrate the dissolution of Israel and their burial or hiding among the other nations, our Lord added a further figure – "In hell [*hades*, the grave] he lifted up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off," etc. The dead cannot lift up their eyes, nor see either near or far, nor converse; for it is distinctly stated, "There is no work, nor device, nor *knowledge*, nor wisdom, in the grave;" and the dead are described as those who "go down into *silence*." (Eccl. 9:10; Psa. 115:17.) But the Lord wished to show that great sufferings or "torments" would be added to the Jews as a nation *after* their national dissolution and burial amongst the other peoples dead in trespasses and sins; and that

they would plead in vain for release and comfort at the hand of the formerly despised Lazarus class.

And history has borne out this parabolic prophecy. For eighteen hundred years the Jews have not only been in distress of mind over their casting out from the favor of God and the loss of their temple and other necessities to the offering of their sacrifices, but they have been relentlessly persecuted by all classes, including professed Christians. It was from the latter that the Jews have expected mercy, as expressed in the parable – "Send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue;" but the great gulf fixed between them hinders that. Nevertheless, God still recognizes the relationship established in his covenant with them, and addresses them as children of the covenant. (Verse 25.) These "torments" have been the penalties attached to the violation of their covenant, and were as certain to be visited upon them as the blessings promised for obedience. – See Lev. 26.

The "great gulf fixed" represents the wide difference between the Gospel Church and the Jew – the former enjoying free grace, joy, comfort and peace, as true sons of God, and the latter holding to the Law, which condemns and torments. Prejudice, pride and error, from the Jewish side, form the bulwarks of this gulf which hinder the Jew from coming into the condition of true sons of God by accepting Christ and the gospel of his grace. The bulwark of this gulf which hinders true sons of God from going to the Jew – under the bondage of the Law – is their knowledge that by the deeds of the Law none can be justified before God, and that if any man keep the Law (put himself under it to try to commend himself to God by reason of obedience to it), Christ shall profit him nothing. (Gal. 5:2-4.) So, then, we who are of the Lazarus class should not attempt to mix the Law and the Gospel, knowing that they cannot be mixed, and that we can do no good to those who still cling to the Law and reject the sacrifice

for sins given by our Lord. And they, not seeing the change of dispensation which took place, argue that to deny the Law as the power to save would be to deny all the past history of their race, and to deny all of God's special dealings with the "fathers," (promises and dealings which through pride and selfishness they failed rightly to apprehend and use); hence they cannot come over to the bosom of Abraham, into the true rest and peace – the portion of all the true children of faith. – John 8:39; Rom. 4:16; Gal. 3:29.

True, a few Jews probably came into the Christian faith all the way down the Gospel age, but so few as to be ignored in a parable which represented the Jewish people as a whole. As at the first, Dives represented the orthodox Jews, and not the "outcasts of Israel," so down to the close of the parable he continues to represent a similar class, and hence does not represent such Jews as have renounced the Law Covenant and embraced the New Covenant, or such as have become infidels.

The plea of the "rich man" for the sending of "Lazarus" to his five brethren we interpret as follows:

The people of Judea, at the time of our Lord's utterance of this parable, were repeatedly referred to as "Israel," "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," "cities of Israel," etc., because all of the tribes were represented there; but actually the majority of the people were of the two tribes, Judah and Benjamin, but few of the ten tribes having returned from Babylon under Cyrus' general permission. If the nation of the Jews (chiefly *two* tribes) were represented in the *one* "rich man," it would be a harmony of numbers to understand the "five brethren" to represent the *ten* tribes chiefly scattered abroad. The request relative to them was doubtless introduced to show that all *special* favor of God ceased to all Israel (the ten tribes, as well as to the two more directly addressed). It seems to us evident that Israel only was

meant, for no other nation than Israel had "Moses and the prophets" as instructors. (Verse 29.) The majority of the ten tribes had so far disregarded Moses and the prophets that they did not return to the land of promise, but preferred to dwell among idolaters; and hence it would be useless to attempt further communication with them, even by one from the dead – the figuratively dead, but now figuratively risen, Lazarus class. – Eph. 2:5.

Though the parable mentions no bridging of this "great gulf," other portions of Scripture indicate that it was to be "fixed" only throughout the Gospel age, and that at its close the "rich man," having received the measurement of punishment for his sins,* will walk out of his fiery troubles over the bridge of God's promises yet unfulfilled to that nation.

*See Isa. 40:1,2, margin; Rom. 11:27-31, and MILLENNIAL DAWN, VOL. II, page 227.

Though for centuries the Jews have been bitterly persecuted by pagans, Mohammedans and professed Christians, they are now gradually rising to political freedom and influence; and although much of "Jacob's trouble" is just at hand, yet as a people they will be very prominent among the nations in the beginning of the Millennium. The "vail" (2 Cor. 3:13-16) of prejudice still exists, but it will be gradually taken away as the light of the Millennial morning dawns; **[R2759 : page 37]** nor should we be surprised to hear of great awakenings among the Jews, and many coming to acknowledge Christ. They will thus leave their *hadean* state (national death) and torment, and come, the first of the nations, to be blessed by the true seed of Abraham, which is Christ, Head and body. Their bulwark of race prejudice and pride is falling in some places, and the humble, the poor in spirit, are beginning already to look upon him whom they have pierced, and to inquire, Is not this the Christ? And as they look the Lord pours upon them the spirit of favor and supplication.

(Zech. 12:10.) Therefore, "Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her appointed time is accomplished." – Isa. 40:1,2, margin.

In a word, this parable seems to teach precisely what Paul explained in Rom. 11:19-32. Because of unbelief the natural branches were broken off, and the wild branches grafted into the Abrahamic root-promise. The parable leaves the Jews in their trouble, and does not refer to their final restoration to favor – doubtless because it was not pertinent to the feature of the subject treated; but Paul assures us that when the fulness of the Gentiles – the full number from among the Gentiles necessary to make up the bride of Christ – is come in, "they [natural Israel] shall obtain mercy through your [the Church's] mercy." He assures us that this is God's covenant with fleshly Israel (who lost the higher, spiritual promises, but are still the possessors of certain earthly promises), to become the chief nation of earth, etc. In proof of this statement, he quotes from the prophets, saying: "The deliverer shall come out of Zion [the glorified Church], and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob [the fleshly seed]." "As concerning the Gospel [high calling], they are enemies [cast off] for your sakes; but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes." "For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" – Rom. 11:26-33.
