

THE OTHER SIDE OF DEATH

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The whole question of human immortality considered from the standpoint of the teachings of the Scriptures.

BY

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1. ABSOLUTE AND CONDITIONAL LIFE

SOME WHOLE scope of human vision is bounded by death. Death brings to a close all human plans, hopes, and joys. Human reasoning cannot pierce its blackness or bring its secrets to light. Its impenetrable darkness is not lightened by any of the innumerable philosophies of men. It is an enigma, a mystery, a black and for, bidding cloud, which will reveal its secrets to no one.

Amid the maze of theories upon this great question there are three views accepted by Christians which stand out above all others. The first of these three views is probably held by a larger class of those who profess the religion of Christ than the other two. It is this: that all men possess immortality regardless as to whether they are good or bad, possess it inherently, by nature, and therefore when death comes their souls will be perpetuated in endless existence, the souls of the good in a condition of joy and bliss, the souls of the bad in a condition of misery and torment.

The second view is similar to the first in its premise that all men possess immortality. But it differs in this, that it teaches that the bad win, at some time more or less distant and in some way not fully understood, be restored to the divine favor and then will share with the good a perpetual existence in a condition of joy and bliss.

The third view is held by those who deny the premise of the first two classes, the natural immortality of the soul. Denying that immortality is the natural inheritance of all men from Adam, they hold that it is a free gift from God, but only to those who accept it through faith in Jesus Christ, and therefore only those who receive Jesus Christ will ever possess immortality. Further, those who do

not get it from this source do not have it at all and never will have it, and therefore, not possessing immortality, will ultimately perish forever. This view teaches that the good alone will live forever, and it may be called the doctrine of conditional immortality.

It is obvious at the very outset of this discussion that unless there is an ultimate, authoritative standard to which all appeals must be taken and by which all theories must be tested it would be useless even to begin the discussion. This question cannot be settled by an appeal to the belief of any man, to the teaching of any denomination, or the decrees of any church council. It cannot be settled by our own unaided reason. It must be settled by an authority which will be an end of all controversy.

There Is a Divine Revelation

Is there a revelation from God to supply our need? God understands this matter. He can solve the problem and remove the obscurity. But will he do it? How big this question is with importance! The world-wide anxiety of six thousand years is compressed within it. Will the Divine Oracle, which cannot err, and which will not lie, respond to the eager query of the truth-seeker who waits with such yearning at the portal of the eternal temple? Our all hangs upon the response.

The God of truth has spoken. By inspiration of the mighty God his servants have been given knowledge and understanding. The veil of the future has been torn aside and its secrets revealed by men who have spoken as "they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

Shall we "turn away from him that speaks from heaven," and go to the uncertain and dubious oracles of earth for the wisdom for which we are seeking? Not so! Let us subordinate human speculation and all the theories of men to his authoritative teaching in which he has spoken so clearly and emphatically concerning this subject.

To the Bible we turn. We will call no man master or teacher. We will pass by the oracles of paganism. And turning from the foolish babbles of a philosophy falsely so called, we take our place at the feet of the eternal Teacher to receive from him the words of everlasting life. All our differences he shall decide. All our difficulties he must settle. All our problems he must solve. Determined to strictly abide by the unalterable decisions of his Word, we shall care, fully and reverently examine its teachings.

The sole occurrence of the term "Immortal" in the Bible is in 1 Timothy 1:17, which reads: "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor and glory forever and ever." Here the eternal King, "the only wise God," is said to be immortal. He is the only being who, in the Bible, is ever said to be immortal, for the Scriptures do not use this word again.

The words "soul" and "spirit" occur in the Bible approximately nine hundred and fifteen times, and never once is the term "immortal" connected with either of them. The writers of the Bible had nine hundred and fifteen opportunities to inform us that the soul is immortal, but never did so. Surely this is a very significant fact that must not be overlooked.

The teaching of the verse just quoted will be accepted by all. No one will question the immortality of God. All admit this. He is "eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God." These are the attributes of God. The word "immortal" is used with reference to no other being. Man is never called immortal in the Bible. The soul of man is never called immortal. The spirit of man is never said to be immortal. Indeed, the exact opposite is constantly affirmed throughout the Scriptures.

Instead of the Bible being "full of the teaching of the immortality of the soul," as the adherents of that doctrine confidently assert, God has thought it of more importance to set forth to men his own immortality. Wherever in the universe life is manifested, of whatever kind, he is the fountain of it. "In him we live, and move, and have our being." Acts 17:28. Absolute and essential existence, and therefore absolute and essential immortality, is the attribute of God, and of God alone.

It is this, indeed, that he claims as his name, "I AM" - the self-existing One, "the first and the last," "the beginning and the ending," "which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." He is uncreated, self-existent, eternal, immortal. His existence had no beginning. Neither will it have any ending. He is absolute life, absolute being, absolute existence, absolute immortality. And there is no other.

Man Is Transitory

It is just on this point of his eternity and self-existence that God contrasts himself with man whose life is but "a vapor, that appears for a little time, and then vanishes away." "I even I, am He, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive. Neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand. For I lift up my hand to heaven, And say, I live forever." Deuteronomy 32:39, 40. He is Jehovah, "the Ever living, the Eternal God. "The Everlasting Father," or "Father of Eternity," whose years "have no end." "Who lived forever and ever." "The Lord Shall endure forever."

Is weak and puny man also able to say, I, too, live forever? The immortality and eternity of God is affirmed in every part of the Bible. The immortality of man is not mentioned or even hinted at. Now, is the immortality of man so much more obvious than that of God that there is no need of mentioning it, while God's immortality must be constantly affirmed? Or is not this constant assertion of the immortality of God and the absence of all similar assertion of the immortality of man in the Bible rather for the specific purpose of showing a contrast between God and man in respect to immortality? God is infinite. Man is finite. God is immortal. Man is mortal. God is eternal. Man is transitory. God has immortality in himself. Man has none in himself, and his only hope of living forever is dependent therefore, or conditional, upon union with God through Christ our Savior, who has promised eternal life to all who believe on him as their Redeemer.

One of the chief objects of the Bible, indeed, seems to be to reveal to men that their life is brief, vapory, shadowy, transitory. It does this in the very plainest terms. Not only does the Bible not call man immortal, or ever-living, or eternal, but it emphatically declares him to be the opposite. He is said to be "mortal" in Job 4:17; Romans 6:12; Romans 8:11; 1 Corinthians 15:53, 54; and 2 Corinthians 4:11. In James 4:14, his life is said to be "even a vapor, that appears for a little time, and then vanishes away." His life is said to be a "wind" in Job 7:7, and Psalm 78: 39 says that "they were but flesh; a wind that passes away, and comes not

again." In Psalm 90:5,6, men are said to be "asleep: in the morning they are like grass which grows up. In the morning it flourishes, and grows up; in the evening it is cut down, and withers." "He comes forth like a flower, and is cut down. He flees also as a shadow, and continues not." Job 14:2. "All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field: the grass withers, the flower fades: surely the people is grass." Isaiah 40:6,7.

Immortality Not a Birthright

Thus while the human soul is spoken of hundreds of times in the Bible it is never once said to be immortal or deathless in its nature, but is always spoken of as short-lived and perishable. In what has been said there is no thought of teaching that man can never secure immortality. What is meant is that immortality is not a birthright. Is not his by nature, is not in himself, and that if he does ever receive it, it will be as a gift from him who has it and who can impart it, yea, who will impart it to those who accept it from him,

There is no question that God can confer immortality upon any person by prolonging his life. But, if having begun to live, we shall continue to live, it will not be because of any inherent principle of life within ourselves irrespective of our condition and independent of the will of God. It will be solely because God is pleased to continue our existence. If he does not confer immortality upon us we shall never have it. Indeed, if at any time he should now withdraw his sustaining power or cut us off from his favor, our existence would inevitably come to an end. Continued life is dependent, therefore, on his continued favor. And continued favor he has made to depend upon conditions which he has laid down himself.

Life Is Conditional

This principle can be seen in nature as well as in revelation. It rested entirely with God, of course, whether he should make man mortal or immortal. He could, without doubt, have given all his creatures assurance of living forever irrespective of conditions or circumstances, whether they should preserve their first estate or fall from it, whether they should rise to heaven or sink to hell, whether they should continue holy and consequently be blessed, or fall into sin and therefore be wretched, whether they should obey him or disobey him. No one can affirm, however, that he did give any such assurance. Divine revelation, reason, and nature teach the contrary. Everything in nature comes to certain ruin unless it preserves its normal condition or is restored to it. In the very nature of things, purity and blessedness are necessary to a continued existence. Life is conditional. Conditions and circumstances which tend to death must be avoided if life is to continue. Like the disease of leprosy, to which it is compared in the Bible, there is something in the nature of sin which will inevitably, unless eradicated, bring to utter ruin the soul into which it has entered. "Sin, when it is finished, brings forth death."

From what has been said it seems clear that there is but one unconditional, independent existence in the universe. Self-existence is the peculiar attribute of God. The source of all life is in him. It follows, therefore, that the life of every creature, no matter how high or low, depends solely on God's power and will, or, in other words is conditional life.

That God alone is immortal, and that man in his natural, fallen condition is mortal can be seen by considering some of the innumerable passages of the Bible which declare that the life of man is a perishable, transitory thing. In Job such expressions as the following frequently occur: "How oft is the candle of the wicked put out." "They are as stubble before the wind, and as chaff that the storm carries away." "They shall lie down alike in the dust, and the worms shall cover them." "The wicked is reserved to the day of destruction." "By the blast of God they perish, and by the breath of his nostrils are they consumed." "All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust."

"The Wicked Shall Perish"

The Psalms are full of similar expressions: "The wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away. "As wax melts before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God. For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish." "They shall be destroyed forever." "His breath goes forth, he returns to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish." "Man being in honor abides not; he is like the beasts that perish." "He shall go to the generation of his fathers; they shall never see light. Man that is in honor, and understands not, is like the beasts that perish."

We find the same teaching in Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. And in the writings of the prophets we find such expressions as: "The soul that sins, it shall die"; "the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners shall he together, and they that forsake the Lord shall be consumed." "they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish." Finally we come to the words of Malachi at the very close of the Old Testament: "Behold, the day comes, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble. And the day that comes shall burn them up, said the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch."

And in the New Testament we find the same teaching that the life which man has is transitory and perishable: "Suppose you that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay: but, except you repent, you shall all likewise perish." Luke 13:2,3. "For God so loved the world, that he gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16. "Thy money perish with thee." Acts 8:20. "For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law." Romans 2:12. "If Christ be not raised. . . then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished." (That is, if Christ had not been raised, the death of all would have been final.) 1 Corinthians 15:17,18. "By nature the children Of wrath." Ephesians 2:3. "Whose end is destruction." Philippians 3:19. "Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction." 2 Thessalonians 1:9. "But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed and shall utterly perish." 2 Peter 2: 12.

If these expressions are not sufficient to prove the uniform teaching of the Bible that God alone is immortal and that man is mortal, then words cannot be put together in the English language which will prove it. If those who read these expressions do not

have their minds disabused of the theory of the natural immortality of all men, then it is impossible to disabuse their minds of it, for it is impossible to frame words which will be more clear or more powerful to teach the opposite of that theory than the ones which have been selected by God himself.

2. IMMORTALITY

IN THIS chapter we shall study every passage of the Scriptures which contains the term “immortality,” in the expectation that by so doing we shall come to a full knowledge of the teaching of the Bible on this subject.

In the Scriptures immortality is never affirmed of mankind. That is, it is never stated in the Bible that man possesses in himself, inherently, the attribute of immortality. On the contrary, the uniform teaching of the Bible is that man is mortal. It is not denied, however, that he is capable of immortality. The Bible clearly teaches that under certain conditions the gift of immortality may be conferred upon men.

The first text which contains this term is 1 Timothy 6: 13,16: “I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickens all things, and before Christ Jesus. That thou keep this commandment without spot, not rebuked, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: which in his times he shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords. Who only bath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen nor can see.”

If the plain testimony of this verse is accepted, the whole question as to whether mankind possesses immortality is at once settled, for here is the plain, bold statement of fact that God “only bath immortality.” There is no vagueness about this, no indefiniteness, nor is there anything left to the imagination of those who may believe the opposite. There is really nothing to be perverted. The sense is so clear as to make a twisting of its meaning impossible. In fact, no other words in the English language could be put together in any different way to make the thought any clearer than these words make it that God alone in all the universe has immortality.

The verse quoted above not only establishes who has immortality, but also who does not have it. If God “only has immortality,” it follows that we do not have it, for if we did this statement would not be true. If the theory of the natural immortality of all men is true, then the statement that God “only bath immortality” could never truthfully be made. Being made, and made by God himself, it is settled forever that the theory of inherent human immortality is not true.

The fact being established that the attribute of immortality is the possession of God alone, the question at once arises, Is it then impossible for men ever to secure this precious gift? God has given to men many great and precious promises. Has he said anything upon which we can base a hope of having immortality conferred upon us at any time? Surely this is a question of vital importance.

The Relation of Mankind to Immortality

The relation which men should sustain to this attribute of immortality is set forth very clearly in Romans 2:5-7: “But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasures up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment Of God. Who will render to every man according to his deeds: to them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life.” That is, God will render eternal life to those who are seeking for immortality.

In this passage the relation of mankind to immortality is set forth plainly as being that of seekers for it. Men do not seek for that which they already have. The very fact that men are seeking for immortality is conclusive evidence that they do not possess it.

But this verse shows something more. It reveals clearly that only those who seek for immortality by patient continuance in well-doing will secure this attribute. Only a certain class will have it conferred upon them. And this class is composed of those who continue in well doing. Those who “are contentious, and do not obey the truth” (verse 8), whatever else they may receive, cannot expect to receive immortality, which is given to those alone who patiently continue in “well doing.” This verse certainly teaches that immortality is conditional. Conditioned upon the attainment of a certain character, a certain experience, an experience in “well-doing.” Those who do not have this character or experience have no promise of ever receiving immortality.

If we are seekers for immortality where shall we find it? From what source shall we secure it? To whom shall we go for it? An answer to these questions will be found in 2 Timothy 1:10: “But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Savior Jesus Christ, who bath abolished death, and bath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.”

Death passed upon all men through Adam, but through Christ it has been abolished. If Christ had never come to this world to die for sinners they would have died in their own sins. All had sinned, and the wages of sin is death. They were all under condemnation, all under the sentence of death. The human race would have perished had it not been for the voluntary sacrifice of Christ. But “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” The sentence of death, the wages of sin, was abolished by Christ, and those who believe in him will not have this sentence executed upon them.

And belief in Christ not only abolishes the penalty for sin, but also secures to the believer the inestimable boon of immortality. This has been brought to light through the gospel. Immortality, therefore, is in the gospel. It is possible for men to

secure it, but only “through the gospel.” It follows that those who do not accept the gospel do not have, and can never have, immortality.

It will be seen from the explanation of this verse that we have no dispute with those who believe it is possible for men to have immortality. The possibility of it has never been denied. Just as confidently as those who accept the theory we are opposing, the inherent immortality of all men, so do we hope for immortality; and more earnestly than they, if possible, do we advocate the doctrine of immortality. It is the basis of our hope upon which we differ. They claim it as an inheritance from Adam; we, as a gift through Jesus Christ.

When Immortality Will Be Conferred

So far in this study we have found the term -immortality” used three times. It is used the fourth and fifth times in the fifteenth chapter of 1 Corinthians, in the fifty-first to the fifty-fourth verses. In these verses we are told when this attribute of immortality will be conferred upon those who secure it “through the gospel.” These verses are as follows: “Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump. For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality. Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.”

These verses clearly teach that the time of putting on immortality will not be at death, but at the resurrection, at “the last trump.” And it is “this mortal which at that time shall put on immortality.” Therefore, even if we accept the gospel of Jesus Christ, where immortality is “brought to light,” we will not actually have it bestowed upon us until the time when the “dead shall be raised incorruptible.” Until that time we shall be “mortal.” But at that time “we shall be changed” from -mortal- to “immortality,” and from “corruptible” to “incorruption.”

And with this passage we have completed our task. The term “immortality” is used in no other place in the Bible. It occurs but five times, and we have carefully studied each verse in which it is used. While the words “soul” and “spirit” occur hundreds of times in the Scriptures, the word immortality is never coupled with either of them. We have found, then, in the only verses where the attribute of immortality is mentioned, that the Scriptures never affirm the natural immortality of all men, never affirm that the soul has immortality, that the spirit has immortality, never teach that it is the birthright of all men.

On the contrary, we have found the Scripture teaching clearly: First, that God alone possesses immortality; second, that men are, or should be, seekers for it; third, that, if seeking for it. They can find it in the gospel; and fourth, that if they secure it -through the gospel,” it will not then be conferred upon them until “the last trump.” or at the time of the resurrection. Surely there is no reason for any one to be in ignorance or doubt concerning this subject when the Bible so clearly sets forth the truth.

3. THE CREATION OF MAN

WHETHER the consciousness of man will continue after death depends entirely upon what effect death may have upon those things which produce consciousness. If death destroys those things which result in consciousness, then consciousness itself is destroyed by death. If death has no effect upon them and they continue their activities regardless of death, then consciousness continues in death.

What produces consciousness? Is it the result of the organization of man’s physical structure, which death dissolves, or is it the result of the working of forces outside of himself, upon which death has no effect?

Spirit Return to God

A passage of the Bible which is used perhaps more than any other to prove that the soul is immortal and that the dead are conscious is that found in Ecclesiastes 12:7. It reads: “Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return to God who gave it.” It is assumed that this spirit which returns to God is conscious, and that, therefore, consciousness in death is proved by this verse. But this is assumption and nothing more.

And this verse proves more than that the spirits of the righteous dead go at once to heaven, which doctrine it is commonly used to prove. It proves that the spirits of all go to heaven regardless of their condition, and thus can be made the basis of the teaching of universal salvation. The whole chapter in which it occurs is speaking, not of the righteous, but of all mankind, without any reference at all to their personal relation to God.

The chapter opens with that familiar exhortation to “remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth,” and goes on to give reasons why this should be done, by graphically describing the infirmities of old age and the ultimate dissolution of the body at death. All are admonished to remember their Creator in youth before “the evil days come” and “the years draw nigh, when thou shall say, I have no pleasure in them”; before the days come when the keepers of the house shall tremble (before the hands and arms are palsied with age). And the strong men shall bow themselves (when the knees bend with the weight of years); “and the grinders cease because they are few (the teeth decay and fall out); and those that look out of the windows be darkened (the eyesight fails). And all the daughters of music shall be brought low (the vocal chords are impaired). When they shall be afraid of that which

is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish” (the hair becomes white as the almond tree in full bloom); “and the grasshopper shall be a burden” (every little thing is magnified into great importance). And desire shall fail: because man goes to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets.” It is then, at the dissolution produced by death, that it is said, “Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return to God who gave it.” This is speaking of all men, not of the good alone. The spirits of all will go to God at death.

How God Created Man

This verse points us very clearly back to the time when man was made. From the language employed in it, it is plain that man at death returns to the same condition that he was in before he was made alive, or before he was created. At death the dust shall return to the earth “as it was.” And then the spirit shall return to God “who gave it.” We are referred back to the time of creation in order that we may know what the condition of man in death is.

Returning to the time of creation we find this clear, simple, and brief account of the creation of man in Genesis 2: 7: “And the Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life. And man became a living soul.” Here we find the method used by the Creator to bring man into existence.

First he formed the man, and the material he used was “the dust of the ground.” Then he breathed into that lifeless form “the breath of life.” As a result, the “man became a living soul.” It is not a complicated matter, but a very simple procedure.

An analysis of this verse will reveal a number of very significant things. “The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.”

The materials chosen by God of which to make man were not superior in any way to the materials of which he had previously made other earthly creatures and things. These also were made “of the dust of the ground.”

It appears from this passage also that the first man was fully created and completed, as far as his physical form was concerned, before he began to live. “God formed man of the dust of the ground.”

After he was completely formed there lacked nothing of making him a living man or “living soul” but “the breath of life.” When this was breathed into him by his Maker, the “man became a living soul.” This “breath of life” is that which man breathes in common with all other animals. This breath is represented as having been given to the beasts as well as to man, and therefore the beasts are also said to be “living souls”, Genesis 1:30, margin; Revelation 16: 3; Genesis 7: 22. In Dr. Lange’s Commentary, under 1 Corinthians 15:45, these remarks are made: “The expression ‘living soul,’ as used in Genesis is often taken to indicate an order of being superior to the brute, and is the text of many an argument to prove the immortality of the soul. The incorrectness of this assumption will be readily seen by referring to Genesis 1:20,21,24, and elsewhere, in which passages the words translated ‘living soul’ are applied also to the entire lower creation. They are used indifferently of man and beast to express animal life in general. And it is in this very light the apostle uses them, as the course of his argument shows. Adam is spoken of as a living soul, not to prove his immortality, but rather his mortality.”

It should also be noticed that there is no record in this verse that God thrust a living soul into this lifeless body. Nor is it said that he created a living soul within the body as something apart from it. It is said only that as a result of the breathing into his nostrils the breath of life, the man, the whole man, became a living soul. The sense in which this term “soul” has come to be used, as a spiritual essence which can live apart from the body, is not known or taught in the Scriptures.

Witnessing the Creation

Now let us, in imagination, take our stand back in the Garden of Eden and witness the creation of this first man. God speaks, and of the “dust of the ground- a form is made and lies before us. It is the form of a man. It is perfect in its symmetry and complete in all its parts. All its organs are there. But it is lifeless. Its brain is ready to think, but it is not acting. Its heart is ready to beat, but it is not beating. Its blood is ready to flow, but it is not flowing. There is no intelligence, no thought, no knowledge, no wisdom, no memory. No consciousness. And this is so because there is no life. In a short time this lifeless body is to become “a living soul.” Now it is a dead soul.

No one will contend that there was any consciousness in this body as it lay there without life. It is not believed by any one that consciousness was produced from “the dust of the ground.”

And now into the nostrils of the lifeless form the Creator breathes the vital “breath of life.” Immediately the man is a living soul. The brain leaps into instant action. Its heart begins to beat. The blood flows through the veins. It now has intelligence, power of thought, knowledge, consciousness. And it has all this because it now has life.

Consciousness has been produced. But how did it come? We have already concluded that it did not reside in the body, “the dust of the ground.” Was it present, then, in the “breath of life”? No, for then it would have been present before the breath of life ever came into the body, and that would teach the pre-existence of the soul as well as its immortality. Surely no one will maintain that consciousness exists in the breath which we breathe, for then our consciousness would be in our “nostrils” into which God breathed the “breath of life.”

Death Results in Unconsciousness

If the consciousness was not in the “dust of the ground,” the body, nor in the “breath of life,” where, then, did the consciousness come from? It is at once obvious to all that the consciousness was produced as a result of the union of the -breath of life- with “the dust of the ground,” or body. There was no consciousness either in the body or in the breath before these two were united; but when the “breath of life- was breathed into the body, that union created a consciousness.

Therefore let it be forever settled that consciousness depends solely and altogether upon the union of the breath with the body. When that union does not exist, whatever may remain, it is certain that consciousness does not remain.

Now let us reverse this process. The man approaches the time as described in the last chapter of Ecclesiastes, when this breath of life is to be withdrawn, and the elements of his body are to be dissolved into dust. His last breath leaves his body; his heart ceases to beat; his brain ceases to act; his blood ceases to flow; his power of thought is gone; there is no intelligence, no knowledge; and what has become of his consciousness? It, too, is gone. All the processes of sensitive, conscious life are at an end. And the organism itself immediately begins to fall into ruin, and the body to dissolve into the dust from which it came. "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was."

As the consciousness depends on the breath's being united with the body, it follows that when this union is broken up and the breath is separated from the body, the consciousness is destroyed, and there is no consciousness in death.

The "spirit" which returns to God, therefore, is but the breath which God "gave." The constituent elements of the man are broken up, the dust returning from whence it came, and the breath also returning to him "who gave it."

But there is no consciousness in this "spirit," or "breath of life," which returns to God. The consciousness was destroyed when the breath separated from the body. This verse, therefore, does not teach that there is consciousness in death.

Scriptural Teaching

And this is not merely a personal theory. This is just what the Scriptures say. "Thou sends forth thy spirit [Hebrew ruach breath], they are created." Psalm 104: 30. "Thou takes away their breath [the same word, ruach], they die, and return to their dust." Verse 29.

And again: "His breath [ruach] goes forth, he returns to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish." His consciousness is gone. Psalm 146:4.

And again: "For that which befalls the sons of men befalls beasts; even one thing befalls them: as the one dies, so dies the other; yea, they have all one breath [ruach]; so that in this respect man has no preeminence above a beast." Ecclesiastes 3: 19.

That breath and spirit are the same will also be seen by reading Job 27:3: "All the while my breath is in me, and the spirit of God [margin, the breath which God gave him] is in my nostrils." And Job 33:4: "The spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life." Read also the first fourteen verses of the thirty-seventh chapter of Ezekiel.

How clear it is that our dependence is in God alone for life. We have no life of our own; we cannot exist unless God gives-us life.

4. DEATH

DEATH is not a modification of life. Death is not a continuation of life in changed conditions. Death is not a release into a fuller life. Death is not life in misery. Death is not life in happiness. Death is not life at all, in any condition whether good or bad. To die is not to live. To die is to stop living. Death is a complete cessation of life.

Death does not mean to go to heaven. Death does not mean to go to hell. Death does not mean to go to purgatory. Death does not mean to go anywhere. Death means an end of life. When a person dies he does not live somewhere else, in heaven, hell, or purgatory. He does not live at all, in any condition whatsoever. He is dead. And when a person is dead he is not alive.

In death there is no life. The soul does not live. The spirit does not live. There is no intelligence, no consciousness, no memory. All that composed the man is gone. Nothing that is here said is to be interpreted as meaning that there will be no future life. There will be a future life. But this future life is not a continuation of the life that now is. It is entirely a new life, another life. And it begins, not at the time of death, but at the time of the resurrection from death.

Origin of Immortality Doctrine

In previous chapters we have seen that God alone is immortal, and man utterly mortal and finite. Notwithstanding all the Scripture adduced in support of this position, however, some persist in placing a figurative, mystical sense on the plain terms of the Bible which deal with this subject, and thus change the meaning of these terms until they teach exactly the opposite of what they say. In this way death has come to mean life.

Thus while the doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul originated with him who was a liar "from the beginning," when Satan told our first parents, "You shall not surely die," in the very face of the most positive declarations of Jehovah to the contrary, it is still being maintained by the scholarship of the church and the literature and philosophy of the world, which are giving another meaning to the words of the Bible.

Blinded by this first satanic delusion, theologians still gravely assure us that the human soul is immortal and therefore can never die; that it is indestructible and therefore can never be destroyed; that its destiny is to live forever and therefore it will always exist. And hence, of course, they assure us that all those passages of the Bible which seem to teach that it will die, that it will be destroyed, that it will not live forever, cannot possibly mean any such thing.

And through their labored circumlocution and wordy reiteration of this perverted meaning of such scriptural passages, the doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul has come to be accepted as a fundamental doctrine of the Christian system. But we submit that when a doctrine is in flat contradiction to the Word of God, when it brings God's law into contempt, when it calls his wisdom, goodness, justice, and truth into question, when it brings reproach upon his character, when it belittles and misconstrues

the work of Christ, and hinders the work and progress of the gospel of Christ, the fact that the great “father of lies” can be shown to be behind it is hardly sufficient authority for its truth.

No, the time is fully here when this stupendous delusion, “You shall not surely die,” should be confronted with the straight testimony of the “Oracles of God,” and driven from the Christian church. It is also high time that the believers in the Word should cease trifling with its plainest utterances and should manifest a willingness to acknowledge Him “who only hath immortality,” as the only source of immortality to dying humanity.

Where Are the Dead?

So, taking our stand again on the immutable rock of God’s Word. We turn away from all the wisdom of men and inquire of him whose “word is truth” concerning the condition of man in death. “Man dies, and wastes away: yea, man gives up the ghost, and where is he?” Job 14:10. This is the question of the ages. The answer to which is fully given in the Bible.

It has already been shown that consciousness depends on the union of the breath of life with the body, and therefore when these two are separated at death, unconsciousness must result. From this it follows that in death man is unconscious. Indeed we have the explicit testimony of the Scriptures to this fact in the statement found in Psalm 146:3,4: “Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goes forth, he returns to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.” There is no intelligence, no consciousness in death. The ability to think has then come to an end.

Notwithstanding the fact that we have been told that when we die we will spend our time in praising the Lord, the Scripture says: “In death there is no remembrance of thee: in the grave who shall give thee thanks?” Psalm 6:5. And, “The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence.”

The Dead Are Unconscious

That death is an absolute cessation of conscious existence is taught by the wise man in Ecclesiastes 9:5,6: “The living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten. Also their love, and their hatred, and their envy, is now perished; neither have they any more a portion forever in anything that is done under the sun.”

Analyze this verse carefully. Note its brief but clear statements. “The living know” something “that they shall die.” There is intelligence and knowledge with those who are alive; and this is just the opposite of death. “But the dead know not anything.” There is no intelligence or knowledge in death. And “the memory of them is forgotten.” In death they do not recall the scenes of life. As the spiritualist medium seeks to teach.

And their love has ceased. While in life the love of a mother may have centered in an only child, yet when she dies her love “is now perished”; nor does she, or her spirit, return to hover over the object of her affections, for in death there is no love. Nor does hatred continue in death. Hatred also perishes there, as does envy. And with anything that is transpiring in all the earth the dead have nothing at all to do. “Neither have they any more a portion forever in anything that is done under the sun.” They are unconscious of all that is taking place.

How impossible it would be for any of God’s people ever to be deluded by the lying claims of Spiritualism if these plain statements of truth were believed! How impossible for any to be deceived by so called spirits of the dead if the great truth of man’s unconsciousness in death, so plainly stated in this passage, were confidently accepted! Nothing is known by the dead of the passing of the years or of the condition and circumstances of loved ones. “His [the dead man’s] sons come to honor, and he knows it not; and they are brought low, but he perceives it not of them.” Job 14: 21.

Death a Sleep

In the Bible death is given a name which stands for unconsciousness. It is called a “sleep.” Thus in Psalm 13:3: “Consider and hear me, O Lord my God: lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death.” Death is a period of unconsciousness, a sleep, from which all will be awakened at the resurrection.

Christ agrees with David that death is a sleep. In John 11:11-14, we have this record: “These things said he: and after that he said unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleeps; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit Jesus spoke of his death: but they thought that he had spoken of taking of rest in sleep. Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.”

Paul agrees with both David and Christ that death is a sleep. In 1 Corinthians 15:6, he says: “After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.” And in 1 Thessalonians 4: 13, he says: “But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that you sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.”

Daniel agrees with David, Christ, and Paul that death is a sleep. In Daniel 12:2, he speaks of the dead as follows: “And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.” At death, then, one lies down to sleep; at the resurrection he is awakened. Between death and the resurrection there is an unconscious sleep.

Luke agrees with these other inspired writers that death is a sleep. In recording the death of Stephen, in Acts 7: 60 he says, “And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.”

David, the man after God’s own heart, instead of being at the present time in heaven, as the theory of the immortality of the soul would teach, is in his grave sleeping. This is clearly stated by Paul in a sermon at Antioch in Pisidia as recorded by Luke in Acts

13: 36: "For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers [in the gravel, and saw corruption."

David Not in Heaven

Peter declares explicitly that David has not gone to heaven. In his sermon on the day of Pentecost, in Acts 2: 34, he says, "For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he said himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand." In the twenty ninth verse he also tells us plainly where David now is:—"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."

The process of dying is not death. The loss of purity is not death. The loss of joy is not death. The loss of heaven is not death. That is, it is none of these things which is meant in the Scriptures when death is spoken of. Nothing but the loss of life constitutes death. This will be seen in a passage contained in the book of Job, the seventh chapter and twenty-first verse: "And why does thou not pardon my transgression, and take away mine iniquity? For now shall I sleep in the dust; and thou shall seek me in the morning, but I shall not be." Surely no more forceful expression could possibly be used to show an utter cessation of existence than this. In death "I shall not be."

In the fourteenth chapter of job this question of death is discussed, and the conclusions there set forth are worthy of our study. In the seventh verse Job declares that -there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground; yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant. And now man is contrasted with the tree: "But man dies, and wastes away: yea, man gives up the ghost, and where is he?" And Job answers his own question by saying, "As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decays and dries up; so man lies down and rises not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep."

From this it is plain that until the day of the resurrection, the day when the heavens shall depart as a scroll (Revelation 6:14), those who are dead will continue in unconscious sleep. Job then exclaims, "O that thou would hide me in the grave, that thou would keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou would appoint me a set time, and remember me!" Notice the expressions: "Hide me in the grave keep me secret." They are descriptive of death.

Having answered this question job now propounds another: "If a man die, shall he live again?" And again he replies: "All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come. Thou shall call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of your hands."

The Coming Change

Attention is directed to the expression, "All the days of my appointed time will I wait." In what place he would wait we are told in Job 17:13: "If I wait, the grave is mine house: I have made my bed in the darkness."

This change for which Job waits in the grave is that spoken of in 1 Corinthians 15:51-54: "Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump. For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." The change for which job still waits is that from "corruptible" to "incorruption." While he waits for this change "the grave" is his house. This change will not be accomplished at death, as many are teaching, but "at the last trump," when "the dead shall be raised incorruptible."

This same blessed awakening from the tomb is spoken of in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-17: "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that you sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. And then Paul shows that they are not in heaven, but in their graves awaiting the resurrection. "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent (Precede, Revised Version] them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air. And so shall we ever be with the Lord."

This was the time to which Paul was looking for his reward, not to death. He declares in 2 Timothy 4:8: "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me," not at death, but "at that day (the day of judgment). And not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

Death is an enemy of the human race, not a friend. "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." Let us fix our eyes and center our hopes on that great hope of the church, the resurrection from the dead, as the fulfillment of all our joys, and the entrance into that "life everlasting" which the gospel of Christ holds out to every repentant sinner.

5. THE WAGES OF SIN

ACCEPTING as an established truth the devil's first falsehood that all men are immortal, and reasoning from this as a premise that the souls of all who have died are now conscious either in a condition of bliss or torment, for they cannot die, many have concluded that it may be possible to establish some system of communication between the souls of those who have died and the

living among whom they once lived. Then coming into contact with the phenomena of Spiritualism, the professed communication of the spirits of the dead with the living, they have been swept away from their moorings into this terrible last-day delusion of the father of lies. Spiritualism is one of the fruits of the doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul.

The belief of our Catholic friends in purgatory rests upon the same foundation, the conscious state of the dead. If the falsehood of Satan were not believed in the place of the truth of the Bible, no one could ever accept the teaching of purgatory, and no one therefore could ever be deceived into paying money in order that the souls of their loved ones might be prayed out of purgatory.

The errors of Universalism and Restorationism may also be charged to this false doctrine of the immortality of the soul, for they have come into existence because of a reaction against the terrible belief in eternal torment, which is a necessary result of believing in natural immortality.

Fosters Infidelity

And this doctrine has greatly hindered the progress of the gospel by fostering infidelity and skepticism, for such a doctrine as eternal misery and torment drives men away from the gospel instead of winning them to it.

For it follows as a necessary corollary to the doctrine of natural immortality that sin, having once gained a foothold in this earth, can never be expelled or exterminated, and those who refuse to accept the gospel of Christ but continue in sin, being immortal, must ever continue in sin and misery and torment, God himself being unable to blot them out because of their immortality.

Thus has been born the baneful error of everlasting torment, the teaching that the fires of the last day, which are intended to purge this earth of sin and sinners forever, will rather perpetuate sin and sinners forever. For having once been started to feed upon immortal souls and finding them indestructible, these fires must rage on forever, not to devour and consume, but only to torment the miserable victims upon whom they are ceaselessly preying. Therefore, this theory teaches us that so long as the righteous live in heaven the wicked will be tormented in hell, and that throughout all the future ages holiness and sin, happiness and misery, praises and curses, and life and death will run parallel with each other.

An Appalling Belief

Accepting this view many believe that heaven will resound with the songs of the ransomed while in hell are echoing the curses and groans of the damned through all future ages. That the time can never come when the love of God, the wisdom and almighty power of God will have so successfully triumphed over the works of the devil as to have destroyed them utterly, nor over death and hell as to have destroyed them; that the justice of God will never have so satisfied itself by the suffering of the lost as to permit them to expire. That the foundations of his government can never be so secure, and the loyalty of his children so assured that this awful exhibition of his wrath, rolling up like the smoke of a furnace forever, can be permitted to stop.

But when intelligent, thinking men stop to consider all that is involved in the fact of suffering that is absolutely endless, what it must mean for creatures just like themselves to writhe and toss in billows of flame without dying forever and ever or without the least possible hope of relief, and that countless millions have already sunk into this place of torment and are being followed by great multitudes every day, and when they take in the thought that this means not only the vast host of sinners whom they have not known, but their own children and loved ones and friends who go out of life without giving any indication of having accepted the gospel, they are so appalled at the necessary conclusions which their creed and their logic force upon them that their faith cannot endure the terrific strain put upon it, but gives way to infidelity or at best to Universalism or Restorationism.

Believing that it will be interesting and helpful to the reader to see to what lengths those who teach the natural immortality of the soul have gone on this point of the punishment of the wicked, before we consider what the Bible teaches concerning it. We shall quote at some length from the writings of prominent theologians.

In the Presbyterian Confession of Faith, the following passage occurs: "The bodies of men after death return to dust and see corruption; but their souls (which neither die, nor sleep), having an immortal subsistence, immediately return to God who gave them. The souls of the righteous, then, being made perfect in holiness, are received into the highest heavens, where they behold the face of God in light and glory, waiting for the full redemption of their bodies. And the souls of the wicked are cast into hell, where they remain in torment and utter darkness reserved to the judgment of the great day."

From Two Theologians

In the second volume of "Sermons" by Jonathan Edwards, he says: "Those wicked men who died many years ago, their souls went to hell, and there they are still. Those who went to hell in former ages of the world have been in hell ever since, all the while suffering torment. They have nothing else to spend their time in there, but to suffer torment; they are kept in being for no other purpose."

Spurgeon, the great Baptist evangelist in his sermon on "The Resurrection of the Dead," says: "When thou dies, thy soul will be tormented alone. That will be a hell for it; but at the day of judgment thy body will join thy soul and then thou wilt have twin hells, thy soul sweating drops of blood, and thy body suffered with agony. In fire exactly like that which we have on earth, thy body will lie, asbestos, like, forever unconsumed, all thy veins roads for the feet of pain to travel on, every nerve a string on which the devil shall forever play his diabolical tune of hell's unutterable lament."

Master of language as he was, Spurgeon could not surpass the following, taken from a sermon on "The judgment," by Revelation Ebenezer Erskine: "Think now, O sinner, what shall be thy reward when thou shall meet thy judge? How shall the adulterer satisfy lust when he lies on a bed of flames? The swearer shall have enough of wounds and blood when the devil shall torture his body and rack his soul in hell. The drunkard shall have plenty of his cups when scalding lead shall be poured down his throat, and his breath draw flames of fire instead of air. Oh! What a bed is this! No feathers, but fire; no friends, but furies; no case, but fetters; no daylight,

but darkness; no clocks to pass the time away, but endless eternity; fire eternal always burning, and never dying. Oh! Who can endure everlasting flame? It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up forever and ever. The wicked shall be crowded together like bricks in a fiery furnace. What woes and lamentations shall be uttered when devils and reprobates and all the damned crew shall be driven into hell never to return! Down they go, howling, shrieking, and gnashing their teeth. What wailing, weeping, roaring, yelling, filling both heaven, earth, and hell!"

Terrible Teaching

Nor have we yet reached the limits of absurdity. In the following quotation the God of love is turned into a monster who is said to take delight in the woes of the lost. Is it any wonder men should be driven into infidelity when such as this is called Christianity? It is taken from a sermon by Revelation William Davidson:

"It is an unspeakably terrible thing for anyone to be lost. Even to those who suffer least, it is not only the loss of all, and a horrible lake of ever-burning fire; but there are horrible objects filling every sense, and horrible engines and instruments of torture. Nor is this all. Unfulfilled appetites, hungry as death, insatiable as the grave, are so many springs of excruciating and ever-increasing agonies, so many hot and stifling winds, tossing the swooning soul on waves of flame. And there will be terrible companions; and every one utterly selfish, malignant, fierce, and devilish. There will be terrible sights and sounds. Fathers and sons, pastors and people, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, with swollen veins and bloodshot eyes, straining towards each others' throats and hearts. Upon such an assembly, God, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, cannot look but with utter detestation. His face shall be red in his anger, his eyes shall not pity, nor his soul spare for their crying. The day of vengeance is in his heart.

It is what his heart is set upon. He will delight in it. He will tread that rebel crew in his anger, and trample them in his fury, and will stain his raiment with their blood. The cup of the wine of his fierce wrath shall contain no mixture of mercy. All this, and more and worse do the Scriptures declare; and that preacher who hesitates to proclaim it has forsworn his soul, and is a traitor to his trust. And all this shall be forever. It shall never, never end. The wicked go away into everlasting torment. If after enduring it all for twice ten thousand times ten thousand years, they might have a deliverance, or, at least, some abatement, it were less terrible. But this may never, never be. There is a great gulf fixed, and they cannot pass from thence. Or if after suffering all this as many years as there are sand grains in the globe, they might then be delivered, there would be some hope. Or, if you multiply this sum, too infinite to be expressed in figures, and too limitless to be comprehended by angels, by the number of atoms that compose the universe, and there might be deliverance when they had passed those abysmal gulfs of duration, then there would be some hope. But no! When all is suffered, and all is past, still all beyond is eternity."

Another Quotation

Surely, you exclaim, the limits of blasphemy are reached. But not yet. Just one more quotation to show to what lengths men who follow false teachings to their logical ends will go. And this is the worst of all. Here it is declared that it is the burning of the wicked throughout eternity which will constitute the entertainment of the righteous, and that it is the fires of hell which constitute the light of heaven, and if hell is brought to an end heaven would be in darkness. I take it from pages 457 and 458 of the "Works of Samuel Hopkins, DD. It reads as follows:

"The smoke of their torment shall ascend up in the sight of the blessed forever and serve as a most clear glass always before their eyes to give them a constant, bright, and most affecting view. This display of the divine character and glory will be in favor of the redeemed, and most entertaining, and give the highest pleasure to those who love God, and raise their happiness to ineffable heights. Should this eternal punishment and this fire be extinguished, it would in a great measure obscure the light of heaven and put an end to a great part of the happiness and glory of the blessed."

I know that it will be a relief to those who read this chapter to turn away from these wild ravings of men who are lost in the mazes of their own speculation, to the blessed truth which is contained in God's Word. To this we shall go, and sitting at the feet of the One who spoke as never man spoke, we shall learn the truth on this subject.

6. THE PUNISHMENT OF THE WICKED

TO MANY people religion is merely a fire-escape. They have been scared into accepting it by hearing descriptions of a place which burns eternally, and into which they are told they will be cast at death if they do not get religion and join the church. As we have already seen, a terrible lake of fire is painted, in which the lost will suffer the most excruciating tortures, which will be eternal in their duration, where imps of the devil will torment them in every way known to the ingenuity of devils.

Now there is no such place except in worn out systems of theology. The place itself does not exist.

Let it be understood at the very beginning that by this statement it is not meant to convey the idea that there will be no punishment for sin, or that all men will be saved. Nothing of this kind is meant, nor does the Bible teach either doctrine. What is meant is that the per. fervid descriptions of the place of torment, quoted in the preceding chapter, have no place in fact or in the teachings of the Bible.

Retribution Is Still Future

There is no place of torment now, nor will there be until the end of the world. Men do not go to hell when they die. This has been conclusively shown. Dead men who have been wicked during their lives are not in hell now, but in their graves, at rest. Perfectly unconscious.

If the doctrine which teaches that at death a wicked man will go to a place of torment were true, there would be no need of a resurrection from the dead in order that men might receive their reward or their punishment. Why need they be raised from the dead to receive a punishment which they are already receiving in death?

If this doctrine of punishment in hell at death were true, there would be no need of a future judgment, which the Bible teaches will take place at the Second Coming of Christ. If men were already receiving all the torment of hell, what need would there be of judging them? Shall they be brought forth from hell to see if a mistake has been made in their cases, and whether they, after all, should have been sent to heaven instead of hell?

The great biblical doctrines of the resurrection and the future judgment must be given up if this anti scriptural doctrine of rewards and punishment at death is retained. They cannot both be believed at the same time.

For nineteen centuries the story of Jesus and his love and his sufferings for men has been told with tears. Multitudes have heard it and wept. Hardened hearts have been broken by it and souls have grown sick of sin because of its love and pathos. Now, can it be possible that the same God whose love was so great for men that he sent his only begotten Son into the world to save them, has, during these same nineteen hundred years, compelled innumerable hosts of immortal souls to remain in the most awful torment which could be suggested by his wisdom or inflicted by his power?

Judgment Not at Death

No, the Bible does not teach that there is a place of torment in which the wicked are suffering now. The Bible does teach a future state of rewards and punishments beyond this world, and on the other side of death. This punishment takes place, not while men are dead, but after they are raised from the dead. And it will not be eternal, but will continue only long enough to inflict upon men that just punishment which is their due according to the deeds committed in this life.

Solomon saw clearly the need of a future judgment when he said: "I saw under the sun the place of judgment, that wickedness was there; and the place of righteousness, that iniquity was there." If justice cannot be obtained in this world, if it becomes vitiated by the ungodliness of men, then there must surely be a great and supreme court of final appeal. And this Solomon declares: "I said in mine heart, God shall judge the righteous and the wicked: for there is a time there for every purpose and for every work." Ecclesiastes 3: 17. Beyond all doubt, therefore, the Scriptures teach a future judgment.

And this judgment is not at death nor in death. Nor does it immediately follow after death. This will be evident from the fact that God holds men responsible, not only for the commission of their own deeds, but also for the consequences resulting from their deeds.

Thus Jeremiah declares that God's "eyes are open upon all the ways of the sons of men: to give every one according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings." Jeremiah 32: 19. And, "I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings." Jeremiah 17: 10.

Now, it is obvious that while the ways of a man may be manifest at his death the "fruit of his doings- will not be manifest until the very end of time. Thus the streams of poison which had their sources in infidel pens may continue to flow through all time, while the Christian fortitude of the martyrs, and the faithful, self-sacrificing zeal and earnestness of true Christians may be a fountain of perpetual blessing to the world until the close of human probation. Therefore the final reward or punishment must be delayed until the ultimate results of every good and evil action can be surveyed at a glance and the fruit of a man's doings rightly estimated. It is beyond the domain of death that the Scriptures fix the judgment. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Hebrews 9: 27.

The Time of the judgment

Job fixes the future judgment after death, not in death. Seeing that such a judgment was required by the inequalities of life, he said: "One dies in his full strength, being wholly at ease and quiet. His breasts are full of milk, and his bones are moistened with marrow. And another dies in the bitterness of his soul, and never eats with pleasure. They shall lie down alike in the dust, and the worms shall cover them. Behold, I know your thoughts, and the devices which you wrongfully imagine against me. For you say, Where is the house of the prince? And where are the dwelling places of the wicked? Have you not asked them that go by the way? And do you not know their tokens, that the wicked is reserved to the day of destruction? They shall be brought forth to the day of wrath." Job 21:23-30.

And this same truth that the wicked are not now being punished in hell, but are being reserved in their graves to the day of judgment, is taught by Peter: "For if God spared not the angels that sinned but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment. And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly. The Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished." 2 Peter 2:1-9.

Peter's argument is clear. God, in times past, has wrought great deliverance and great judgments. Therefore he is a judge of man. And these past acts of God are but types of future deliverance and punishments. God will deliver the "godly," and will "reserve

the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished.” The “day of judgment” is not at death; men are only reserved in the prison-house of death “to be brought forth to the day of wrath.” The judgment is after death.

Judgment at the Coming of Christ

One of the most ancient prophecies recorded in the Bible fixes the day of judgment at the coming of Christ: “And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord comes with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.” Jude 14.15.

“These,” of whom Jude spoke have long since been dead. But judgment was not to be executed upon them while they were dead but at the time when “the Lord comes with ten thousands of his saints.” Then, at the coming of Christ, the Lord will “execute judgment upon all.”

Hence the day of judgment will be when the Lord shall reign in glory upon Mount Zion and in the New Jerusalem. This will be at the time when the new earth is about to be established as the eternal home of the redeemed of the Lord.

In the second chapter of Daniel a dream was given to Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, of a great image with head of gold, breast and arms of silver, waist and thighs of brass, legs of iron, and feet and toes part of iron and part of clay. A great stone was thrown by an unseen hand, and struck the image upon its feet, and then all of the materials of the image, the clay, the iron, the brass, the silver, and the gold, were ground to powder, and blown away by the winds, while the stone became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

According to the interpretation given to this dream by Daniel, the head of gold represented Babylon; the breast and arms of silver, Medo-Persia; the waist and thighs of brass, Greece; the legs of iron, Rome; and the feet and toes of iron and clay, the modern nations of Europe today. The stone represents the kingdom of God which is to destroy the existing nations and which will take their place in the earth, filling the entire earth and remaining forever.

This destruction has not yet taken place. The stone has not yet struck. But the preceding kingdoms, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome, have long since passed away. Those who composed the subjects of these kingdoms are dead. This prophecy, however, informs us that when the stone strikes, when the kingdom of God comes, then the iron, clay, brass, silver, and gold are to be broken to pieces together, and be carried away so that no place will be found for them. But those represented by the gold, silver, brass, iron, and clay are dead, and therefore must be raised from the dead to receive the punishment predicted in this prophecy, for all are to be destroyed together, and sent into eternal destruction, as a punishment for their sins in a day long ago.

Jesus Makes It Plain

Jesus clearly fixed the time of future judgment when he said: “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.” Matthew 16: 26, 27.

Every man, then, is to be rewarded “when the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father.” All are comprehended in that expression “every man,” both righteous and wicked, living and dead. There can be no doubt from this passage that the future state of rewards and punishments will begin at the second appearing of the Lord. Jesus said again: “He that rejects me, and receives not my words, hath one that judges him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.” John 12: 48.

Every person, wicked or good, those who receive the Word of God, and those who reject it, will be called to meet God. But the judgment which is pronounced on the rejecters of the word is not in this life, nor in death, but will be “in the last day.”

A passage which proves conclusively that there is no punishment for the wicked while they are dead will be found in Luke 13: 25.30: “When once the Master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and you begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence you are. Then shall you begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou has taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence you are; depart from me, all you workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last.”

Here are persons who have been dead for ages, in whose streets Jesus taught, who ate and drank in his presence, and they are lost, but they have known nothing about it, and do not discover it until the day of judgment. So far from having been punished at death, or during death, they do not even know their doom when they enter into the judgment. How, then, could they have been in hell for nineteen hundred years and then when judged never know they were lost? This passage of Scripture would be utterly impossible if the dead were being punished now.

Let us be admonished by this passage. It will not be long before “the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door.” At that time not only those who heard Jesus preach, but we also who have had the privilege of reading and hearing his word, will find our destinies decided. Every soul must appear before that judgment seat. There is no escape from it.

Are You Ready?

Are you ready for that day? Has Christ covered your sins with his own life? Are you safe? Can you face the judge with confidence? Have you been obedient to the commandments of God? Have you repented of all your sins? Oh, have you believed to the saving of your soul? There is time now, but there will be no time then. While mercy still lingers, while the door is still open, and the master of the house has not yet risen up to shut it-make your peace with God now, that it may be well with you in that day.

The instrument which will be used by God to punish the wicked will be fire. This fire is employed not for the purpose of torture, but for the purpose of destruction. The fire will completely destroy the wicked from the earth, and they will never recover from this destruction. This fire will not perpetuate their lives, but will bring them to an end.

That the Lord will destroy the wicked by fire will be seen by reading Matthew 13:40-42: "As therefore the tares, are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

Another verse bearing on the same point will be found in Matthew 25:41: "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

From these verses it is plain that the punishment for sin will be by fire, and that this fire will take place, not at death, but "in the end of this world." It is plain also that members of the human race were never intended to be cast into this fire, for it was prepared for the devil and his angels. Therefore those of this earth who are cast into this fire will suffer this fate only because they choose to ally themselves with the devil.

Punished on This Earth

This punishment and this fire will be on this earth. God has no special place of punishment which he will keep in perpetual operation to torture the wicked. They will be punished where they have sinned, on the earth. Two verses from the Scriptures will be sufficient to show this: "And they [the wicked] went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them." Revelation 20:9. "Behold the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth: much more the wicked and the sinner." Proverbs 11:31.

The time at which this final destruction of the wicked will take place is at the end of the thousand years of the millennium. The millennium will begin with the Second Coming of Christ, at which time all the righteous, both living and resurrected, will be caught up to meet Christ in the air, and will be taken to heaven with him, there to live and reign with Christ during the thousand years. 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17; Revelation 20: 4. At the Second Coming of Christ also all the wicked who are alive at that time will be put to death by the brightness of the glory of Christ (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9), and will remain unburied on the face of the earth (Jeremiah 25:31-33). At the end of the thousand years of the millennium all the wicked dead will be raised to life again (Revelation 20:5), and it is at that time that they will endeavor to capture the holy city, the New Jerusalem, and fire will come down from heaven and devour them. Revelation 20:5-9.

The effect of this fire upon the wicked will be seen from Malachi 4:1: "For behold, the day comes. that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that comes shall burn them up, said the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch." When a thing is burned up there is nothing left of it but ashes, and so of the wicked it is said: "And you shall tread down the wicked. For they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, said the Lord of hosts." Malachi 4: 3.

Sin Not to Be Perpetuated

Thus it is plain that the wicked are not perpetuated in this fire in which they meet their fate, but entirely consumed. And this does not have reference to the body alone, as is insisted by some who earnestly cling to their favorite doctrine of eternal torment. In Ezekiel 18:4, 20, we read: "The soul that sins, it shall die."

It is for this reason, that there is a complete destruction of the sinner, that the Bible uses such terms as "eternal," "everlasting," and "forever and ever," in connection with the fate of the wicked. The thing which these expressions are designed to show is that the overthrow of the wicked is a complete overthrow, that there will never be any hope of a recovery from their fate, for it is eternal. Their torment is not eternal, their grief and anguish are not eternal; but their destruction is eternal.

Bearing out this thought of a complete destruction of the wicked we read in 2 Thessalonians 1:9: "Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." Again in Matthew 25:46 we read: "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment."

Notice the force of these expressions which have been used so long to teach the doctrine of eternal torment. The "destruction" of the wicked will be "everlasting"; the -punishment- of the wicked will be "everlasting"; there will never be any recovery from it. Neither verse declares what the advocates of eternal torment desire. There is nothing in either verse concerning eternal torment. It is not the torment which is said to be "everlasting," it is the "destruction" and the "punishment." Nor does it say "everlasting punishing," but "everlasting punishment." There is no dispute at all concerning the length of the punishment of the wicked. The only question is as to what the punishment consists of. If the punishment for sin is torment, then there is no question but that the torment will be eternal. If, however, the punishment for sin is death, then the death is "everlasting." And no one will dispute the fact that the Bible teaches that "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23), and not eternal life in misery.

Everlasting Fire

It will be urged by some, however, that the Bible not only speaks of "everlasting destruction," and "everlasting punishment," but also of "everlasting fire." Matthew 25:41. And it will be asked why, if the torment is not continued, there should be need of everlasting fire. Let the reader turn to the seventh verse of Jude, and there notice that Sodom and Gomorrah suffered "the vengeance of eternal fire." Inasmuch as Sodom and Gomorrah are not now burning, not with, standing the fact that they were destroyed by eternal fire, it is evident that eternal fire is not necessarily fire which perpetuates that which it burns, and never ceases to burn. From 2 Peter 2:6 it is evident that eternal fire completely consumes that which it attacks. The language is: "And turning the

cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow. Making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly.” And that it takes but a very short time for eternal fire to bring that which it attacks to ashes will be plain from Lamentations 4: 6, where it is said that Sodom was “overthrown as in a moment.”

From these verses it will be seen that the effect of everlasting or eternal fire is not to perpetuate the existence of that upon which it feeds, but to consume it, to bring it to ashes, and it may accomplish this “as in a moment.”

Unquenchable Fire

Again it will be urged that Mark in speaking of the fire which will punish the wicked says of it that it “never shall be quenched.” Mark 9:43-45. But a fire that never shall be quenched is not a fire that never shall go out, but a fire that cannot be put out. Jerusalem was burned with a fire that could not be quenched (Jeremiah 17:19-27; 2 Chronicles 36:19-21), but it is not burning yet. By this unquenchable fire it was brought to destruction and ashes, just as the fires of the last day will bring the wicked to destruction and ashes. The fire which is to destroy the wicked must of necessity be unquenchable, for if it were not, the wicked would put it out.

7. SPIRITUALISM

ANY discussion of the condition and state of the dead would be incomplete without an explanation of the false claims of Spiritualism which pretends to open a way of communication between the living and the spirits of the dead. We have already seen that this claim must be false, inasmuch as the dead are unconscious. This, however, leaves us to explain and account for the phenomena of this false system.

Every candid person must admit that a considerable portion of these phenomena is fraud, pure and simple, nothing but deception and imposture, contrived by craft and cunning and imposed on the credulity of the simple-minded for purposes of personal profit. But there are phenomena in this system which cannot be accounted for on these grounds. There is a supernatural power connected with it, but this supernatural power is of Satan, and not of God.

The Rise of Witchcraft

Those who recall the art of the magicians of Egypt who were buried with Pharaoh's host in the Red Sea. The incantations of Balaam which brought about his own destruction. The spirit-mediums of Nineveh and Babylon who perished with the nations they had deluded; the experience of Saul, the king of Israel, who went from a spirit-medium's seance to a suicide's grave. The history of numerous rulers from Croesus to Napoleon III to whom ruin and discomfiture were brought by consulting with spirits. The multitudes who wander now in heathen lands as hopeless and helpless demoniacs, as some did in ancient Palestine. The wreck of mind and morals which meddling with Spiritualism now brings to many; the frantic agony of those whom Spiritualism has brought to a suicide's fate will surely want more evidence than such a record affords that Spiritualism is from God. Its deadly pitfalls, terrible chasms, and awful abysses into which so many have plunged who have dabbled in it, ought to cause every prudent and wise person to avoid it as he would the bubonic plague.

Some smile with incredulity when they hear the legendary tales of ghosts, goblins, and black cats, and of old women riding broomsticks through the air, and many who do the smiling then go to see a spirit medium floating in ether, or being borne around on a table suspended in space. They take but little stock in the tales of persons binding themselves to serve the devil at a witch-dance in some dark forest, and then such incredulous ones attend a seance in a darkened room where the medium could never have gained the high position of mediumship without first absolutely yielding her body, soul, mind, spirit, and will to the control of unseen and unknown spirits. But there is no essential difference between the two.

The first spiritualist medium was the serpent in the Garden of Eden. This creature was---more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made.” Satan selected this -subtle- beast as a medium through which to manifest the first spiritualistic phenomena. Through the serpent he spoke to Eve, the first woman. And he spoke to her in order to deceive her. It is worthy of more than passing attention that it was by believing a spiritualist medium that this world has been overwhelmed with such a flood of sin, disease, sorrow, grief, misery, trouble, war, and death. And it is worth noticing, also, that if Satan then could take possession of the body of an animal or reptile and so control that animal as to make it appear to be different from what it was, and then through his possession of that animal deceive and delude an innocent and unfallen human being, we certainly are justified in believing that he can and does exert his power today in a similar way to deceive and delude human beings. For his power and craft and malice during these six thousand years since this first spiritualistic manifestation have not been diminished, but rather increased. Today he still deceives and deludes the world through mediums.

Origin of Modern Spiritualism

Modern Spiritualism had its beginning in Hydesville, NY, in the year 1848. The first intelligible communication of Spiritualism in modern times came in response to a direct appeal to Satan himself. In the year mentioned, a farmer by the name of John D. Fox lived in Hydesville, near Rochester, NY. He was the father of six children, two of whom were living at home. These were the youngest children of the family and their names were Margaret, who was fifteen years of age, and Kate, aged twelve. They had but recently moved and they found the house they occupied disturbed by noises, especially at night.

They attributed these noises at first to mice and rats, and then to a loose board, but they soon discovered the noises to be distinct and intelligent rapping. After retiring on the night of March 31, 1848, the parents and children sleeping in the same room, these rapping commenced with greater violence than usual. Mr. Fox arose and tried the window sashes, and finding them all secure was about to return to his rest when Kate, observing that when he shook the sashes the rapping seemed to reply, turned in the direction from which the sound seemed to come, and snapped her fingers, at the same time exclaiming, "Here, Old Split foot, do as I do."

The rapping instantly replied, frightening the girls so that they had no further desire at the time to continue the conversation with "Old Split foot." But the mother continued to cultivate his acquaintance, and from him received a message professing to come from the spirit of Charles B. Rosna, which told her that he had been murdered in that very house some years ago. An exact location in the cellar of the house was given as the place where his body had been buried, and on digging there a considerable portion of a human skeleton was found, and it was later ascertained that a man answering to the description given had visited the house and had not been seen since.

Margaret Fox soon developed remarkable occult powers in her continued intercourse with the spirits. Many questions were asked the spirits and the answers in the main were found to be correct. Thus lost articles were found. Neighbors came in to investigate, other questions were asked and answered, and many became convinced that the Fox girls were actually in communication with the spirits of the dead. From this time the movement spread like a prairie fire.

A Vast Confederacy of Evil

In our study of this movement we must ever bear in mind that there are upon earth a vast multitude of invisible beings clothed with supernatural power, called "demons" by the Scriptures of truth, wholly evil in character, and who, with the most intense hatred toward God and man, are constantly engaged in the most bitter warfare against the welfare of human beings and the glory of God. This vast confederacy of evil is presided over by a chief who once dwelt in the courts of heaven, but whose present supreme aim is to ensnare the human race to its eternal destruction and who aims at pressing every event and circumstance of human life into his fiendish service.

When Satan fell from heaven a great number of his angels were cast out of heaven with him. Revelation 12:7-9; 2 Peter 2:4. The Bible teaches that each child of God has an attending angel from the courts of heaven. Matthew 18:10; Acts 12:12-16. Without doubt each person has also an evil angel attending him constantly. This evil angel, who is under the direction of Satan, knows all that we have ever done, all that we have ever said, all the secrets which we have thought were known only to ourselves, and all the things which we have carefully kept from the light of day. It is this evil angel who has been in constant attendance on our loved one in this life, who appears and impersonates that loved one at a spiritualist seance. That evil spirit can tell all that the loved one himself could tell if he were really there. It can reveal secrets which were known only to the one who is dead and the inquirer at the seance, and this revelation appears of such a supernatural character that the inquirer, not being fortified by the truth of the Bible concerning the state of the dead, is convinced that he is in actual communication with the spirit of his dead loved one. He is led on to believe "doctrines of devils" (1 Timothy 4:1), for once convinced that it is one who loves him who speaks to him, he is then ready to believe any message he may receive. Thus he is drawn away from God into this terrible delusion. The spirits which appear at spiritualist seances are not the spirits of the dead but are spirits of devils. This movement is the latter-day working of the one who was cast out of heaven, and all of the people of God should guard them, selves against it with the utmost care.

An Intelligence Wholly Evil

We admit that there are mysterious and supernatural manifestations, and freely concede that there are evidences of physical power and mental intelligence in Spiritualism which cannot be explained by ordinary scientific principles. But the power thus exercised is an evil power, and the intelligence that is thus manifested is also an evil intelligence.

Let us sit for a moment at a spiritualist seance. The medium inquires, "Are the spirits present?" "Rap, rap, rap," comes the reply. "Will they communicate? Rap, rap, rap." Is this the spirit of this gentleman's grandmother?" Map, rap, rap." Will the spirit use the alphabet? Rap, rap, rap."

Thus a communication is received, by slow and painful methods, from a grandmother, who, after progressing in the spiritual sphere, which is said to be one of great progress and enlightenment, for three decades, cannot talk as well as she could thirty years ago.

And how am I to be sure that this is the spirit of my grandmother? Any other spirit could make three raps just as loud or just as low. Any other spirit could profess to be my grandmother. This spirit may be, for all I can know to the contrary, the spirit of my aunt, my brother, my bitterest enemy, a Borneo savage, a demon, the devil himself, or any of his angels. I am completely at the mercy of some intelligence which does not dare to show its face, and which gives me no references, but expects me to believe it implicitly.

But there are other tests offered. Handwriting, the very familiar handwriting of the departed, is submitted to us. But this proves nothing. Our prisons are full now of men who were too handy with their pens, and too free in the use of other men's handwriting. If the dead are conscious, as Spiritualism teaches, what assurance can we have that the spirits of forgers, knaves, and criminals of all descriptions are not still plying their nefarious trades?

But, it is insisted, the spirits tell things which no one present can know. We are not sure about it. There may be those present we do not see, the spirit not of your grandmother, or wife, or child, but spirits which have known the history of your family for

generations, and who may be familiar with every event of your life. Such a spirit knows your secret acts, it has heard your most secret whispers, and it is not surprising that it can astonish you by revealing things which you believed were known to no one else.

Scientists Are Baffled

The claim is made that the spirits talk piously, and give good instruction, and tell the truth. But suppose they do-sometimes. This proves nothing. 'Bad messages, of course, come from bad spirits, but good messages do not necessarily come from good spirits. While a good man will not lie, yet a bad man and a liar will sometimes tell the truth. A bad spirit will tell the truth and falsehood, giving each kind of fish the bait it likes best, but will ultimately lie to all and deceive and dupe everybody who deals with it. And granting, for the moment, that these spirits are what they claim to be, the spirits of the dead, even then it should be remembered that there are plenty of living men whom we would not want to meet with masks on their faces and in the dark. There are living men who will lie, and cheat, and steal, and deceive, and swindle, and forge, and delude, and who most certainly will bear close watching. What assurance have we, if the dead are conscious, that such men when they are dead will be any better than they were when living?

But, we are assured, even scientists have been baffled in their investigation of these phenomena, and freely admit they must have a supernatural origin. So do we admit it. And it is not surprising that science is baffled. Science may be able to explain anything which is based upon natural laws or physical forces, but it never can satisfactorily explain acts which are the results of the whims or inclinations of intelligent beings, in possession of self-determining wills, especially when science enters such an investigation disbelieving in the existence of the very forces and agencies which produce the phenomena.

Scientists can perform an experiment in chemistry or physics again and again, and under similar conditions will get unvarying results. But when a scientist comes to deal with the caprices of a living, self-determining, self-acting thing, he can no more predict its next whim than can the most unscientific mortal. The operation of a machine may be accurately forecast, but the wisest of men will have difficulty predicting the antics of a monkey. An astronomer would have no difficulty in locating on his celestial map the farthest planets and stars, but all his mathematical and astronomical wisdom and learning would not help in locating his boy's cap the next morning.

Masquerading as Christian

Those things which are dependent on human action and human will cannot be accurately calculated by man. And let the existence of millions of unseen intelligences which often interfere in human affairs be once granted, and it will be obvious at once why, denying the very existence of such agencies, science is baffled by the phenomena of Spiritualism, for it is just as impossible for scientists to find a solution of the mysterious work of unseen and devilish spirits as it would certainly be for the greatest mathematician to forecast a kitten's antics or a lunatic's hallucinations.

Today Spiritualism masquerades under the guise of Christianity. It hides its real character under a pretension of great holiness. It is building churches and taking on the appearance of a Christian denomination. And under this deceptive appearance it is sweeping millions to ruin and despair. But at the beginning of its modern history it made no such pretensions, and frankly acknowledged its connection with the devil, to whom it offered its prayers and devotion. Its official organ of that time contains a number of petitions to his Satanic majesty, three of which are here given:

"O Lucifer, thou son of the morning who fell from thy high estate, and whom mortals are prone to call the embodiment of evil, we lift our voices to thee. We know thou cannot not harm us unless by the will of the Almighty of whom thou art a part and portion, and in whose economy thou played a part, and we cannot presume to sit in judgment over Deity. From the depths of your infamy stream forth divine truths. Why should we turn from thee? Does not the same inspiration rule us all? Is one in God's sight better than another? We know thou art yet to come up in his expanded creation, purified by the influence of God's love, for his love is not perfected while one of his children writhes in misery. So, O Lucifer do we come up and stand before the throne of the Ancient of Days, hand in hand with thee. As thou has been the star of the morning thou wilt again become an angel of light. O Satan, we will subdue thee with our love and thou wilt yet kneel humbly with us at the throne of God." Banner of Light, December 21, 1861, page 8.

"O thou prince of darkness and king of light, God and devil, greater and lesser good, perfect and imperfect being! We ask and demand of thee that we may know thee, for to know thee is to know more of ourselves. And if to do this it be necessary to wander in hell, yea and amen, we wander there with the spirits of darkness. The church and the world tell us that the devil goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, but we know thee only as God's vicegerent, to stand at his left hand, the regenerator of mankind, the means of bringing up all things, intellectually and morally to perfection." - Banner of Light, March 1, 1862.

Prayer to the Devil

On opening a debate with a Christian minister on the subject of Spiritualism, Prof. W. Chaney, a medium, at San Jose, California, January 29, 1874, offered this prayer: "O devil, prince of demons in the Christian hell! O thou monarch of the bottomless pit, thou king of scorpions having stings in their tails, to whom it is given to hurt the earth for five months, I beseech thee to hear my prayer. Bless thy servant in his labors before thee. Fill his mouth with words of wisdom. Enable him to defend thee from the false charges about to be made against thy sulphurous majesty, and triumph by truth and logic over his opponent, so that this audience may realize that thou art a prayer hearing and prayer-answering devil." - Signs of the Times, May 10, 1877.

And that the anticipations of Spiritualists have now been met, and Satan has actually been converted, is the message which is now brought from the world of spirits, as recorded in what purports to be a message received from a departed Lutheran minister

developed into a psychic,- as the spirit described itself, printed in the Washington DC. Post of November 1, 1914. The message is as follows:

“The new revelation and great truth I am graciously permitted to tell is the fact that Satan (Helios) has been truly converted. Pray for him, all you earnest ministers and children of God; for Helios has a terrible battle on his hands, as I am informed this morning. While many of the spirits of the abyss or lowest hell on the sun, with him, have turned and accepted Jehovah, there are many left who are fiercely obstructing the higher progress of Helios and other hell spirits who have left them. You know that people on earth who turn from wickedness to righteousness have the hardest time to defend them, selves against their former bad companions. Not only does everybody doubt that their conversion is sincere, but all the old cronies, out of revenge, do whatever mischief they can against their former friend.

Now, imagine Satan being converted, as he really is, and you know that it is an awful struggle for him. Satan was a high angel from a very ancient world, possibly one of the Elohim or sons (emanations) of God, who fell through pride. For many thousands of years he has been the jailer of the lowest hell sphere on the sun, and that is why he gives his name as ‘Helios,’ which is Greek, and means ‘sun.’ His scriptural names are Hebrew, Abaddon; and Greek, Apollyon.

“The recent conversion of Helios was the greatest victory of Jesus, and the turning point of the history of the earth.”

Spiritualism Is Spreading

From the small beginning already described, Spiritualism has grown by leaps and bounds until today it numbers its converts by the hundreds of thousands. It has developed through different stages, such as slate-writing, table-tipping, the playing of musical instruments by unseen agencies, and other remarkable manifestations, but through all its history the chief characteristic of this delusion has been, and is now, the claim of communicating with the spirits of the dead.

This claim of communication with the dead is not a new thing. Spiritualism itself, as has been shown, is not a new thing. It is an old thing which has been given a new name. In ancient times it was not called Spiritualism, but witchcraft, sorcery, wizardry, necromancy, and consulting with familiar spirits. Under those names it is spoken of in the Bible and strongly condemned.

Inasmuch as this system is sweeping many people from their moorings out into a great sea of deception, it is well that we study what God has to say about it. It is a most powerful deception, and we cannot combat its power successfully in our own strength. God has given much instruction concerning it in his Word, and this instruction will be of the utmost value to us in meeting the lying claims of Spiritualism and overcoming them.

God said to his ancient people: “Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them: I am the Lord your God.” Leviticus 19: 3 1.

The possession of familiar, or controlling, spirits is the very claim upon which the so-called communication with the spirits of the dead is made by spiritualist mediums. In the verse quoted above God forbids his people to have anything to do with those who make such claims, and further admonishes them that any such connection will be defiling to his people.

God Prohibited Spiritualism

“And I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against the sorcerers.” Malachi 3:5. Sorcery was a pretended familiarity with the spirits of the dead, that is, it was the ancient name of modern Spiritualism. “Therefore hearken not you to your prophets, nor to your diviners, nor to your dreamers, nor to your enchanters, nor to your sorcerers, for they prophesy a lie unto you.” Jeremiah 27:9, 10.

Spiritualism pretends to be able to foretell the future accurately. This is mere pretension, for it does not know the future. Mediums, reasoning from cause to effect, may surmise something of what may come to pass, and so may we all, but they have no supernatural knowledge at all of the future. If Spiritualists knew what would happen tomorrow and the next day they would undoubtedly be the most successful manipulators of the Wall Street stock market, for they would be able to tell whether stocks were going up or down and thus be far in advance of their competitors. They do not know the future, but “they prophesy a lie unto you.” “A man also or a woman that hath a familiar spirit, or that is a wizard, shall surely be put to death: they shall stone them with stones: their blood shall be upon them.” Leviticus 20: 27.

This was the ancient penalty for attempting to communicate with the spirits of the dead, and there are those who never cease to deride the Bible for such a law. But when men talk, it is well to know what they are talking about. And when they take a little trouble to find out, they might discover that the occult and devilish practices of ancient Spiritualism not only tended, as they do now, to disease, insanity, immorality and death, but that those who practiced these occult arts were too often guilty of the most horrible, abominable, and revolting crimes and barbarities, which in themselves were sufficient cause to prohibit the practices which gave rise to them. It is well, at any rate, to learn the estimation in which the Lord holds Spiritualism. “There shall not be found among you any one that makes his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that uses divination or an enchanter, or a witch, or a charmer, or a consultant with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord.” Deuteronomy 18: 10,12.

Surely at the present time consulting with familiar spirits cannot be pleasing to God when anciently it was an abomination to him.

In the New Testament, Spiritualism is also found in doubtful company under its old name of witchcraft. “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife, sedition, heresies, envying, murders, drunkenness, reveling, and such like. Of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” Galatians 5: 19,21.

Try the Spirits

All such movements which claim to be of God we are told to test: “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets have gone out into the world.” 1 John 4: 1.

And how, and by what, we are to try the spirits is also made plain: “And when they shall say unto you. Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep, and that mutter; should not a people seek unto their God? For the living to the dead? To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.” Isaiah 8: 19, 20.

Rather than the living seeking to the dead for help, they should seek to their God. When Spiritualism urges us to seek to the dead through a medium controlled by a familiar spirit then we need to seek God. And we are to test the claims of Spiritualism by “the law” and by “the testimony,” that is, by the Word of God. If they speak not according to the Bible it is because there is no light in them.

Examined by this test Spiritualism fails at every point. The doctrine upon which the whole system is based is in contradiction to the plainest statements of the Bible. Spiritualism teaches that the dead are conscious; the Bible declares them to be unconscious.

Spiritualism is not all trickery. There is a supernatural power behind it, but that power is not the power of God, but of Satan. The spirits which appear in the dim light of a Spiritualistic seance, are not the spirits of our departed friends at all. “They are the spirits of devils, working miracles,” declares the inspired Word of God. Revelation 16:14.

As many will be brought into contact with these spirits who impersonate the dead they will find themselves confronted by a power which they will be utterly unable to withstand or resist. Appeals will be made to their sympathies, and before their eyes miracles will be wrought which will convince them that this fearful delusion is the great power of God. They will be led to disbelieve the Word of God which opposes the claims of Spiritualism and will thus be led on until God departs from them, as he did from King Saul, and they are completely entangled in the snares of the devil. Thus thousands and hundreds of thousands will lose their souls in this final effort of Satan to deceive the whole world and take it captive. Our only protection against this powerful delusion is to be acquainted with the inspired teaching of the Bible concerning the dead.

King Saul’s Experience

The experience of King Saul with the witch of Endor is sometimes cited as proof of the possibility of communicating with the dead. But this experience is merely an account of the deception of Saul by a demon impersonating the dead Samuel. If we accept this account as a genuine manifestation of the spirit of Samuel we must be prepared to believe that all the prophets, and apostles, and saints are at all times liable to be called from their resting places at the bidding of spirit mediums. We must believe, too, that the whole host of the dead, instead of being, as has been taught, in heaven, in hell, or in purgatory, are merely kept “on tap” in preparation for a call from any witch, wizard, necromancer, sorcerer, or company of free lovers who may choose to have a seance in order to parade these patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and relatives before anyone who may be willing to pay a quarter at a wholesale seance, or a dollar at a retail one. The Christian is not ready to accept any such preposterous idea.

8. THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

GOD’S people are to be released from the prison-house of death at the time of the Second Coming of Christ. It is this great event, the coming of Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords, which is the consummation of the hopes of the saints of the Lord in all ages. From the time of Adam to the present the servants of God have looked with longing eyes for the coming of Christ to make all things new, to destroy death, and to restore to the redeemed everything that has been lost by sin. From the very earliest times it has been the purpose of God to destroy sin when it has run its course, and he has revealed this purpose in numerous promises to his people.

The reign of sin is nearly finished. The message heralding the return of Jesus to this earth is even now going into all the earth. The present generation is destined to see the closing up of all things. This is made clear in the prophecy uttered by Christ on the Mount of Olives and recorded in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew.

The Great Tribulation

The prophecy of this chapter is given in reply to the question of the disciples, “When shall these things be, and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?” Matthew 24:3. Christ answered this question by predicting the destruction of Jerusalem and then by outlining the history of the world from that time to the end. He declared that after the destruction of Jerusalem, which took place in AD 70, there would be a period of “great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.” Verse 21. This was fulfilled in the period of papal persecution, which, according to the prophecy of Daniel 7: 25, was to continue for a time, times, and half a time, or 1260 years. This period began in 538 and closed in 1798, at the time when the pope was taken prisoner by Berthier and exiled into France.

“And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.” Verse 22. The persecution to come upon the church was to be so severe that unless there should be some shortening of it none of the people of God would survive it. The time of the persecution reached down to 1798. But before 1798 came, the effects of

the Protestant Reformation began to be felt, and persecution had practically ceased by 1775. Here is a period of about twenty-three years, between 1775 and 1798, by which the persecution of Christians had been shortened.

“Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light.” Verse 29. This very definitely locates this sign, not after the days of persecution themselves, but after the persecution “of those days.” The days ended in 1798; the tribulation ended about 1775. Mark, in recording the same prophecy of the Master, puts this prediction in this language: “But in those days [before 1798], after that tribulation [after 1775], the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light.” Mark 13:24.

The Dark Day and the Falling of the Stars

Thus the occurrence of this sign, a remarkable darkening of the sun, a dark day, is limited to a period of about twenty-three years, between 1775 and 1798. And in that very period that prediction was remarkably fulfilled. It was on May 19, 1780 that this remarkable dark day occurred. About ten o'clock in the morning of that day a darkness began to shut out the light of the sun. The chickens began to go to roost as if it were night, and the cows came in from the pastures. It was necessary to light the candles in the homes of the people in order to read common print. All felt that this was a sign of the approaching of the end of the world. It came at the very time predicted and was the fulfillment of Matthew 24: 29.

“And the stars shall fall from heaven.” Verse 29. This sign was fulfilled in the wonderful meteoric shower of the morning of Nov. 13, 1833. On that day the most wonderful falling of stars that the world has ever seen took place, and fulfilled this verse.

“And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.” Verse 30, 31. In this line of prophecy the very next thing to happen after the falling of the stars in 1833 is the actual appearance of Jesus in the clouds of heaven. “When you shall see all these things, know that he [margin] is near, even at the doors.” Verse 33.

When we see these signs, the great tribulation, the dark day, and the falling of the stars, we may rest assured that Christ is very near at hand, just as near as a person is who is knocking at our door. Then to make it still more definite, Christ said: “Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.” Verse 34.

This locates the coming of Christ in a certain generation. And that certain generation is definitely located as the one which “shall see all these things,” the tribulation, the dark day, and the falling of the stars, not see them literally, but see them as signs of the coming of Christ. Undoubtedly some who saw the falling of the stars in 1833 will be among those who are alive when the Lord shall come. But the teaching of this verse is that when the people of the earth bear a great message of the coming of the Lord, which will set before them these signs as signs of his coming, the generation which hears that message will be the generation which will be living when the Lord comes. just as it was the generation which heard the message of John and of Christ and his disciples, and which rejected that message, upon which the destruction of Jerusalem came as a punishment for that rejection, so in these last days it will be the generation which hears the message of the coming of Christ with all its allied truths, and rejects that message, upon which the destruction of the last days will come. That message is now being preached in all the world. This present generation is the one which is hearing the message of the coming of Christ. The present generation is the one which is destined to see the coming of Christ.

A Counterfeit Coming of Christ

Satan has attempted to pervert even the truth of the Second Coming of the Lord. He has led some to believe that Christ will not come literally, and to believe that the prophecies of the Bible concerning his coming are sufficiently fulfilled at the death of each person. Others he has deceived by leading them to believe that Christ's Second Coming will be secret, that he will take one here and one there. Others he has led to believe that Christ has already come.

There is no doubt that before the Second Coming of Christ Satan will attempt to counterfeit his coming by a pretended coming in which he will himself assume the character and likeness of Christ. This seems to be clearly taught in the following verse: “And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming. Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders.” 2 Thessalonians 2:8, 9.

We may expect, therefore, that the coming of Christ will be counterfeited before it happens. Satan will pretend to be Christ. Undoubtedly he will take on the appearance of Christ, for we are told that he has power to transform himself into an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14). He will speak in the same gentle, compassionate tone that Jesus did when he was among men. He will perform miracles, heal the sick, speak with tongues, and do the same wonders and the same work that would be expected of Christ. And many will be led away by the deception and give Satan their allegiance. This will undoubtedly be the last great deception of Satan before the coming of Christ.

And the way for this deception is being prepared by the teaching which is being disseminated today that Christ has really come to this earth, this coming having taken place in 1874, and that he will appear before long to all the earth. It is taught that while he came the second time in 1874, yet that coming was a secret one, known only to a few, but that in a very little while he will appear to the whole world, and set up a temporal kingdom, and reign one thousand years during the millennium, and at that time all who have not accepted Christ in this life, will then have another trial and another opportunity to accept him. This deceptive teaching, which is finding wide acceptance, is preparing the world for Satan's last great attempt to defeat the work of God.

Manner of Christ's Coming

It is not at all necessary for the people of God to be deceived in this matter of the coming of Christ. The Bible clearly teaches the manner of his coming, and makes it plain that it has not yet taken place, and that when it does take place it will be a literal coming in the clouds of heaven in the sight of the entire earth.

That Christ's coming will be literal is evident from the following passage: "While they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said.

You men of Galilee, why stand you gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as you have seen him go into heaven." Acts 1:10, 11.

Yes, it will be "this same Jesus" who will come again, and he will come "in like manner" as he went into heaven. When he went away, "a cloud received him out of their sight." Acts 1:9. Therefore when he comes again he will come with clouds. "Behold, he comes with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him and all kingdoms of the earth shall wail because of him." Revelation 1:7.

His coming will not be a secret coming. "Every eye shall see him." "For as the lightning comes out of the east and shines even unto the west: so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." Matthew 24:27.

And there will be no probation after the coming of Christ. Even a little while before he comes the probation of all is forever closed, and this decree goes forth: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still. And he that is righteous let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still." Revelation 22:11. And then: -Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." Revelation 22: 12.

Resurrection of Righteous and Wicked

The coming of Christ brings the reign of sin to an end, and delivers the people of God from the great tyrant who has held them in bondage through the ages. At the coming of Christ all the people of God from the beginning of the world to this time are raised from the dead to be taken with Christ to those mansions which he has gone to prepare. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." 1 Thessalonians 4:16,17. "But the rest of the dead [the wicked] lived not again until the thousand years were finished." Revelation 20:5.

There are to be two resurrections, a resurrection of the righteous, which will take place at the Second Coming of Christ, and a resurrection of the wicked, which will take place one thousand years later, or at the end of the millennium. The millennium opens with a resurrection and closes with a resurrection. During the millennium the wicked are all dead.

It is plain from these verses that at the Second Coming of Christ all of the righteous dead will be raised, all of the righteous living translated, and together the righteous of all ages will be taken by the Lord to those mansions he is now preparing, and there in the courts of heaven they will live and reign with Christ a thousand years. Revelation 20:4.

At the same time that the righteous dead are raised and the righteous living are translated from the earth, the wicked who are alive will be destroyed, and the wicked who are dead remain dead until the second resurrection at the close of the thousand years.

"Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; and to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints." 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10.

Thus the earth is entirely emptied of its inhabitants, all the wicked being dead on the earth and all the righteous having been taken to heaven with Christ.

Are You Safe?

In one of these classes, reader, you will stand at the coming of Christ. And the time of that coming is very near at hand. We may doubt it, dispute it, deny it now; but at that time we shall be compelled to meet it. Can you meet it with composure? Do you tremble when you think of it? Are you ready for that day? Are you in Christ? Are you safe? Have you obeyed God? Have you heard the great final message of the gospel? If so, have you obeyed it? It has been sent to you for the very purpose of preparing you for the day of God. Have you brought your life into harmony with it, and thus permitted the Lord to prepare your heart to meet him in peace? If not, let me plead with you to seek the Lord while he may be found. Before the door of mercy is shut, and while probation still lingers, believe the message he has sent to you and give him your heart.

It may be, however, that you are a Christian. If so, God speed you on your heavenly journey. Christ's love for you is very great; and your zeal for his work and glory should be proportionate thereto. The Master is about to come with rewards. What reward will he bring you? Be diligent. Remember the work of God. Strive to save those about you from the wrath which is to come. Give them the message of his coming. Be zealous in giving the message, for in it is salvation. The time is too short for half-hearted work. God is calling for laborers now. Oh, give yourself to him for the finishing of his work in the earth.

"And now, little children, abide in him; that when he shall appear, we may have confidence and not be ashamed before him at his coming." "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world." 1 John 2: 28; 4: 17.

9. THE MILLENNIUM AND HELL

THE Second Coming of Christ, Satan is to be bound a thousand years so that he will be unable to deceive the nations. After the thousand years he will be loosed from his bondage and again enter upon the work of deception for a little season. The only passage in the Bible which makes reference to the thousand year period is as follows: "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled. And after that he must be loosed a little season. And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the Word of God, and which had not worshiped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands. And they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection." Revelation 20: 1-5.

Every theory of the millennium which is now being taught must be made to harmonize with this passage of Scripture, for, as has been said, this is the only passage which speaks of the thousand year period. The word "millennium" comes from two Latin words, "mille," meaning a thousand, and "annus," meaning year, -a thousand years. There is no other meaning to the word. It does not mean what its perverted use has come to convey to the minds of many people - a thousand year period of great peace, prosperity, and salvation upon this earth. This has been the generally accepted meaning of the term, but there is no such meaning in the term itself. It means merely a thousand years, without specifying anything at all as to the character of that period.

This thousand year period, the millennium, begins with the Second Coming of Christ. During the thousand years Satan will be bound in some place called "the bottomless pit." This is for the purpose of restraining him from deceiving the nations, and to partially punish him.

From the fact that Satan is bound it has been concluded that the millennium will be a very happy, glorious time of peace among the nations, that all the nations will be converted to the gospel, and as a result disband their armies, dismantle their navies, and learn war no more. This theory had been taught so long that it has come to be widely accepted, but it has absolutely no foundation at all in the Scriptures.

There is nothing in the Bible which would lead any one to suppose that before the end of this world the nations will all be converted to the gospel and cease to fight each other. The Bible teaches just the contrary.

The verse upon which much of the teaching is based that the world is to be converted to Christ before his Second Coming is Matthew 24:14: "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations, and then shall the end come." But this verse does not teach at all that the world will be converted. It teaches merely that the gospel will be sent to all the world, not for the conversion of the nations, but "for a witness" unto all nations.

In the parable of the wheat and the tares, recorded in Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43, it is made very plain that both the righteous and the wicked are to "grow together - until the "harvest," which is explained to be "the end of the world." At the end of the world, instead of the wicked all being converted, they are to be cast into a furnace of fire where there is wailing and gnashing of teeth.

World Growing Worse and Worse

We are plainly told in the Bible that "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." 2 Timothy 3: 13.

Jesus himself, in speaking of the days immediately preceding his Second Coming, declared that "as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought they sold, they planted, they built; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed." Luke 17:21-30.

Hence all that it is necessary to do in order to discover the character of the days just before the coming of Christ is to refer to the history of the days just before the flood and the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah. Concerning the conditions prevailing on the earth in the days of the flood, we read: "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Genesis 6: 5.

Perilous Times

We have a picture of the last days of the history of this earth, painted by divine inspiration. It is as follows: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce, breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despising of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God. Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away." 2 Timothy 3:1-5.

Surely this does not appear to be teaching the conversion of the world. Here is the list of nineteen terrible sins which are especially to characterize the "last days." And the astonishing thing about this passage is that the people who indulge in these sins will not be unbelievers only, but church members. This is evident from the expression that they have a "form of godliness." And if

the professed church of Christ in the days of his Second Coming can be so described by divine inspiration, then what must the world at large be?

Nor are we left in ignorance by the Lord even of the rise of the movement which is teaching the world's conversion and a millennium of peace upon earth. "Of the times and the seasons, brethren, you have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that, the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction comes upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape." 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3. It appears, then, that this very movement which is proclaiming the world's conversion is a sign in itself of the rapidly, approaching destruction of all things.

But, it will be asked, does the Bible not teach somewhere that the world at some time in the future will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, and all nations serve him? Yes, the Bible does teach just this. But the mistake has been made in not seeing that this is taught with reference to the earth in its regenerated condition, when all things are made new, and not regarding the earth as it is now.

"The earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." Isaiah 11:9.

"And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another and from one Sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, said the Lord." Isaiah 66: 23.

These passages clearly foretell a time when all the earth will be acquainted with Jehovah, and will worship him. But they have reference solely to the new earth, not to the earth in its present condition. And this condition of universal worship is to be brought about, not at all by the conversion of the nations of the earth, but rather by their destruction. Thus Peter informs us: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night. In the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burned up." "Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness." 2 Peter 3:10, 13.

Order of Events

Let us study briefly the order of the events at the beginning and the close of the millennium. It is to begin, as we have seen, with the Second Coming of Christ. At the coming of Christ all of the righteous dead will be raised from their graves to be taken to heaven with the righteous living, who are to be translated. "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." 1 Thessalonians 4: 16, 17.

The Bible teaches clearly that there are to be two resurrections. a resurrection of the righteous, and a resurrection of the wicked. "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection Of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." John 5:28-29.

The first resurrection is to take place at the coming of Christ, and will include only the righteous. This will be plain from a study of the verse which reads: "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power." Revelation 20: 6.

Thus it is plain that at the Second Coming of Christ all of the righteous, both the dead, who have been raised, and the living, who have been translated, will be caught up together and will meet the Lord in the air, and then will be taken with the Lord to those mansions in his Father's house which he is now preparing for his people. They will be taken to heaven, and there they will live and reign with Christ for a thousand years. John 14: 1.3; Revelation 20: 4.

The Earth Depopulated

As the wicked dead are not raised at the time of the coming of Christ, this removal of the righteous from the earth will leave only the living wicked here. And these wicked who are alive at the coming of Christ are put to death by the brightness of his presence. This is clearly taught by 2 Thessalonians 1:7.9.

Thus it will be seen that with the righteous all in heaven, and the wicked all dead upon the earth, the earth will be utterly emptied of its inhabitants. A description of the condition of the wicked in that day will be found in the book of Jeremiah: "And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth. They shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground." Jeremiah 25:33. "Behold, the Lord makes the earth empty, and makes it waste and turns it upside down, and scatters abroad the inhabitants thereof." "The land shall be utterly emptied, and utterly spoiled: for the Lord hath spoken this word." Isaiah 24:1,3. "I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the Lord, and by his fierce anger. For thus hath the Lord said, The whole land shall be desolate; yet will I not make a full end." Jeremiah 4: 23.27.

Thus it is plain that the condition of the earth during the millennium will be a waste, desolate wilderness. All of the works of man will be ruined and destroyed. Darkness will cover the earth. It is the earth in this condition which is called the "bottomless pit," into which Satan is cast and bound. The term bottomless pit is used in Revelation 9:1,2, and there applied to the Arabian desert, from which issued the hordes of Saracens and Turks which are described in that chapter. The term means any place of darkness, desolation, and death. And when the earth during the millennium returns to its original condition of chaos, "without form and void," it becomes the "bottomless pit" of Satan's captivity.

Here, in this desolate earth, with its cities broken down, and its whole expanse become a great wilderness without any of the human race left, Satan will be compelled to stay for one thousand years. He is bound with a great chain. This chain is not a literal chain, but a chain of circumstances. He is unable to do anything. He is out of work. He cannot deceive the righteous, for they are in heaven, out of his reach. He cannot deceive the wicked, for they are dead. By the very circumstances of his position he is bound, and he must of necessity remain bound until some change is brought about either in the condition of the righteous or the wicked.

A Just Punishment

While this is not Satan's final punishment, it is a just preliminary to it. It is sin which causes the wreck of the world. This is the work of Satan. This is the result of the rebellion he started in heaven and continued upon this earth. And now, during the millennium, he is made to understand what it all means. The great chain which will bind Satan will be broken by the resurrection of the wicked.

"But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." Revelation 20:5.

Now, if the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished, then when the thousand years are finished the rest of the dead will live again. The resurrection of the wicked takes place at the close of the millennium. This releases the devil and provides him some one to work with again and to deceive. It was the emptiness of the earth of all human inhabitants which constituted his binding, and now the resurrection of the wicked effects his release.

And no sooner are the wicked raised from the dead than Satan begins to plan for his last great attempt to overthrow the government of God. When the wicked are raised he has a greater host at his command than ever before in the entire history of his rebellion. All of the wicked who have ever lived upon the earth are now under his control and ready to do his bidding. And all the angels who were cast out of heaven are still with him, and are now in such desperation as to be ready for anything.

It is at the close of the thousand years of the millennium that the Holy City, the New Jerusalem, comes down from God out of heaven and rests upon the earth. At this time the wicked are still upon the earth, being marshaled into companies and battalions by the great arch-rebel and his assistants. That beautiful and glorious city, which is to be the capital of the new earth, settles down upon the place prepared for it in the sight of the wicked. And in the city are to dwell the redeemed of the Lord who have been living and reigning with him during the millennium.

"And I John saw the holy city, the New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven; prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God." Revelation 21:2, 3.

Satan is released from his captivity by the resurrection of the wicked. Around him are gathered the vast hosts of his own evil angels, and now this great company is joined by the innumerable throng of the wicked. As Satan sees himself joined by this great host, and beholds before him the New Jerusalem containing the righteous and the holy angels with their loved Commander, the Son of God, he determines that he will not yet yield his struggle. He inspires his host with the hope that after all they may be able to overthrow the government of God and take the city.

The Attack Against the Holy City

Led by this delusive hope, the great host of the lost are marshaled by Satan to take the Holy City.

"And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city; and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." Revelation 20: 7,9.

As the great host of the wicked surround the Holy City the fire of God falls from heaven, and the vast multitude of evil men and fallen angels are overwhelmed. This fire does not perpetuate the wicked, but devours them. This is the second death from which there will never be any recovery. None of the wicked will ever be raised from the death which they experience at this time. There will be no eternally burning hell into which they will be cast and in which they will suffer forever. Notice what the Scriptures say of their fate.

They shall "die" (Ezekiel 18:4), they shall suffer "death" (Romans 6: 23), they shall suffer the "second death" (Revelation 20:14, 15). They shall be "destroyed" (Psalm 145: 20), they shall suffer "destruction" (Job 21:30), they shall "perish" (Psalm 37: 20), they shall be "burned up" (Matthew 3:12; Malachi 4: 1). They shall "not be" (Psalm 37: 10), they shall come to an "end" (Psalm 37: 38), they shall be "consumed" (Psalm 37: 20), they shall be "devoured" (Psalm 21:9), they shall be "slain" (Psalm 62:3), they shall be "cut off" (Psalm 37:9). "They shall be as though they had not been" (Obadiah 16), they shall be "silent in darkness" (1 Samuel 2: 9), they shall be "no more" (Psalm 104: 35). They shall be "blotted out" (Psalm 69: 28), they shall suffer "perdition" (2 Peter 3: 7). They shall be "ground to powder" (Matthew 21:44), they shall be "hewn down" (Matthew 3:10), they shall see "corruption" (Galatians 6:8), they shall be "torn in pieces" (Psalm 50: 22). They shall be "rooted up" (Proverbs 2: 22), they shall be as -nothing- (Jeremiah 10:24), and they shall be as "naught" (Isaiah 41:12).

The Destiny of Satan

These expressions, with the other studies on this subject in this book, are surely sufficient to establish the fact that the Bible does not teach the God-dishonoring doctrine of eternal torment. This doctrine was invented by Satan himself in the garden of Eden when he told Eve that if she disobeyed God she should "not surely die," although God had plainly told her that she should "surely die." The doctrine of eternal torment for the wicked has no place in the Bible and will have no place in reality when the wicked are punished. The fire that falls upon them from heaven at the close of the millennium will consume them altogether. Each will be

punished -according to his deeds” (Romans 2:6), some burning longer than others as they have lived more wickedly, but ultimately the fire which punishes them will bring them all to utter death and destruction.

The fire will have the same effect upon Satan and his angels that it has upon the wicked. They will also be brought to nothing, and be as though they had not been. This will take longer in Satan’s case than in any other, as he has been the one through whom all the rest have been caused to sin. But even in his case the fire of God will eventually devour him, and he will be no more. This is very plain from the words which God spoke to Satan: “I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. I will bring forth a fire from the midst of thee, it shall devour thee, and I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that behold thee. All they that know thee among the people shall be astonished at thee: thou shalt be a terror, and never shall thou be any more.” Ezekiel 28: 16-19.

The destiny of Satan is also referred to in the book of Malachi: “For behold, the day comes, that shall burn as an oven. And all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that comes shall burn them up, said the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch.” Malachi 4:1. Thus the end of the great conflict of the ages between Christ and Satan will result in the utter annihilation of Satan and his angels and all who ally themselves with him. The fires of the last day will consume them and leave them neither root nor branch. Satan is the root and the wicked are the branches. Nothing is to be left either of sin or sinners. The universe is to be cleansed from every stain of sin.

10. THE REWARD OF THE RIGHTEOUS

THE people of God will not spend eternity in heaven. There is no promise in the Bible that those who are saved will be given heaven as their eternal reward. But there are numerous promises of a glorious inheritance for the saints of the Lord on the other side of death. What that inheritance is and where it is the Scriptures make very plain.

We are informed by David that “the heaven, even the heavens are the Lord’s: but the earth hath he given to the children of men.” Psalm 115:16. And in Isaiah 45:18 we read that God formed the earth “not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited.” It is inconceivable that God created the earth to be inhabited under its present conditions or by its present inhabitants. His purpose involved its being inhabited by a race of pure, holy, and righteous beings. He planned for just such a race when he placed our first parents here in the Garden of Eden. That race was to fill the earth, live forever, ever remain as pure and holy as when their parents came from the hands of God, and constitute the kingdom of God on earth. This plan has been delayed a while by the entrance of sin, but God will yet have his way.

Earth to Be Redeemed

This earth was given to the human race at the time of its creation, and although it has been captured by Satan, this lost inheritance will yet be brought back to the children of God by the great plan of redemption, which includes the lost dominion as well as the lost race. Mankind lost the possession of the earth by sin, but it will be restored to the people of God through the gospel of Christ. And everything else which the race lost by sin will be restored by Christ.

The first specific promise of the future inheritance recorded in the Bible is that given to Abraham, and recorded in Genesis 13:14-17. “Lift up now your eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land which thou sees, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever.” This promise was repeated to Isaac, the son of Abraham, in Genesis 26:1-4, and to Jacob, the son of Isaac, in Genesis 28:12-15.

All that is included in this promise in the way of territory is not apparent on the surface of it, and a divine explanation is therefore required concerning it. This inspired explanation is given by Paul in Romans 4: 13 where he declares that this promise made to Abraham included the entire earth: “For the promise, that he should be heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.”

But this promise has never yet been fulfilled. Paul, in speaking of the men to whom the promises were made, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and their descendants, declares in Hebrews 11:13, that “these all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.”

The Resurrection a Part of the Promise

Inasmuch, therefore, as God promised the earth to these ancient worthies, and they died without having had the promise fulfilled to them, and as God’s promises do not fail, it is evident that there must be involved in that promise the resurrection from the dead. In order for God to fulfil the promise made to Abraham, the father of the faithful must be brought again from the grave and live upon this earth once more. The resurrection from the dead is therefore involved in the fulfillment of God’s great promise.

To this thought agree the words found in Ezekiel 37:12-14: “Thus said the Lord God; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And you shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves, and shall put my spirit in you, and you shall live, and I shall place you in your own land: then shall you know that I the Lord have spoken it and performed it, said the Lord.”

God will bring his people into their own land, the land of promise, the land of Israel. This he will do by bringing them up from their graves. At that time it will be seen by all that not only has he spoken it, but he has also performed it.

It will probably be inquired, What have Christians to do with these ancient promises to the fathers of the Israelites? Much every way. All Christians should be intensely interested in the promise to Abraham, for Paul, in Galatians 3: 7, informs us that “they

which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.” And in the twenty ninth verse of the same chapter, he says, “If you be Christ’s, then are you Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”

The only promise, then, that we as Christians have of a future inheritance, is this ancient promise made to Abraham. We become heirs of that promise by becoming Christ’s for we then become Abraham’s seed, to whom the promise was made. The promise of God, then, to all Christians is not that they shall inherit or spend eternity in heaven, but that through Christ they become joint heirs with him and with Abraham in the earth. They will spend eternity in the earth in its regenerated condition.

And to this agree the promises found in Isaiah 65:17. “For, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind.” In 2 Peter 3:13: “Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness”. In Revelation 21:1: “And I saw a new heaven and a new earth.” in Matthew 5:5: “Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth.” and in Psalm 37:11: “But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

At that time also will be fulfilled the promise of Micah 4: 8: “And thou, O tower of the flock, the stronghold of the daughter of Zion [the church], unto thee shall it come, even the first dominion [the earth as it came from the hand of God]. The kingdom shall come to the daughter of Jerusalem.”

The Earth Regenerated

The fire which consumes the wicked will also purify the earth. From the fearful ordeal of fire through which the earth will pass when the wicked and all sin are burned out of it, it will emerge fully cleansed from every stain of sin. The Holy City will then become the capital of the regenerated earth, and the whole earth will become again like the Garden of Eden. As “the wilderness and the solitary place- shall “blossom as the rose,” and “the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon,” the earth be, comes what it was first intended to be, the eternal home of the people of God. Thus “the first dominion” is to be restored to the church.

After the destruction of the wicked and the cleansing of the earth, the righteous will go forth from the Holy City, and “they shall build houses, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and eat the fruit of them.” Isaiah 65: 21. The whole earth will be populated with the redeemed of the Lord. Sin has passed forever. There will be none to make afraid. All will be peace and contentment, and unspeakable happiness will fill every heart.

Every month and every Sabbath day the people of the new earth will gather at Jerusalem to engage in worship of the King of kings. Isaiah 66: 22, 23. Here in the city of God the redeemed will partake of the fruit of the tree of life. Here also they will wander through the groves which border “the river of water of life,” which proceeds out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. Revelation 22:1, 2.

Never Again Any Sin

“And there shall be no more curse.” Revelation 22:3. Sin has been destroyed and will never return. Every one of the created intelligences on the other worlds, all of the angels, and every soul which has been redeemed at such an infinite cost have fully decided that God is righteous altogether. They have had enough of sin. Thank God for the promise of the Word that when the Lord destroys sin “he will make an utter end: affliction shall not rise up the second time.” Nahum 1:9.

In that glorious land “my people shall dwell in a peaceful habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.” Isaiah 32: 18. “Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shall call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise.” Isaiah 60: 18. “Instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree.” Isaiah 55: 13. “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.” Revelation 21:4. “And the inhabitant shall not say, I am sick: the people that dwell therein shall be forgiven their iniquity.” Isaiah 33: 24.

And the New Jerusalem shall be “a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God.” Isaiah 62: 3. “Her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.” Revelation 21:11. “The nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it.” Revelation 21:24. “And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God gives them light: and they shall reign forever and ever.” Revelation 22:5.

And in the new earth “shall I know even as also I am known.” 1 Corinthians 13: 12. Friends and loved ones, long separated by death, will there be reunited, and they will know each other there just as they have known each other here. Their love and their sympathy for each other will be increased and will continue throughout the ages of eternity, never again to be broken by death. All the faculties of the human mind will be developed there, and our capacity for knowledge will be constantly increased. There will be no enterprise into which we can enter there that will be too great to be carried forward to completion. There will be no aspiration which cannot be reached. There will be no ambition which cannot be realized. There will be no end to the acquirement of knowledge. It will be possible then to travel from planet to planet, and from system to system, in the study of the treasures of wisdom and knowledge of the universe of God. Our companions will be the angels of God and the unfallen intelligences of the other worlds.

There Will Be No End

And to all this there will be no end. As the ages of eternity unfold there will never be any fear that the years to come will bring an end to the happiness of the redeemed. When millions of ages have rolled by, still all beyond stretches eternity.

Oh, my brother-man, I want a place in that glorious new earth. Do you not want to be there? It will soon be here. It will not be long before sin and sinners will be no more. The day of the Lord hastens greatly. Do not be deceived by the wiles of Satan. He will take you captive if he can. The message of the coming of Christ is even now in the earth, and is being proclaimed far and wide. There is salvation in that message for you, and a preparation to meet the Lord in peace. Come, then, to Christ, who rescues the perishing, who saves the lost. Seek for his mercy. Cast away the sins which offend him, forsake the thoughts which insult him, and take him for your Redeemer and Friend. For you he has given his life that you may have a part in this glorified new earth. Oh, delay no longer. The time is short. The Lord is at hand. May he say to you who read these words, "Come, you blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

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