

WHAT IS IT ?

HELL

WHO ARE THERE ?
CAN THEY GET OUT ?

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HELL

What is It? Who are There? Can They Get Out?

RELIGIOUS leaders of the various denominational churches for many centuries have answered the above questions and taught the people as follows:

Hell is the place and state of punishment for the wicked. God prepared this place before the creation of man, of sufficient capacity to accommodate all sinners. That all who have died as sinners are there. That the fires of hell are fed constantly with brimstone, and burn without ceasing. That in these flames the wicked are suffering conscious punishment; that their punishment is torment, eternal in duration, and that there is no hope for those who are there ever to get out.

These same religious leaders earnestly contend that the Bible supports their conclusions. If their answer is true and correct, then every clergyman, regardless of whether his salary is paid or not, should busy himself by constantly telling the people what awaits them if wicked, and should advise them how they can avoid going there. If any religious teacher asserts the above answers to be true ones, and then treats the matter with indifference and demands his salary before he will preach to the people, either he is dishonest or else he does not believe what he claims to believe. If the

above answers to the questions, given by religious teachers, are false, then every honest person should use his best endeavors to enlighten the people concerning the truth, that the living might have peace of mind concerning themselves and hope for their beloved dead.

The purpose here is to examine the Scripture texts bearing on the subject, and then let each person who reads decide for himself. It will be of great interest to you to follow the argument in the light of the Scriptures.

The Bible is God's Word. It is the truth. It was written by holy men of old as God directed them to write. Otherwise stated, it was written under inspiration. Some parts of it are expressed in literal and some in symbolic phrase. All people use symbolic expressions of speech. Often they mix literal and symbolic phrase in the same sentence. To illustrate, a man says: "The political fight is getting red hot," meaning thereby that the contest between the candidates for political office is creating great interest and contention. Likewise the Bible employs symbolic and literal phrase. For instance: "Bread of deceit is sweet to a man; but afterwards his mouth shall be filled with gravel." (Proverbs 20:17) Anyone would know that this is a symbolic statement. The great teacher, Jesus of Nazareth, taught in parables and dark or symbolic sayings.—Matthew 13:34.

When we read a Scriptural text, how may we know whether it is to be understood in a literal or a symbolic sense? We are to use our reasoning faculties. God did not expect us to take

every statement in the Bible as literal. He invited us to use reason. To those who would learn how they might escape from sin and from the punishment incident thereto, he says: "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." (Isaiah 1:18) It is apparent to the reasoning person that both literal and symbolic phrase are employed in this text. The Bible states that all of God's creation was made by him in wisdom (Psalm 104:24); that justice is the habitation of his throne (Psalm 89:14); and that "God is love." (1 John 4:8) Otherwise stated, God is perfect in character. His wisdom, justice, love, and power are in equal and exact balance.

Now apply your reasoning faculties, as God has invited you, and ask yourself these questions: Is it reasonable that the all-wise Creator would create a creature, knowing that he would sin, and arrange in advance for his eternal torment in fire and brimstone? Is it reasonable that a just and righteous God would create man, telling him that if he sinned he should die, and then arrange that his punishment should be eternal torture in flames of fire? Is it reasonable that the God of love could be so cruel as to torture eternally an unfortunate sinner? What good could result from so doing? How could the eternal conscious suffering of a creature bring glory or satisfaction to the loving Creator? It is obvious that all these questions must be answered in the negative. No reason-

able person, though very imperfect, would torture eternally even a dumb brute, if that were possible. Then there must be some grave doubt about the Bible's supporting the answers made to the foregoing questions by religious leaders. At least a sufficient doubt is raised to warrant every honest person to make a diligent search and examination of the Scriptures.

Millions of people have heard the name of God only with dread and morbid fear, because of the teachings of the denominational leaders concerning hell. God says: "Their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men." (Isaiah 29:13) Children are made to have a morbid fear of God by reason of the terrible tales told them concerning a burning hell. A little girl who attended Sunday school was asked by her teacher: "Mary, what will you do when you get to heaven?" She replied: "The first thing I will do will be to run and hide so that God can't get me." It is a serious thing thus to poison a child mind against the great Jehovah God.

GOD'S ANSWER

Briefly stated, Jehovah's answers to the above questions, as gleaned from his Word, are: Hell is the condition of the dead. It is the grave or tomb wherein the dead rest, without knowledge, without love, without hate, where they know not anything. All who die go to hell. God has provided an awakening out of death, therefore a returning from hell, of all those who have died.

The above answers we now purpose to support by every text in the Bible relating to hell

and to prove that the Bible is in harmony with reason and in perfect harmony with the character of the great Creator, just, wise and loving. Every one who has an interest in his own destiny and love for his dead friends will eagerly examine every paragraph hereinafter written.

The Bible which we have was translated into the English; the Old Testament from the Hebrew language, the New Testament from the Greek language. The Hebrew word *sheol* is the only word in that original language translated *hell*. The Greek word *hades* has the same meaning as the Hebrew word *sheol*. Two other Greek words in the New Testament, to wit, *gehenna* and *tartaroo*, are translated *hell*. The Hebrew word *sheol* and the Greek word *hades* are translated also *grave* and *pit*.

Hell is an English word. The English word meant *a dark and silent place or condition*. An old Englishman would say: "I put my potatoes in *hell* for the winter," meaning thereby that he had buried his potatoes in the ground to preserve them during the winter season. No one would understand that he put them in to roast all winter; and surely no one could, for a moment, expect him to torture his potatoes.

Religious teachers, early in the Christian era, thought it well to frighten the people. Satan induced them to do this. Hence they brought forth the doctrine of eternal torture, borrowed from heathen philosophers. When the Revised Version of the Bible was prepared, however, the translators were wise enough to know that *sheol* and *hades* can never be properly trans-

lated torment. But they were not honest enough to say what these words really mean; hence they left them untranslated.

In some places where they translated the word *sheol*, *hell*, they put in the margin the correct meaning, *grave*.

If the Hebrew word *sheol* means *pit* and *grave* in some instances, it could not mean a place of conscious torture in other instances. Even the translators of the King James Version ran against this difficulty; and where it was so patent on the face of it that *sheol* meant the condition of death they declined to translate it by the word *hell* and translated it *grave* or *pit*. Note some pertinent examples of this:

Psalm 55:15: "Let them go down quick into *hell*"—marginal reading, "the grave."

Concerning Job it is written that he was a man perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil. He was sick and afflicted, forsaken by his friends, even by his own wife. Covered with boils from head to foot, he suffered bodily pain and mental anguish; and while in this distressed condition he prayed that God would send him to hell: "O that thou wouldst hide me in the grave, that thou wouldst keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldst appoint me a set time, and remember me!" (Job 14:13) Here the translators rendered *sheol*, *grave*. If *sheol* means eternal torment, then surely Job would not have prayed to go there. Then Job adds: "If I wait, *sheol* [hell, the grave] is mine house: I have made my bed in the darkness." (Job 17:13) There

could not have been much fire or brimstone there; else Job would not have spoken of it as a place of darkness.

Amos 9:2: "Though they dig into *hell*, thence shall mine hand take them." [The only hell that man can dig into is the pit or grave.]

Psalm 16:10: "Thou wilt not leave my soul in *hell*; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." [The apostle Peter says that this refers to our Lord's three days in the tomb. (Acts 2:30-32) Our Lord came out of hell, or the tomb. If hell is a place of eternal torture, how could he get out?]

Psalm 18:5: "The sorrows of *hell* compassed me about." [This is a Scriptural statement that sorrows hasten one to the grave.]

Deuteronomy 32:22: "For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest *hell*." [A figurative expression, picturing the utter ruin of the nation of Israel.]

Psalm 139:8: "If I make my bed in *hell*, thou art there." [Meaning that Jehovah can and will exercise his power over those who are in the pit, the tomb, the state of the dead.]

Job 11:8: "It [God's wisdom] is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? deeper than *hell*." [Clearly meaning the pit or grave.]

Proverbs 5:5: "Her feet go down to death, her steps take hold on *hell*." [Symbolically meaning her course leads unto the grave.]

Proverbs 15:11: "*Hell* and destruction are before the Lord." [*Sheol* is here connected with destruction, not with conscious torture.]

Isaiah 5:14: "Therefore *hell* hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure." [A symbol of destruction, death, into which the human race has gone.]

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

The following other texts, in which the Hebrew word *sheol* occurs, and is rendered *grave* and *pit* by the translators, will be interesting:

Genesis 37:35: "I will go down into *sheol* [the grave] unto my son mourning." [These were the words of Jacob. He believed that his beloved son, Joseph, was dead. Surely he did not expect that his beloved son was in eternal torture; for he was going to Joseph.]

Later Jacob's other sons sought to induce their father to send with them their younger brother, Benjamin, into Egypt. Jacob loved this son devotedly. He replied: "My son shall not go down with you; for his brother [Joseph] is dead, and he [Benjamin] is left alone: if mischief befall him by the way in the which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to *sheol*." (Genesis 42:38) If *sheol* here meant hell fire and brimstone Jacob's gray hair would not last long in such a place, nor could the hair suffer much conscious torment. It is

plain to be seen that he expected to go down into the tomb. The translators evidently saw this, and hence they balked at translating the word *hell*. In the King James Version they translated it *grave*, but the Revised Version leaves it untranslated.

1 Kings 2:6-9: "Let not his hoar head go down to the *grave* in peace." [Here *sheol* is again rendered properly.]

Job 24:19: "Drought and heat consume the snow waters; so doth *sheol* those which have sinned." [If one is consumed, it is not possible for that one to be in torture.]

Psalms 31:17: "Let the wicked be ashamed, and let them be silent in *sheol* [the grave]."

Isaiah 38:10: "I shall go to the gates of *sheol* [the grave]: I am deprived of the residue of my years."

ARE THE DEAD CONSCIOUS?

It would be utterly impossible for any one to be in conscious torment unless that creature, at the time of torment, is in a conscious state. If it should appear from the Scriptures that when a person dies he is unconscious, then it could not be reasonably possible that he is consciously tormented anywhere. Concerning this point the Scriptures say:

"For the living know that they shall die: but the dead know not anything."—Ecclesiastes 9:5.

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

"For in death there is no remembrance of thee: in *sheol* [the grave] who shall give thee thanks?"—Psalm 6:5.

"Like sheep they are laid in *sheol* [the grave]; death shall feed on them." [No one would contend for a moment that sheep are in conscious torment.]—Psalm 49:14.

But our religious teachers would say: "These scriptures refer to the body. It is the soul that is conscious and alive: the soul is inherently immortal and cannot die." Again the religious teachers have no support in the Bible for their contention except one text. They would say at once that the one text is sufficient; but we reply that that text is the language of the devil, who said to Eve: "Ye shall not surely die" (Genesis 3:4); and concerning this statement Jesus said that it was the first lie; that Satan was a liar and the father of lies. (John 8:44) If religious teachers insist on standing by this teaching of the devil, they thereby admit that they are his allies or his children.

The soul is a synonymous term for being, man, creature. Every man is a soul; no man possesses a soul. All animals are souls. The Scriptures refer to the dumb beasts as souls.—Numbers 31:28.

The Scriptures give the proper definition of soul, as follows: "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." (Genesis 2:7) God then in substance said to that soul, that man: In the day thou sinnest thou shalt surely die. (Genesis 2:

17) Did he mean that only the body should die, but that the soul should live on forever? The Scriptures answer: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." (Ezekiel 18:4) "What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?" (Psalm 89:48) "The dead praise not the Lord, neither any that go down into silence."—Psalm 115:17.

In not a single instance in the Old Testament can the word *sheol* represent a place of consciousness in which the dead are suffering torment. On the contrary, in every instance the Scriptures show that *sheol* means the grave, hell, the condition of the dead, the condition of silence, where there is neither knowledge nor wisdom.

IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The Greek word *hades*, translated *hell* in the New Testament, is exactly the same as the Hebrew word *sheol*. In Acts 2:27 the apostle Peter quotes from Psalm 16:10, proving this point. Other proof texts of this point are 1 Corinthians 15:54, 55, referring to the same thing as mentioned in Isaiah 25:8 and Hosea 13:14. Without doubt, then, the words *sheol* and *hades* mean the unconscious condition of the dead in the tomb, awaiting God's appointed time to awaken them in the resurrection.

GEHENNA—DESTRUCTION

Jesus taught the Jews. All his disciples were Jews. They understood that at some time future Jesus would set up his kingdom, and they expected to be a part of it. On one occasion

they disputed amongst themselves as to who would be the greatest in his kingdom. Jesus, knowing this, called them to him and taught them; and in the course of his instruction he said to them: "And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than, having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." (Mark 9:47, 48)



This text has long been a favorite with the hell-fire screechers. In it they think they have conclusive proof that the sinners are punished by torment in a fire which is never quenched. They argue with great warmth that the worms die not. But be it noted that the only thing mentioned as dying not are the worms. Therefore, it is worms that are immortal, from their viewpoint. Nothing is said about human beings as alive and conscious in that fire.

The word *hell* in this text is translated from the Greek word *gehenna*. It is the Grecian mode of expressing the name of the Hebrew phrase "Valley of Hinnom." Lying on the southern border of the city of Jerusalem is the Valley of

Hinnom, sometimes called the Valley of Gehenna. The offal, garbage, bodies of dead animals, etc., were brought out of the city and thrown over the high embankment, down into the valley. Fires were kept burning continually to destroy this offal. No live creature was permitted, under the Jewish law, to be cast into this valley nor placed on the fire. When cast over the high embankment these dead bodies would sometimes fall on a ledge, and were destroyed by worms. Anyone would understand that the Valley of Hinnom was a place of destruction and therefore a symbol of destruction. Every Jew understood it thus. Surely Jesus had the same thought in mind.

The Scriptures point out that the Israelites were a typical people. For instance, the temple and the priestly service of Jerusalem represented the royal priesthood in glory as the temple of God. Jerusalem was the city from which authority went forth. It was the city of government. The kingdom of God is represented in the symbolic book of Revelation under the figure of a city, the New Jerusalem. (Revelation 21:2) Jerusalem therefore was intended to picture Christ's kingdom about which these disciples were disputing. The Valley of Hinnom, used in connection with the city as a crematory, pictured the destruction of those who were cast out of the kingdom. The Scriptures, describing the blessings and benefits of the holy city, the new Jerusalem (the kingdom of God), declares that everything that defileth or worketh an abomination shall be kept out of the same.

(Revelation 21:27) The Valley of Hinnom, or Gehenna, understood by all Jews as a place of destruction, represents the condition of death from which there is no resurrection and which is described in the Scriptures as the second death.

In this text (Mark 9:47,48) Jesus was laying down to the disciples the requirements to enter into the kingdom, the holy city. Pride and ambition would be hindrances to one's entering therein. Jesus was instructing them that the kingdom was of greater value to them than anything else. In order, therefore, to make his illustrations pointed and strong he referred to the eye. Surely Jesus did not mean to tell the disciples that if they expected to get into the kingdom they must gouge out an eye! I dare say that no advocate of hell fire is willing to gouge out his eye voluntarily as a condition precedent to entering into the kingdom. If we are to take these statements as literal then we would have to conclude, according to the ecclesiastical teachers, that only one-eyed people would get to heaven.

What then did Jesus mean? To paraphrase his language we understand him to mean this: That eternal life as a member of the kingdom of God is the greatest prize that can be received by any one. Only those who are willing to make a sacrifice of things earthly could be counted worthy of it. If, therefore, any earthly thing should offend one or prevent him from preparing for the kingdom, that he might enter in, even though that thing be as dear as an eye it

would be well to destroy that thing. That is to say, it would be better for him to sacrifice something dear to him than to lose this great prize of life and be cast into Gehenna, a condition of everlasting and complete destruction. This destruction was pictured by both the fire and the worms; and the destruction was so complete that there was nothing left, thus foreshadowing that for these wilful ones there would be no resurrection.

Every text in the New Testament wherein the word *hell* appears, and is translated from the Greek word *gehenna*, means everlasting and complete destruction. One of the strong proof texts on this point is the following: "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." (Matthew 10:28) Jesus was instructing his disciples that they would have persecution from their enemies, and that their enemies might kill them. A distinction here is made between body and soul: Body meaning only the human organism; soul meaning the being, the creature, including the right to life. The enemies of the disciples of our Lord could do nothing more than destroy their bodies. They could not affect their future right to life. Jehovah alone holds that power. Therefore, Jesus said to them: 'Do not fear these men who can destroy only your bodies; but fear him, Jehovah God, who has power to destroy both body and soul in Gehenna.' The word *destroy* here used is conclusive proof that the Valley of Gehenna was a

picture of destruction, and that the word *hell* translated therefrom means destruction, from which there is no resurrection. It shows, therefore, the fate of the wilful sinners after full opportunity for life given by the Lord.

Again Jesus said: "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers! how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" (Matthew 23:33) *Gehenna* is the word here translated *hell*. The words of the Master were addressed to the scribes and Pharisees who, although being enlightened, wilfully and wickedly misrepresented and persecuted the Lord. Because they were deceiving the people and blinding them concerning the truth, Jesus said to them in substance: 'You boast of your piety and make a great outward show of righteousness, but unless you change your course you will surely be destroyed in *Gehenna*.' The counterpart of these Pharisees are the religious teachers of modern times who pose as pious creatures and as representatives of the Lord, and who yet deliberately misrepresent his Word. They might take a lesson from the above.

TARTAROO

From the time of Eden until the great deluge the angels of heaven had much to do with man. Some of these became wicked, and God enforced his judgment against them at the time of the great flood. Concerning them St. Peter says: "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." (2 Peter 2:4) The word *hell* in this

text is translated from the Greek word *tartaroo*. Just why the translators rendered this word *hell* is somewhat difficult to understand. They evidently thought that these wicked angels or demons were in hell, helping the devil to keep up the fire and to put on the brimstone. Had they read the text more carefully they would have seen, however, that these angels are confined in darkness; and if in darkness there could not be much fire about.

The word *tartaroo*, as used by the Apostle in this text, closely resembles the word *tartarus*, a word used in Grecian mythology as the name for a dark abyss or prison. Scientists tell us that beyond a certain distance from earth's surface there is complete darkness; and there is much proof to lead to the conclusion that these evil spirits, or demons, who sinned in the time prior to the flood, are restrained in this darkness. However, the word *tartaroo*, as used in this text, seems more particularly to refer to an act than to a place. The text might properly be rendered: God spared not the angels who sinned, but *degraded them*, and delivered them into chains of darkness. The degradation represented the depriving them of privileges, and the darkness the condition in which they are confined. We have not space here to discuss the history of these demons, but respectfully refer the reader to the publications, "What Say the Scriptures about Spiritism?" and "Can the Living Talk with the Dead?" This text is the only place in the Bible that this Greek word appears, and in no sense has it reference to man.

From these Scriptural texts, therefore, the proof is conclusive that hell is not a place of conscious suffering; but that *sheol* and *hades*, translated *hell*, mean the condition of the dead, from which the dead shall be awakened at the resurrection; that *gehenna* means the condition of the wilfully wicked who die and have no hope of a resurrection, but who are therefore completely destroyed; and that *tartaroo* represents the condition of degraded evil spirits.

POINTED QUESTIONS

The advocates of the conscious eternal torment theory will quickly now ask: If the dead are not conscious, and if hell means the condition of silence, how about the rich man in hell who lifted up his eyes, being in torment? How about the thief in paradise? How about the sheep and the goats, the latter going away into everlasting punishment?

With much satisfaction the hell-fire advocate rests his case upon these three points. He considers himself invulnerable. That the answer may be more keenly appreciated it is deemed well first to outline briefly the divine plan concerning man as stated in the Scriptures. With this clearly in mind the advocate of eternal torture will not feel so comfortable in his position. We hope that he may be led to see the absurdity of that position, however.

God created the first man a perfect creature in his own image and likeness. (Genesis 1:27; Deuteronomy 32:4) Jehovah set before man life, liberty, and happiness upon a condition of

complete obedience. The penalty Jehovah prescribed in his law for disobedience was death. "Thou shalt surely die." (Genesis 2:17) The Scriptures plainly state that the penalty for sin is death. (Romans 6:23) This is God's law. God is unchangeable. (Malachi 3:6) Having made this law before man sinned, if Jehovah sentenced man to eternal torment after man had sinned, then God changed the penalty of his law. This would be an ex-post-facto law. Even imperfect men recognize an ex-post-facto law as unrighteous. That is to say, no governing power could rightfully change the penalty for a crime and inflict that penalty on a person after he had committed the crime. If God sentenced Adam to eternal torment, he did not deal fairly with man. If God sentenced man to death, then he could not consistently torture man eternally; for he would be failing to carry out his own sentence, therefore would be inconsistent.

ETERNAL PUNISHMENT

The ecclesiastical teachers use the terms *eternal torment* and *eternal punishment* as synonymous. In this they are clearly wrong. One may suffer eternal punishment, but not eternal torture. One could not be eternally tortured without consciousness; but if his punishment is everlasting death, that punishment would be eternal or everlasting. God does punish the wicked, and that punishment is death. There are degrees of punishment. If a man steals a chicken he may be punished by imprisonment for thirty days. His imprisonment lasts only during that period of time. If he steals an automobile, he

may be punished for five years in prison. If he commits deliberate murder, his punishment may be death. In the latter case his punishment is lasting, therefore everlasting insofar as man is concerned.

Jehovah, consistent with the penalty mentioned in his law, sentenced Adam to death, not to eternal torture. That judgment or sentence reads: "Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life: thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field: in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." (Genesis 3:17-19) By what process of reasoning can a clergyman stand with a pious face before an intelligent audience and, in the light of the plain statement of the judgment above set forth, say to them that God sentenced Adam to eternal torment?

God enforced this judgment by expelling Adam from Eden, causing him to feed upon the poisonous elements which the earth outside of Eden brought forth. The death sentence continued upon him for 930 years, after which time he was completely dead. (Genesis 5:5) During that time his children were born. The father, being under sentence, was imperfect; and by reason of the sentence of death his children were born as sinners, and without the right to

life. (Psalm 51:5; Romans 5:12) Adam, when he died, went to hell, the grave, the tomb. He paid the penalty of the law. His children, who have since then died, likewise went to hell, the tomb, the grave. They have suffered as a result of their father's disobedience. This death upon Adam and his children would be everlasting unless God makes some provision for redeeming man out of death and giving him an opportunity for life. Therefore, Jehovah made the following clear and definite promise:

"I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes." (Hosea 13:14) The word *grave* in this text is from the Hebrew word *sheol*, the same word translated *hell*. The promise, therefore, is that God will redeem mankind from hell.

It was a perfect man that sinned; and God's law provided that nothing but a perfect man could redeem mankind from death. There was no perfect man on earth who could accomplish this purpose.—Psalm 49:7.

Then Jehovah, in his great love for mankind desiring to give them a full opportunity for life, sent from heaven his beloved Son, Jesus, whose life was transferred from the spirit to the human plane. Jesus was begotten by Jehovah; therefore he was born perfect, holy and without sin. (Matthew 1:20; Hebrews 7:26) He had none of the contaminated blood from Adam.

Jesus plainly stated that he came to ransom mankind from the grave and to fulfil the prom-

ise God had made to this effect. (Matthew 20:28; John 10:10) He died upon the cross; and God raised him out of death, thereby providing the ransom or redemptive price for mankind. (John 3:16) The death and resurrection of Jesus was a guarantee that all the dead in hell, the grave, in due time should be awakened out of death.—John 5:29; Acts 17:31; 24:15.

CAN THOSE IN HELL GET OUT?

If the resurrection of the dead is true, then this doctrine of eternal torment is as false as the devil himself. If the dead can be resurrected, that fact is proof conclusive that they will not be kept in eternal torture. If they are there eternally, they could not be brought out. Resurrection means an awakening and restoration to life. If the resurrection of the dead is the truth, and is taught in God's Word, then the doctrine of inherent immortality is a deliberate lie. Jesus plainly says that inherent immortality of man was the first lie told. (John 8:44) If inherently immortal, then men are not dead but alive somewhere; and if alive, it would be impossible to awaken them to life. Hence either the doctrine of inherent immortality or that of resurrection of the dead must fail. Which is supported by the Bible?

St. Paul answers this question in the following conclusive argument: "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures." "Now if Christ be preached that he rose

from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not. For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised: and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins. Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order; Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."—1 Corinthians 15:3, 4, 12-26.

Paraphrasing the Apostle's words he says: 'Jesus was resurrected. This statement is either true or false. If he was resurrected, it is a guarantee that all the dead shall be resurrected. If there is no resurrection, then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are per-

ished.' To perish means to cease to exist. No one could perish and be in eternal torment at the same time. Thus the Apostle shows that, instead of being in conscious torment, the dead are in the tomb, the hell of the Bible; that in God's due time they shall be awakened out of death, every man in his own order; and that during the reign of Christ he will destroy even death, which is man's great enemy. Thus is conclusively proved the fact that the dead in hell will be brought out through the power of the resurrection through Christ Jesus. This great boon and blessing to mankind is to be granted during the reign of Christ, after his second coming.

A complete discussion of the philosophy of the ransom sacrifice and the awakening out of death is to be found in Volumes I and V of *STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES*.

WHO ARE IMMORTAL?

Immortality means not subject to death. It means inherent life. We have seen that man is not immortal. The devil is not immortal; for St. Paul plainly says that Christ, in due time, will destroy the devil. (Hebrews 2:14) The teachers of incandescent brimstone as the fate of the wicked, have told us that the devil is the fireman of hell. Upon the authority of these positive statements that the devil is to be destroyed we respectfully ask them: Who then, when Satan is destroyed, will keep up the fire?

St. Paul tells us that God only hath immortality. (1 Timothy 6:16) Jesus stated that the Father would grant him this honor. The Apos-

tle tells us that God did grant it unto Jesus. (John 5:26; Philippians 2:9-11) Those who compose the members of Christ's body, and are granted membership in his kingdom, likewise will receive the prize of immortality; but none other.—1 Corinthians 15:53,54; Rev. 2:10.

RESTORATION OF THE WORLD

During the reign of Christ the living shall be first granted an opportunity for life; and the obedient ones shall be restored to perfection of mind and body, and dwell on the earth forever. The dead shall be awakened, and likewise given a trial for life. (2 Timothy 4:1; Acts 17:31; 3:19-24) In this trial time, during the reign of Christ, those who wilfully disobey the Lord shall be punished by everlasting destruction. (Acts 3:23; Psalm 145:20) This destruction was pictured by Gehenna (in our Bibles translated *hell*), from which there is no resurrection.

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

The scribes and Pharisees were the principal men of Israel. They were leaders in the religious, as well as the political, part of that nation. On one occasion, when our Lord was speaking to them, he uttered the words which are generally recognized as the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus. The complete text of his utterance is as follows:

"There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: and there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with

the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried: and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

—Luke 16: 19-31.

Ecclesiastical teachers insist that this Scriptural statement is not a parable, but must be literally construed. They confidently rely upon

it as proof conclusive that the penalty of the wicked is conscious torment in flames of fire, eternal in duration, from which there is no possible relief. If the Scriptural statement is found not to support the theory of eternal torture, then that doctrine is without Scriptural support anywhere, and must fail.

Consider carefully the words of our Lord here used, view them as though literal, and see to what reasonable conclusion we are led.

Dives, the rich man, wore good clothing and had plenty to eat each day. Not another thing is charged against him, so far as the record discloses. All this wealth that he possessed, his fine apparel and splendid food, may have been given to him. If the possession of such is sufficient reason to send one to eternal torture, then fully ninety percent of the clergymen of our day are in danger of eternal torment. They are rich in favor amongst men, if not so rich in purse; and most of them receive a comfortable salary. They wear the very best of clothing, and have plenty to eat, and manage to eat it. If torment in flames of fire is the penalty to be suffered by man because he possesses such things, what then could we expect to befall the ultra rich, such as Mr. Rockefeller and Mr. Henry Ford? Surely no one is so unreasonable as to believe that these men should be tortured eternally because they have much money, plenty of good clothes, and splendid food to eat. Surely no one is so unreasonable as to believe that a just and wise God would send a man to eternal torment because he is frugal, energetic,

and amasses a large amount of money, wears good clothes and eats well.

Look for a moment at the other man, Lazarus, and what is claimed for him. Ecclesiastics answer: "He died and went to heaven, and awakened in Abraham's bosom." If heaven is only the size of Abraham's bosom, then a very few will be there, and most of the ecclesiastical teachers would be left out. But what had Lazarus done to warrant the giving to him the great prize of heavenly glory and ease? The Scripture answers: He was a poor beggar, had no regular food, was anxious to eat the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table, was full of sores, lay at the rich man's gate, and the dogs came and licked his sores. If that is the fixed rule to the heavenly way, then everyone who hopes to go to heaven must become a beggar, lie at the gate of some rich man, eat the crumbs that fall from the rich man's table, be full of sores, and have the dogs come and lick him. Is there a sensible man on earth who believes that such are the divine requirements to get one into heaven? How many clergymen and advocates of eternal torture, who hope to go to heaven, are willing to prove their belief that this is the way, by becoming beggars, having sores all over them, lying at some rich man's gate, and then letting the dogs lick them? Not a single one will attempt it; for not a single one honestly believes it.

Furthermore, these ecclesiastical teachers say that Dives, the rich man, died and in hell lifted up his eyes. Where is the man who ever saw a dead man lift up his eyes?

Probably the most absurd part of the literal interpretation of this text is that Dives, in the midst of a burning lake of fire and brimstone, cries to Lazarus to come a long distance to him with a single drop of water on his finger, and put it on his tongue to cool his tongue in the flame. How absolutely unreasonable! If the fire is such as it is claimed by these advocates of hell fire and brimstone, then Lazarus could not get within twenty feet of the fire with a bucket of water; and surely a single drop of water on his finger would evaporate before he was within forty yards of Dives.

A literal interpretation of this scripture is shocking to reason. It is more than shocking to justice and love. A literal interpretation cannot be true. Besides, the Scriptures conclusively prove that the dead are unconscious, hence cannot be in torment. What then does this saying of our Lord mean?

The following explanation is confidently submitted as appealing to the reasonable mind of the person who knows the historical facts:

This Scriptural statement is a parable. The rich man symbolizes or represents the nation of Israel. The beggar, Lazarus, symbolizes or represents the Gentiles of earth who for a long time were without God and without hope, and who desired to be in harmony with God. Israel was the only nation with which God ever made a covenant. He gave to that people a royal promise. (Exodus 19:5, 6) He gave to them the Law; he sent to them the prophets. He required them to be taught of the Law. He established

amongst them the true religion. He shielded them from other nations and peoples round about. He promised them that they should not only have the position of royalty, but that if they kept his covenant they should become the greatest nation of earth, and through them all other nations should be blessed.

Long years thereafter, when they had departed from their covenant, and when Jehovah purposed to punish them, he said to Israel: "You only have I known of all the families of the earth: therefore I will punish you for all your iniquities." (Amos 3:2) That nation, therefore, enjoyed riches at the hands of Jehovah. The royal robes, of purple and fine linen, symbolize royalty and righteousness, which promise the nation had. They received a great favor above everything else at Jehovah's hand when Jesus came to them, and to no other people. (John 1:11) The Jews, as a nation, were favored every way. (Romans 3:1,2) The scribes and Pharisees, the leaders of Israel, rejected the Lord; therefore the nation was cast off, just as Jesus foretold. The royal promises were taken from them as Jesus said: "The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof." (Matthew 21:43) Officially, Jesus withdrew God's favor when he wept over Jerusalem and said: "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." (Matthew 23:38) Thereafter, the nation of Israel was completely destroyed. The rich man, the nation of Israel, therefore died; but the peoples composing that nation lived on. Gener-

ation after generation have come and gone, and that people have been in a condition of torment ever since; for they have been hunted like wild animals hunted to their dens. They have been persecuted for centuries. The rich man, therefore, represents both the Jewish nation as a polity and the people making up that nation. After the nation was dead, the people of Israel have been suffering great torment, and time and again have cried unto the Gentiles for help.

Lazarus also died. Death means a change of condition. For an individual it means a change of condition from entity to nonentity. To a nation or people it may mean a change from nonentity to entity. It may mean a change from no favor to some favor. The death of Lazarus, therefore, pictured the old conditions under which the Gentiles had existed as passing over. God's favor came to the Gentiles from the day of Cornelius. To this day the Lord has been favoring the Gentiles with the prospects of the kingdom.

Abraham, many times in the Scriptures, is used as a type of Jehovah. The bosom is a picture of a condition of favor; therefore Lazarus in Abraham's bosom pictures the Gentiles in the favor of God. When the Jews refused to accept the gospel, and therefore rejected the promises for the royalty of heaven, St. Paul said: "It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you [Jews]: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."—Acts 13:46.

The remainder of the parable we interpret by paraphrasing the language of the Scriptures as follows: The Jews, persecuted by people of every nation, have cried to God for help and have prayed Jehovah to send Gentiles to their aid to relieve them in their distress. They have asked for water, which symbolizes the truth, that they might be relieved. God has said to them in substance: Remember that when you were in my favor you had all the good things, and the Gentiles [the Lazarus class] the bad things. But now the Gentiles are comforted with the promise of the kingdom, and you are tormented by your enemies. Besides, there is a great gulf fixed between you and the Gentiles, and that gulf is this: You reject the Lord Jesus Christ as your Redeemer and Messiah and refuse to become Christians; therefore you will not and cannot be Christians and become Gentiles. A Gentile cannot become a Jew and put himself under the Law, nor even attempt to do so; for he would thereby deny Christ Jesus as the Messiah.

As to the five brethren: The people of Judea, at the time this parable was uttered, were divided; part of them known as the tribe of Judah, the other as the tribe of Benjamin, while many had never returned from Babylon. If the rich man represented the Jewish nation, composed now generally of the tribes of Benjamin and Judah, the other five would well represent the Jews who were scattered abroad amongst the other peoples. The request is introduced

in this parable doubtless to show that God's favor had ceased toward the ten tribes as well as toward those more directly in contact with the Lord Jesus. The ten tribes had disregarded Moses and the prophets. They did not return to the land of promise; and now the other two tribes, through their leaders, had rejected the Lord, thereby ignoring Moses and the prophets, who testified of the Lord Jesus. Therefore, to the request that some one be sent to the five brethren, the reply is given: They have Moses and the prophets. If they will not hear these, they would not be persuaded even if one were raised from the dead.

Those living in the present time, and witnessing the fact that God's favor is returning to the Jew, as Jesus promised, by faith as well as by extraneous evidence can clearly see that this great gulf between the Jews and Gentiles is being bridged; that the selection of the Church is about complete; that the new covenant will soon be in operation, and that then all the Israelites shall have their eyes of understanding opened and be permitted to come to a knowledge of the truth, accept Christ as the Messiah, and receive the blessings of life.

This was what St. Paul evidently had in mind when writing to the Gentile Christians at Rome. He said: "For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There

shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob. For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins." (Romans 11:25-27) The Apostle here clearly shows that when the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, then opportunity for Israel to be restored will be due.

This wonderful lesson the Lord Jesus was here teaching in parabolic phrase to the Pharisees who, because of their arrogance, self-esteem and self-importance, would not hear. Others can learn a lesson from this, that the favors of God should not be lightly held, but appreciation thereof should be manifested. This parabolic statement of our Lord, instead of supporting the doctrine of eternal torture, foreshadows the justice of Jehovah executed against a nation that rejected his favors; and this justice is administered in mercy and love, looking to that time when the Lord would take away their blindness and bring to them the blessings of life everlasting. It also shows the people of Israel that they missed the greatest prize of heavenly royalty because of the wickedness of their leaders.

Christians can get a lesson from this today. Their leaders are ignoring the Lord and the abundant testimony of his presence, and the blessings that his kingdom will bring. This is due to the fact that the modern Pharisees and other leaders are standing in the way of many who would accept the truth. There is a certain responsibility upon all in proportion to their knowledge. Hence he who hears should use his

reasoning faculties and reach a conclusion himself and not be blindly led by the blind guides.

These ecclesiastical leaders have defamed the name of Jehovah by inducing many to believe that God has fixed a place of eternal torment for his creatures, when the Lord plainly said that no such wicked thing ever entered his mind. The religious leaders of the Jews turned to Baal worship, and builded altars to burn their sons with fire, claiming that they were authorized by God thus to do. This devil worship, instituted by the ancient Israelites, has been the basis for the doctrine of eternal torture by their counterparts. Concerning them, God, through the prophet, said: "They have built also the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings unto Baal, which I commanded not, nor spake it, neither came it into my mind." (Jeremiah 19:5) "And they built the high places of Baal, which are in the valley of the son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire unto Molech, which I commanded them not, neither came it into my mind, that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin." —Jeremiah 32:35.

If it had never entered the mind of Jehovah to resort to such a wicked thing, then how could it possibly have entered his mind, long before that or since, to fix a lake of fire and brimstone in which his sons and his daughters must be tormented day and night without any hope or relief? Eternal torment is without support in the parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus.

THE THIEF IN PARADISE

Advocates of hell-fire torment find another favorite text which they claim sustains their position. It is that of the thief in paradise. (Luke 23:39-43) The contention is that the thief died and went that same day to heaven, and that heaven is here called Paradise; thereby proving that the dead are conscious immediately after death and continue so. They argue with force that if this is true, then the wicked dead must be in conscious torment. Some of them will say that though the wicked be not in actual fire, yet being conscious, they are suffering mental anguish. We freely admit that if the Scriptures prove that the dead are conscious while dead, and before the resurrection, then the position of these contenders is sustained by this text. But the Scriptures show that the dead are unconscious. Is it possible, then, that the words of the Master are contradictory of every plain statement of the Bible?

• An examination of the Lord Jesus' words here concerning the thief establishes beyond a doubt that his statement is entirely in harmony with every text, and does not in the slightest tend to show that the thief was alive the day that he died or at any time since. Jesus was crucified on the cross between two thieves. One of the two malefactors who were hanged with him railed on him, saying, "If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward

of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." The thief thus showed that he believed Jesus to be the Messiah; that Jesus would have a kingdom; hence he asked this favor. "And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee today shalt thou be with me in paradise."

Advocates of conscious torment insist that this text proves that the thief went to Paradise (that is to say, to heaven) that very day and was with Jesus; for, as they say, Jesus stated that he should be with him *that day*. The Scriptures prove conclusively that this is wrong. Jesus died, went to hell, and stayed in hell, the grave, for three days. He was dead. (Psalm 16:10; Acts 2:27) The apostle Paul, afterwards speaking of the Lord Jesus, said: "And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures." (1 Corinthians 15:4) It is absolutely certain that Jesus had not been to heaven during those three days; for when he rose from the dead Jesus said to Mary: "Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father." (John 20:17) Forty days thereafter Jesus stood with his disciples on the Mount of Olives and spoke to them. "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; . . . And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven, as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel." (Acts 1:9-11) Thus the Scriptures definitely prove that forty-three days after Jesus had spoken these words to the thief

he ascended into heaven. If the thief went to heaven the same day that Jesus and the thief were crucified, then the thief got to heaven forty-three days ahead of the Lord.

Thus we see that it is utterly impossible to reconcile the construction that the hell-fire advocates place upon this text with the fact that Jesus did not ascend to heaven for forty-three days after his crucifixion. What, then, is the reason for this misunderstanding? It is a simple matter. The confusion has all come about by men trying to twist the Word of God to make it appear that the dead are conscious. Doubtless they did this in all good conscience, having themselves first been taught that the dead are conscious somewhere. When they came to the translation of this text, it was an easy matter to make it appear that the facts concerning the thief support their theory.

The New Testament was translated from the Greek into the English language. In the Greek language there were no punctuation marks at the time these words were written. Punctuation marks were invented in the early part of the sixteenth century. The translators had no authority whatsoever to put a comma after the word "thee" and the emphasis on the word "today." Now read the text with this following thought in mind: Jesus was dying upon the cross. The thief was dying upon the cross. The thief asked a favor, and that favor was that Jesus should remember him, the thief, when he came into his kingdom. The reply was, to paraphrase Jesus' words: 'I have heard what you

have said. I note your request. I say to you now.' "I say to thee this day, Thou shalt be with me in paradise." Paradise is from the word *paradeisos*. It is an Oriental word. It means a park, an Eden, so rendered by all the best authorities. It does not mean *heaven*. It means the restored earth during the Millennial age.

When Jesus went to heaven he bade his disciples pray: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." (Matthew 6:10) Christians have been praying for the coming of his kingdom since that day. So it is clear that the kingdom referred to by the thief was a long way in the future. What is really meant by paradise is the kingdom of God on earth under the control of Christ, the Messiah. During his Millennial reign Christ will restore the earth to an Eden, Paradise. Isaiah wrote:

"The wilderness, and the solitary place, shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing; the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon; they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God. Strengthen the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not; behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall

waters break out, and streams in the desert. And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons where each lay, shall be grass, with reeds and rushes. And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called, The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there: but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."—Isaiah 35.

The prophet Ezekiel, concerning the earth during that time, says: "The land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden." (Ezekiel 36:35) During that Millennial reign of Christ the thief will be awakened out of death. He is in the grave now. He has the promise from Jesus that he shall be in paradise under the supervision of the Lord. Thus an understanding of the divine plan clarifies this scripture that has long troubled many honest people. Briefly stated, Jesus said to the thief: 'I am dying now. I am going to have a kingdom. I will restore the earth. It shall become like the garden of Eden, a paradise. But I say unto you today that at that time you shall be also in paradise.' And thus the last prop falls from under the hell-fire screechers, and the name of Jehovah stands vindicated.

WHO WANTS ETERNAL TORMENT?

In desperation the advocates of eternal torment will reply: 'If there is a heaven there must be a hell, a place of torture for the wicked.' But you never heard of one of these advocates who wanted such a place for himself or for any of his loved ones or even for his dog or other dumb animals. He always wants such a place for some one he does not like. He does not stop to think that he who would desire to see another in eternal agony would be so devoid of any sense of justice or love that he himself would be unworthy of life or of any favors that flow out from life. The apostle John says that he that hateth his brother is a murderer; and surely any one who would want another creature tortured would have nothing in his heart for that creature but hatred. (1 John 3:15) There is not an honest man under the sun who would cast a dumb brute into a boiling caldron, or who would slowly burn one to death with a red-hot poker. It is only a perverted mind, made so by the wicked influence of the evil one, that could advocate such torture of any creature.

SHEEP AND GOATS

Our Lord gave utterance to another parable, known generally as the parable of the Sheep and Goats. All must admit that this is a parable; for surely the Lord would not devote his time to the dividing of literal sheep from literal goats. The parable relates to the time of the second coming of the Lord. The sheep mentioned by him without doubt symbolize a class of people who have a desire for righteousness

and a willingness to aid those who are striving to do right; whereas the goats represent a class of people who wilfully neglect Christians and persecute them because they are Christians. The two animals very fittingly represent the two classes. A sheep is an inoffensive animal that would not harm any one; whereas the goat is rude, unruly, disobedient and cruel, butting everybody as opportunity is afforded. It is quite easy to locate these two classes of people at this day. Jesus concludes this parable with the statement that the goat class receive everlasting punishment, but that the righteous go into life eternal.

Briefly stated, the parable as we understand it means this: The Lord's invisible presence dates from 1874. For forty years thereafter is the period of preparation for his kingdom, as stated in the Scriptures. This brings us to 1914, at which time the Lord took unto himself his power to begin his reign, and the nations were angry. (Revelation 11:18) (See full and complete proof set forth in books, "Millions Now Living Will Never Die" and "The Harp of God.") The goat class pretend to be Christians; and yet they neglect others who are Christians, and not only refuse to minister unto them, but do violence toward them.

The facts show that this is exactly what has occurred from 1914 and since. The majority of the clergymen, of the various denominations in the countries involved in the war, advocated war; and not only neglected but persecuted all other Christians who had conscientious scruples

against killing their fellow man. These clergymen, and the principal of their flock, maligned and misrepresented humble Christians. They entered into a conspiracy and turned these away from their doors, caused them to be ill-treated, put many of them into prison, and then, while they were in prison, failed to minister unto their needs. They went even further, and tried to keep these in prison. All this time they claimed to represent the Lord and to preach Christ's kingdom. At the same time there was another class of Christian men and women who treated their fellow Christians kindly. If they found some who held conscientious scruples against war, they were kind to them. If they found them in prison, they ministered unto them. They did this kindness because they believed these humble ones to be followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lord shows a division of these professing Christians into two classes. He shows that his favor is with all those who have a disposition toward righteousness; and if these advance on to righteousness they shall have eternal life during his reign. He shows his disapproval of those who possess a wicked heart and a persecuting disposition, and indicates that all who would persist in manifesting this unkind, oppressive and persecuting disposition toward the followers of Jesus because they are Christians should be punished. Concerning such he said: "These shall go into everlasting punishment."

As heretofore set forth, punishment does not

mean torment. The laws of the land would not permit any creature to be tormented. Our law makers are not more righteous than God. We have shown heretofore from the Scriptures that conscious torment in fire never entered the mind of Jehovah. The greatest punishment man can inflict upon another who is a criminal is death. The Lord pointed out that the greatest punishment that he inflicts upon any of his creatures is death, or destruction, from which there is to be no resurrection. As to the kind of punishment here meant by the Lord there can be no doubt, for the reason that he said: "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." (Matthew 25:41) Now it must be admitted that the goat class here will suffer the same punishment that the devil suffers; and his punishment the Apostle clearly states will be destruction. (Hebrews 2:14) Hence the punishment inflicted upon the class mentioned in this parable is destruction; and since the destruction is everlasting, therefore the punishment is everlasting.

The everlasting fire here mentioned does not mean everlasting torment; for fire never preserves anything that has life. In order to be preserved in fire an article must have a thick asbestos coat. It would follow then that if God purposed to put the devil and his angels into a place like that, in order to keep them from being destroyed he would have to furnish them with heavy asbestos coats or covering. But the word *punishment* used in this text is from the Greek word *kolasis*, and means *everlasting cut-*

ting off. The apostle Paul likewise shows that this punishment means destruction. He says: "Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."—2 Thess. 1:9.

LAKE OF FIRE

A lake of fire and brimstone is several times mentioned in the book of Revelation. (Revelation 19:20; 20:10, 14, 15; 21:8) All admit that Revelation is written in symbols. Fire here is used as a symbol of destruction. Gehenna fire means a destruction from which there is no resurrection, a complete annihilation. We read: "Death and hell [*hades*] delivered up the dead which were in them." Thus are we shown that the dead in hell shall be brought out in the resurrection. And then we read: "Death and hell [*hades*] were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." (Revelation 20:13-15) Without question the lake of fire represents destruction. Death is not conscious; yet it will be destroyed by the raising of the people up out of death and giving them health and strength, so that no man again will say: I am sick. (Isaiah 33:24) When people quit dying, death will thereby be destroyed.

Hell, the grave, the state of death, is to be destroyed also; and every one of the wicked, who are not worthy of life everlasting, are cast into this lake, the second death, the condition of destruction, from which there is no resurrec-

tion. God has promised to destroy death and the grave. (Hosea 13:14) He will make good that promise. "All the wicked will he destroy." (Psalm 145:20) All the obedient ones will be granted life everlasting. "Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"—1 Corinthians 15:54, 55.

TURNED INTO HELL

The Psalmist says that the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God. This means that those who are wicked shall be turned into the condition of death, and all the nations which forget God shall die as nations. And when the Lord's kingdom is in control, these wicked nations shall never again come forth.

God could not be just, and fail or refuse to carry out the penalty of his own law. Man sinned and must suffer the penalty of death. God could not set aside that judgment, but he could consistently provide for its satisfaction by permitting another perfect man to take the place of the perfect one who had sinned. Thus love provided the great plan of redemption. The gift of God is life through Jesus Christ our Lord, who redeemed the race and who offers life everlasting to all who will accept and obey him.—Romans 6:23.

For more than six thousand years human-kind have fallen victims to the enemy death. Generations have come and gone, moving like

a great stream rapidly in its downward course. Like blades of grass have the people sprung up in the morning of youth, only to wither and die in the evening of old age. Tenaciously each one has clung to life. Nothing is so precious as life. Many in all ages have diligently searched for the fountain of eternal youth, that they might live and not die. Scientists have searched in every direction to find some way to stay the ravages of the great enemy. All have failed.

MILLIONS RETURNING FROM HELL SOON

Death, a silent and relentless monster, has swept away millions in times of peace and in times of war. It has been no respecter of persons. The rich and the poor, the strong and the weak, the ruler and the peasant—all have come to a common level in death. In every age and in every tongue the questions have been asked: Shall the dead live again? Are we ever again to see our loved ones that are gone? Those who have asked these questions in sorrow, have trudged along the great, broad way of destruction, and in due time have gone down into the tomb. Sorrow has followed in the wake of the enemy. This great sorrow is pictured by the prophet of God speaking to the mother weeping for her dead children:

"Thus saith the Lord, A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rahel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not. Thus saith the Lord, Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears: for thy works shall be rewarded, saith the Lord; and

they shall come again from the land of the enemy. And there is hope in thine end, saith the Lord, that thy children shall come again to their own border." (Jeremiah 31:15-17) Death is here described as the land of the enemy; and those left behind have been bidden to have hope that in due time their loved ones shall come again to their own border. Those who have heeded the Word of the Lord and exercised faith in his Word have been comforted by the words of St. Paul, who wrote:

"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him."—1 Thessalonians 4:13, 14.

Jesus of Nazareth, the beloved Son of God, that great Day-spring from heaven that visited the people, said:

"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.

Here the Master definitely states that those who have done good shall come forth to the resurrection of life, and that those who have done evil (all have been born evil, and only those who have turned to the Lord have done good) shall come forth to a resurrection by judgment. This word "judgment" is mistrans-

lated in our Bible "damnation." There could be no judgment without a trial. From our Master's words, then, all shall have a trial for life. Corroborating this St. Paul writes:

"And have hope toward God . . . that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust." (Acts 24:15) Hope means expecting a thing and looking forward with pleasure and joy to the coming of that thing. Millions have gone into the tomb, the hell of the Bible; and many of their loved ones behind have had hope for their future. They have looked forward to a time when the dead might be restored and again be with their loved ones.

TIME IMPORTANT

Long centuries have come and gone; and with each succeeding year the weary watchers, while in this present life, have asked: "When will the resurrection be?" God's Word answers: "In due time." He is working out his great plan according to his own sovereign will. His wisdom is working exactly in harmony with love; and in due time the tomb, that is to say the hell of the Bible, shall give up the dead and they shall come forth. The basis for the hope of such is the resurrection of our Lord.

The apostle Paul plainly states that the death and resurrection of Jesus is a guarantee that the dead in their tombs shall come forth. (1 Corinthians 15:12-25) Again, he says:

• "Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof

he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.”—Acts 17:31.

St. Peter says: “Times of refreshing shall come from the face of Jehovah; and he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.”—Acts 3:19-21.

Again St. Paul writes: “The Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick [the living] and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom.”—2 Timothy 4:1.

These and many other corroborative scriptures prove conclusively that before the resurrection of the dead shall take place, the Lord Jesus must come a second time; that he must begin judging the living; and that after judging those living at his coming, then, during the kingdom, the dead shall come forth. Some have understood that at the second coming of the Lord all the graves would be suddenly opened, and all the dead immediately come forth; but this and other scriptures prove that such is not possible. First he comes; then he establishes his kingdom. First he judges the living; and then he calls forth the dead for judgment.

HIS COMING

When Jesus was about to take his departure from earth he said to his disciples:

“I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again.”—John 14:1-4.

When he ascended into heaven, two angels

stood by and said to his disciples: “This same Jesus shall come again.” (Acts 1:11) All the disciples believed in the second coming of the Lord, and taught concerning it. So thoroughly was his second coming, the end of the old order of things, and the setting up of his kingdom impressed upon the minds of his disciples that three days before his death they propounded to him this question:

“Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign [proof] of thy coming, and of the end of the world?” (Matthew 24:3) They understood from his answer that it would be a long time. Jesus knew that those living on earth would recognize the time of his coming, provided they were searching the Scriptures and watching the fulfilment of prophecy. Those who have been watching and are now watching can fully testify to this fact.

Jesus answered the disciples by saying: “For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes [revolutions] in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows.” (Matthew 24:7,8) That is to say, the happening of these events would mark the beginning of the sorrows of the old world and the time of the end of the world and of his presence. These things have already been fulfilled. They began to have their fulfilment in 1914; and other events stated by the Lord are still in process of fulfilment. He said, in addition to the above, that God’s favor would then begin to return to the Jews, that there would

be a great falling away from the faith, that there would be persecution of Christians, and that upon earth would be distress of nations with perplexity, men's hearts failing them for fear, because of what they see coming upon the earth. All these things are being fulfilled in our day, bearing testimony to the fact that the Lord Jesus is present and that his kingdom is at hand. Therefore, the time is here when, shortly now, he shall begin the judgment and restoration of those that are living, and in the course of time those who are dead shall come forth.

Seeing that this testimony is so clear, cogent and convincing, establishing the fact of the Lord's second presence, it can with confidence be said that the resurrection of the dead will soon begin. By the word "soon" we do not mean next year, but, we confidently believe, before another century passes away. That the restoration judgments of the living are just at hand, the evidences are convincing beyond a doubt. [For a more exhaustive proof of this see the books "Millions Now Living Will Never Die" and "The Harp of God."]

We are living today in the most wonderful time during the six thousand years of man's history. The great Sun of Righteousness, the Lord, the great King, is rising with healing in his beams. The light is being shed forth, and the veil of darkness and superstition that has enshrouded men for centuries is lifting, and many are beginning to take heart. They see that the living shall live and not die, and that their beloved dead shall be returned to them.

Happy is the man, then, who today casts out of his mind the devilish doctrine of eternal torture, and learns to know Jehovah, to know that he is a God of love, justice, wisdom and power; who learns that Jesus is the great Redeemer of mankind, that he is now present, that his kingdom is being put into operation, and that he soon will awaken those that sleep in the dust of the earth.

The God-dishonoring doctrine of eternal torment has been a great nightmare to the peoples of earth. Happy is the man who now learns that it is but a nightmare, a dream; and that the truth of God's Word is certain, that the dead are not conscious in torment, but are silent in the tomb, and shall be awakened and given an opportunity for life.

TWO RESURRECTIONS

There are two general divisions of the resurrection; one known as the first or chief, the other as general or common to all of mankind except the Church. Those who participate in the first resurrection are the Christians who have been faithful even unto death. Concerning these the Lord Jesus, through the Revelator, said:

"Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years." (Revelation 20:6) The apostle Paul was so stirred with the thought of participating in this first resurrection that he said:

"I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: . . . that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection. . . . If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead."—Philippians 3:8-13.

These faithful ones have the promise from the Lord of the very highest form of life, immortality, dwelling with him in glory. To such he said: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." (Revelation 2:10) These resurrected ones, with the Lord Jesus, will constitute the Christ, the Messiah, which is "the seed of promise." It was to Abraham that God made the promise: "In thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." (See Galatians 3:16, 27-29) From the time of our Lord's ascension on high until the setting up of his kingdom, the selecting and developing of those who shall be associated with him in his kingdom have been going on. Now he has come, and is setting up his kingdom; and through this "seed" the blessing of life, liberty, and happiness shall be offered to the whole human race, first to the living and then to those awakened out of their graves.

The order of the resurrection will be, 'The last first and the first last'; that is to say, those who have died last shall be awakened first. In the reverse order they shall be brought out of the tomb, not all in one day but gradually. If there were 100,000 people awakened out of the graves every twenty-four hours it would require fully nine hundred years to awaken all the

dead. Gradually then, as the world is prepared for them, the dead will return from the tomb. As they come forth, the sorrows of earth will be turned into joy. The Prophet, in beautiful phrase, describes those in the tomb being awakened thus:

"And the ransomed of the Lord shall return [from the land of the enemy death, hell of the Bible], and come to Zion [God's chosen ones, "seed of promise," Christ] with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."—Isaiah 35:10.

The poet has truly said:

"The earth is old with centuries,
But not for this she hangs her head,
Close to her heart the sorrow lies:
She holds so many dead."

But when the tombs of earth have given up their dead and death and the grave are destroyed, sorrows and tears shall likewise be destroyed. Jesus, speaking in loving words through John the Revelator concerning that happy time, says:

"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. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write; for these words are true and faithful."—Revelation 21:4, 5.

Let all, then, who have been frightened by

the doctrine of eternal torture awaken out of their nightmare and turn their hearts and minds with hope toward the Lord. The kingdom of heaven is at hand, and there awaits the peoples of earth a day of unspeakable joy.

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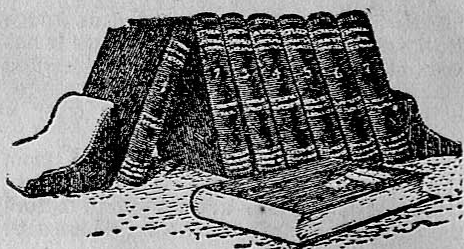
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