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Humility in Truth.

(Convention Address)

“Be subject one to another and be clothed with humility; for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you in due time.” (1 Pet. 5:5, 6.)

IN His sermon on the mount our Lord said, “Blessed are the poor in spirit”—that is, divinely approved are the humble minded, the contrite ones, those who sincerely acknowledge their smallness and imperfection, lacking in selfconfidence and self-esteem. Further, we are exhorted, “Doing nothing from party spirit or vainglory, but in humility esteeming others as excelling yourselves.” (Phil. 2:3.) Also, in Col. 3:12, we are admonished as the elect of God to put on humbleness of mind, meekness and long-suffering. Further, the Apostle James assures us, “God resisteth the proud but giveth grace unto the humble,” and exhorts us, “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord and He shall lift you up.”

We who have traversed to some extent along the straight way understand that lowliness of mind-humility—is a mental quality which enables its possessor to look up with appreciation, not only to God, but also to earthly beings, recognising their good qualities, and giving honour to whom honour is due. The Apostle urges that this lowliness of mind should be in all God’s people. Not all of the Lord’s people are lowly in mind; some think more highly of themselves than they ought to think. Some may be proud of having the truth, or their ability to serve the truth. Any such pride is very objectionable in the sight of the Lord and indicates that its possessor is very small in mind, for, with a proper estimate of matters, the best of us can see that we have nothing of which to be proud, nothing of which to boast. What does the Apostle say? “Who maketh thee to differ . . . and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory as if thou hadst not received it?” In receiving any-thing from the Lord we should acknowledge our receipts instead of glorying in something as if we had attained it of ourselves. So the Lord’s people should spend earnest effort to stimulate and encourage humility.

When we come to consider the Apostle Paul’s injunction, “In humility esteeming others as excelling ourselves,” it is a question as to what he meant. Those who have come into Christ should make progress, and should, therefore, feel that they are better than they were when they first came to the Lord. Such as are in Christ know that they are not lower than all others. Evidently the Apostle did not mean that the Lord’s people should rate themselves as inferior to other men; we certainly are not to bear false witness of ourselves. In what way, then, are we to understand the Apostle’s words? We are to realise that no two of the Lord’s people are just alike. If we have the right view upon the matter, we shall think of our own talents in a humble manner. We should feel that having something of this quality or that talent of grace, we would, therefore, have that much responsibility to the Lord. Then we would need to consider whether we are using as faithfully as we could all our talents which may be greater than those of our brethren. Though they may have less than we have, they may be using their all with more resolute purpose to succeed than we are using what we have. If this be so, then such are better in this respect than we. As we look round in the Lord’s family we are bound to see the weaknesses and frailties of its various members. We are not to allow our thoughts to dwell too much upon their undesirable qualities however, but are to remember all their good ones, especially their loyalty of heart. It is always a recommendation in any one that God has called and accepted him. Although at times we might not be able to esteem some so highly according to their natural qualities, yet we would do them good as we have opportunity. Some may not be so select as we would desire, yet God may esteem them more highly than we do, and we know that is what counts. Realising this we should try to keep very humble and learn whatever helpful lessons we might get from even the babes in Christ, as God may use such to test our humility of mind. In all persons there are certain qualities that may be esteemed and appreciated. We are not fully competent to read the heart, and, therefore, we are to think kindly and generously of all whom God has brought into His family; and let us not think that because some are young in the truth God does not approve them as much and perhaps more than ourselves.

Humility is the only path to glory; the heavenly Father has deep love for those who are humble. Since we find “God resisteth the proud,” and that humility is one of the basic principles of a properly crystallised character, we should more and more seek to develop this grace and attain to the attitude in which God can give us the greatest blessing.

In humbling ourselves we are not to think that we have no talent, no power, no ability; such an attitude would not be sound-mindedness. If, on the other hand, one who has by nature too low an estimate of himself, submits himself to God, He will show him the proper attitude of mind through permitting circumstances to come to pass for his encouragement, possibly through the brethren, etc.

In proportion as we seek to become acquainted with God, and submit ourselves to His will, in that same proportion we become balanced in mind. He who receives the mind of Christ, the mind of God, the holy mind, is instructed more thoroughly by the Word. Thus we get the balance of a sound mind, the spirit of a sound mind; our reasoning faculties become more developed as we grow in grace and in knowledge of the truth. If we would ‘Make any true progress we must say from the heart, “Thy will, not mine, be done.” We know that God’s will is best, whether we understand that Will or not. A person with large self-esteem might, as a natural man, think his own will better, but when he comes to see the truth he will say, I have made mistakes before, but now I will do the Lord’s way as near as I can discern it. Such a course would evidence real humility. As one would progress in the good way and see more clearly ‘wherein he had made mistakes, his humility would increase: So’ we are to submit ourselves, humble ourselves, have no will of our own but merely seek the Lord’s will.

There is such a thing as a false submission which might even deceive the person himself. One might talk a great deal about submission to the will of God and yet be only nominally submitting, while he is really doing his own will. We are to watch, therefore, that we are carrying out the profession of submission. A person would certainly be of no importance who had no tastes or preferences; one may know what he would will for himself, but he is to ask and determine—Is this the course which the Lord wishes me to pursue? Is this the will of God for me?

We cannot suppose that our Lord Jesus, who was perfect, did not know that He had perfect powers, but no matter what His own ideas were He submitted Himself to the Father and said—“Not My will; but Thine, be done.” Sometimes the Lord’s hand is very heavy; God’s hand was pressed down heavy in our Lord Jesus’ case, but when He felt it heavy He meekly bowed Himself beneath its weight in humble acceptance of the will of the One whose purpose He had come to fulfil. But the hand did not crush Him, although it had an appearance that way. Instead of crushing it was the hand of love testing His obedience to the full. When His obedience was fully tested the same hand lifted Him up and “set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places,” etc. (Eph. 1:20, 21.) Thus it will be with us, if we are found faithful, God will exalt us in due time.

As a further evidence of the Master’s great humility we are reminded of His pre-human existence. As the Logos,

He was in the form of God—the spirit condition. He was not ambitious, He was not self-seeking, but, on the contrary, He made Himself of no reputation, divested Himself of His former glory and honour that He might do the will of the Father. His spirit was directly opposite to that of Satan’s. Then, “let this mind be in you,” urges the Apostle. Consider that God has called you with the same high calling, that you might attain to a place with Christ in His Throne, even as He attained a place at the Father’s right hand. If we have become Jesus’ disciples, if we have accepted the conditions of the high calling, if we have received this mind, then we are to let or permit this mind to work out in us the character likeness of our Head.

We should not pass through life with the thought that we are running this, or regulating that. As children should be looking to their parents, so should our eyes be looking to the Lord, asking His guidance in all things. Perhaps some business complications arise, or some employee loses his situation. One who was not of the right, humble mind might be inclined to blame someone else or perhaps his employers for treating him badly. The right attitude for the Lord’s people, however, would be to say, “The Father knows all about this

Matter, He could have prevented it and would have done so had it been for my best interests; there is some lesson here for me to learn and I must look for it.” In business affairs trade may fall back, then it is for those affected to realise the Lord’s hand to keep them, lest they be too much absorbed and forget their God. Then, again, a flourishing business is likely to draw attention away from the Lord and His Word.

Those of us who have inherited the greatest amount of stubbornness will find that there is accordingly the greater fight to acknowledge our necessity of the humble and tolerant mind. Though we may not see this necessity so much ourselves, it becomes apparent to others, and the fact remains that a correct diagnosis of our case is one of the first essentials to a cure. But who is sufficient for this? Who can understand his errors? Who is able to look into his own character and mark its defects? Surely none possessing the spirit of the world with a measure of pride, selfishness or vainglory. A sober estimate of self is a humiliating, not an exalting exercise, yet it is healthful and beneficial. It

reminds us continually that we are “men of like passions” and thus enables us to strive against our own weaknesses and besetments and also to sympathise with those of others.

A sober mind will remind us also of our mental infirmities, however favourably we may compare with some other members of the dying race about us. How slowly and labouriously does the mind act; how dull are the perceptive faculties; how inert the reasoning powers; how unskilled the judgment; how feebly we discern the great principles of truth and how stupidly we go about applying them. How repeated are our mistakes and failures and how tedious and slow our progress. Surely no one, however favourably he may compare with some of his fellows, has anything whereof to boast in, a sober estimate either of his mental or his moral capacity or development as compared with the standard of perfection. In a sober estimate of character, how painfully manifest are those overestimates of pride which are due to the worldly spirit. How unlovely, how mean, and how effectually it impedes progress toward actual perfection. No man can make commendable progress in any direction who does not recognise his shortcomings. If we say we see, our blindness remains; if we say we are wise our ignorance remains and our folly is manifest to others while we glory in our shame. (Phil. 3:18, 19). Such is the spirit of the world; it is blind to the highest interests and noblest ends of life. Against this spirit it is the duty of the Christian to set a vigilant guard. Let us, therefore, be sober and watch unto prayer and let the burden of our prayer be, “Cleanse thou me from secret faults; keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me.” “Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me and know my thoughts, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”, Psa. 19:1214; 1.39:23, 24.

It is in the diagnosis of our own case that we are most likely to err and it is here that sobriety of mind and weakness are so much needed. Self-love does not like to admit faults, nor particularise them looking them squarely in the face with the searchlight of God’s Word; it is much more conducive to complacent ease of mind to generalise and to overlook particulars; to say, yes, I know I am not perfect. However, it requires a great deal more of moral courage to say, yes, I see now in the light of God’s Word that I have been selfish or unkind or unfaithful to my obligations or whatever the fault may be. It requires meekness, humility; to admit these things even to oneself and still more to confess them to those who have been injured or grieved by them, yet how necessary is the recognition and also the confession of the matter to bring about the healing. “Confess your faults one to another and pray one for another that ye may be healed,” says the Apostle James. The recognition and the confession as well as the prayer are thus seen to be very important in order that the heart may be in a proper attitude to receive an answer to that prayer. Let as many therefore as would follow on to know the Lord, whom to know is life eternal, studiously apply their hearts unto instruction and in meekness and humility receive the ingrafted Word.

The Apostle also instructs the consecrated how they should deal with others who might be over taken in a fault.

The spiritual ones of the church should exercise themselves to bring about a restoration of the erring one. This they should do in a meek manner, remembering that they also are imperfect in the flesh and that they also may at some time inadvertently fall into sin contrary to their heart intentions. In this manner we are to “bear one another’s burdens,” assisting one another in battling against the weaknesses of the flesh, and the besetments of sin, and thus fulfil the general law of Christ. The law of Christ is a law of service and self-sacrifice in the interests of others. By this law of love, Jesus laid down His life, and all, therefore, who are disciples of Jesus should have the same mind, the same spirit and should seek to follow the same law. As the Apostle says, “We ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren.”

Sanctification is a growth under the sustaining and supporting influences of the Holy Spirit dwelling within us. —A. A. Hodge.

His power is sovereign to fulfil The noblest counsels of His will.

—Watts.

PEOPLES PAPER.

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Convention News.

IT is with much thankfulness and appreciation of the goodness of our loving heavenly Father that at the beginning of another year we report a very enjoyable and beneficial Convention of the truth brethren held in Melbourne over the recent Christmas season. From expressions of the friends generally and our own experience, we feel that the Lord's promise to bless His people who gather together in spirit and in truth was abundantly fulfilled throughout the four days of assemblies in His name.

The members of the Melbourne Class greatly appreciated once again the presence of the visiting brethren. Some were in attendance from South Australia, Digby (Vic.), and other parts, and added greatly to the helpfulness of the gatherings, as they manifested that earnestness and zeal that becometh all true followers of the Master. Messages with greetings from other dear friends who could not attend were received with pleasure, and throughout the Convention these were remembered in prayer along with God's people everywhere, for their blessing and keeping in the Christian way.

Each of the four days, commencing Sunday, 23rd December, two main sessions were held—afternoon and evening—with fellowship meetings of a shorter duration in between.

The afternoon meetings, after opening with praise and prayer, were devoted to the selected Bible studies as follows—James 5:7-11; 1 Thes. 5:4-8; Psa. 19:7-14; Heb. 3:16; and by meditating upon these passages it will be possible to approximate the many good exhortations, instructions and encouragement received as the friends cooperated together in the study circles.

Three very helpful fellowship meetings were conducted along the lines of the subjects; "Praise and Testimony,— God's goodness over the past year"; "The Consecrated Life—In the world but not of it"; and "The year ahead— Keeping ourselves in the love of God." The expressions at these meetings, being along the line of our every day experiences, were more of a heart to heart nature, bringing to mind the gracious over-ruling providence of our heavenly Father under all conditions past days and how we may by His grace and strength live a truly consecrated life, keeping ourselves unspotted from the world, redeeming the time, and allowing and invoking the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of love, to keep our hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

The addresses of the brethren at the evening sessions added much to the general blessing, as the many good lessons and encouragements were brought out on the various topics, which were as follows:—"Humility in Truth"; "God is our Refuge and Strength"; "If ye do These Things ;" "Conscience Void of Offence"; "God preparing for the Harvest"; "Whatsoever Things are Lovely"; and "That He may establish your hearts." This issue of "Peoples Paper" contains some of these addresses, and others will follow as opportunity offers, so that our readers generally may participate in some of the thoughts given at the Convention.

It gives much pleasure also as we reflect upon the Baptism Service held on Christmas morning in the peaceful surroundings of Hawthorn. It was good to be reminded of the depth of meaning in Christian baptism—complete death baptism—of which the water immersion is a beautiful symbol, and we greatly rejoice with the five dear members who, that morning, symbolised their consecration to the Lord, that complete submission to His will, to be dead with Christ, which had previously taken place in their hearts. There was special cause for rejoicing in the fact that four of the members to symbolise belonged to the one family. Our prayers are offered on behalf of the three sisters and two brethren who have now "made their vows unto the Lord in the presence of His people," that they may be kept faithful unto death and enter into that reward which the Lord bath in reservation for them that love Him supremely.

The Melbourne friends much appreciated the messages from other Classes brought along by the visitors, and on the evening of the closing day of the Convention the passage of Scripture in Col. 3:12-17 was selected as a Convention message to go to the brethren everywhere with Christian love from the Melbourne Ecclesia.

The closing feature of another happy Convention was the Love Feast, during the singing of "Blest be the tie that binds," and finally, "God be with you till we meet again," concluding with thanks-giving prayer to the Giver of every good and perfect gift.

PASSOVER MEMORIAL.

For all who desire to celebrate the Memorial of our Lord's death on its anniversary, Tuesday, 16th April, after sunset would be the correct time this year.

Beware of a half-truth; you may have got hold of the wrong half.

If Ye Do These Things.

(2 Pet. 1: to.)

WHILE we desire to centre our thoughts more particularly around these words of the Apostle just at this time, it would be helpful to us if we can get the main thoughts from the whole of this Epistle, the theme of which seems to be an exhortation and warning to all who have obtained like precious faith through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

In the 17th verse of the third chapter we notice that the warning is against falling from grace, or the favour of God wherein we now stand (Rom. 5: I, 2). Surely we are in a privileged position having the hope of the glory of God and so we would do well to heed the Apostle's warning at all times. Then, along with this warning, the Apostle gives us strong and encouraging exhortation along the lines of growing in grace, this great favour of God (ch. 3:18).

In this connection there are perhaps three points well worthy of our earnest attention and careful consideration. These would seem to be:—(1) The source of growth; (2) the lines of growth; (3) the great need of growth.

We see in 2 Pet. 1:2-4 that the source of all our growth in grace and towards Christian maturity is in God Himself. Grace and peace is multiplied unto us only as we come to a heart knowledge of God and His divine attributes, and a thorough appreciation of the great loving plan through which He has purposed in due time to bring all mankind (who are obedient) into harmony with His will. His divine power grants unto us many other things that pertain to life and Godliness through a knowledge of Him, and it is through this knowledge that we become possessed of certain things. What are they? Verse 4—"Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises." Surely there is a wealth of meaning in these words to all who love the Lord in sincerity and truth. And it is through the possession of these promises, we are told, that we might be partakers of the divine nature. 1 John 3:2—"Beloved now are we, the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He cloth appear we shall be like Him and see Him as He is"—"Having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

We find that these qualities or fruits of the spirit referred to in verses 5 to 7 are such as, if developed in us and exercised daily, will make us, as the words of our text say, "so that we shall never fall." Let us note that the Apostle speaks to us as having obtained that faith in God (verse 5) which in a judicial sense declares us as righteous; not, however, of ourselves, but through the imputed robe of Christ's righteousness which we accept by faith to cover all our blemishes.

Some would tell us that all we need do to inherit the heavenly kingdom is just believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

True, this is the first step towards it after having realised our sinful condition, but the Apostles tell us, as well as our Lord, that there is far more than this to be done in us. We are told to "work out our own salvation with fear and trembling" and also "to labour to enter into that rest," etc. (Phil. 2:12; Heb. 4:11). True, it is the spirit of God which does the transforming work in us, but only when there is manifest on our part that willing cooperation and an entire submission to His will.

Now follows the list of virtues we are exhorted to add to our faith in order that we might be perfected in Him and receive the great reward at the end of our earthly course. We must give all diligence, that is, we are to be actively and constantly engaged, striving to acquire these graces of the spirit.

Virtue (in verse 5) seems rather to mean fortitude, and how very necessary it is to develop this quality—a moral courage to confess our faith before men. It would seem that one great difficulty with the Lord's people is that, even when determined for a right course and thus resisting the temptation they do not take sufficiently positive action.

Many say to the tempter, "I have decided not to yield this time." Thus they leave in their own minds an opportunity open by which the tempter may return. Our Lord's course was the proper one, and like Him we should dismiss the tempter once and for all. We should take our stand so firmly that even the great Adversary would not think it worth while to come back to us along that line. Let us then, as God's people walking the narrow way, add to our faith fortitude, and be very decisive in saying to the tempter, "Get thee behind me, Satan."

Then we must seek to acquire knowledge; not the knowledge that is only heady and which puffeth up and is proud, but rather the knowledge which becomes a heart experience and which draws us daily into a more intimate relationship with the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. We must so learn as to show ourselves approved unto God, workmen that needeth not to be ashamed rightly dividing the word of truth (2 Tim. 2:15). And so it must be a knowledge of the things pertaining to life and holiness and which when given forth to others will be to the edifying and building up of our brethren.

We must also exercise temperance, that is, moderation or self-control, at all times, so that in our every line of conduct we are able to bring glory to God in this way, holding, as in all things, to Jesus as our great example.

Patience, the next mentioned of these virtues (verse 6), is surely a very essential part of the character development of all who are walking the narrow way. Patient endurance, long suffering, without murmuring, under all circumstances, is what is required of us. In Heb. 10:36 the Apostle says, "Ye have need of patience that after ye have done the will of God ye might receive the promise." Here we see that it is not merely to do the will of God that is the test, but that, after having attained to that point, that mark of character in our hearts and in our wills (if only partially in the flesh), we should by patient endurance establish God's righteous law, will within our hearts as the rule of life at all times and under all conditions. Then, and not until then, shall we be in the heart condition of fitness for the Kingdom. The Apostle James says, "The trying of your faith worketh patience." That is to say, if our faith stands the trial it will produce in us this character of patient endurance. On the other hand, if we do not attain to patient endurance, it will mean that our faith has not stood the test satisfactorily and that we are not fit for the Kingdom.

Then to patience we are to add godliness and brotherly kindness and love (verse 7). When we get the thought of Godlikeness and ponder over its meaning, what a realisation it brings home to us. Are we actually growing more like Him daily? We should be, should we not? If so, we shall find ourselves becoming more possessed of that same spirit of love and justice and brotherly kindness toward all mankind. We are told, "Do good unto all men, especially to the household of faith." And so, if we do not manifest always this kindly and sympathetic disposition toward all our brethren and to the poor groaning creation, having that desire to give them of the best we have, how can we expect to be accepted in the Bride Class, since we know that the great work to be done in the next age, by Christ and His church, is along the lines of love, justice and benevolence?

The chiefest among these qualities which must be characteristic of all of us who would be over-comers, seems to be love, as Paul says, "Without love we are nothing," and "Love is the fulfilling of the law." "If we love one another God dwelleth in us," etc. (1 John 4:12). What we are in God's sight is measured by our love for Him, for His brethren, for His cause, and for the world in general, even for our enemies, rather than by our knowledge or fame or oratorical ability. In the measurement of character, therefore, we must put true love first and consider it the chief test of our nearness to God and acceptance in Christ. We must be sweet tempered—in no way can we better show forth His praise than by exhibiting the spirit of love in the daily affairs of life.

Coming to the eighth verse and the third point in consideration of "our doing these things," we find the words, "If these things be in you and abound they shall make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus." We must produce that growth which will bear fruit. "Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away." (John 15:2.) What earthly parent would be satisfied with his child if it did not grow and progress towards maturity; and what farmer would be satisfied with his grain if it did not reach the stage of corn in the ear.

And so, let us who have been planted in grace, which is a most fruitful soil, continue to do these things, so that we might make progress during the year ahead, towards Christian maturity. How carefully we are tended by the divine Husbandman and warmed by the Sun of Righteousness, and watered by the dew from heaven. Surely under such conditions we should bring forth fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixty and some thirty.

It is the presence of these fruits of the spirit in our lives that make us fruitful in Christ and bears testimony to the power of the cleansing blood. They produce also the strength of assurance of our salvation and secure for us an abundant entrance into the Kingdom of God. So let 1.15 do these things and we shall never fall.

“Hell, Death, Spiritism.”

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That He May Establish Your Hearts.

(1 Thes. 3:12, 13).

ONE cannot read the Apostle's letters with out being impressed with the intense zeal which burned within his consecrated heart, and found expression in his words. In addressing the Philippian church (ch. 1:21) he says—"For me to live is Christ," and his conduct in life showed that this was no idle boast. Surely the desire of our hearts would be that we may all have more of that same spirit that dwelt so richly in Brother Paul. In the words of our text, the Apostle is addressing those who have already been begotten of the holy spirit of God; they had come into Christ through faith and consecration, and therefore had a measure of the Lord's spirit—the spirit of love. Paul's expressed desire is that the Lord would make His people to increase and abound in love one toward another. The thought of increasing in love signifies that love already has attained an ascendancy in the heart, a mastery in the mind, by which it is progressing, conquering and bringing into subjection A the thoughts and conduct of life.

And this thought that love is to increase in the hearts of God's people, is in full accord with the general testimony of the Scriptures, that we are to grow in grace and in knowledge and in love; approaching more and more and attaining and maintaining the "mark" which God bath set before us as the standard of character for which He will be pleased to award the Prize in due time. It is as though a cistern were being filled more and more with pure water from hidden springs, until, increasing and increasing, it overflows with its abundance. Thus the Lord's people are to increase in love continually, until the love abounds or overflows in all the thoughts and words and conduct of life; not only carrying blessings to their own refreshment and to the refreshment of all with whom they come in contact, but also redounding to the glory and praise of God, from whom this blessing is derived.

The Apostle specifies only abounding love toward the brethren and toward all, but this presupposes the love which, first of all, is due to God, our Father. Nor is it to be expected that 'any man will love his fellow-creatures to the extent indicated, unless he has first learned to love his Creator, has been taught of Him, and has to some extent become a copy of His dear Son. This is in thorough accord with' the Lord's statement of the full meaning (-4 the Law, "Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God, with all thy mind, heart, soul, and strength and (then) thou shalt love they neighbour as thyself." No man can love his neighbour in this Scriptural sense, until he has first loved his God to such a degree as to be, not Only willing, but anxious to do those things which are pleasing in His sight; for God-is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God. 1, Jno. 4) 16.(Convention Address).

The Apostle's words, "Even as we do toward you," are full of meaning and force. Paul and his associates were not teaching a Gospel which they did not appreciate and practice; on the contrary, they were exemplifying in their daily course of life this very abounding love, which, overflowing, was leading them to sacrifice their own interests and rights and privileges for the sake of the Lord's people everywhere. They were laying down their lives for the brethren—daily, hourly; they were sacrificing for the sake of others opportunities and privileges as respects their earthly life, earthly pleasures, etc. It is with particular force, therefore, that they exhort fellow-christians to follow after them in the same way of self-sacrificing, loving obedience, as imitators of Jesus.

And so it should be with all who exhort others to walk in the way of righteousness and love. - In order that their words may have force and meaning, they must exemplify them in their own lives. As they point to the "Mark" of perfect love they must approximate that mark in their own daily lives, and certainly possess it in their hearts, their wills, their intentions.

So we must always remember that the disciples of Christ are living epistles, read and known of all men who come in contact with us. The darkness may hate, and say all manner of evil against the Lord's followers falsely, yet it must "take knowledge of them that they have been with Jesus, and have learned of Him"; that they have the same spirit, the same disposition of heart, however crooked their natural dispositions.

As footstep followers of Christ the thought comes to us, how can we increase in this quality of love and overflow it upon others? What shall we do that we may have this overflowing love? The Apostle impliedly answers this question- - that it is not what we can do, but what the Lord can do in us and for us. His words are, "The Lord make you to increase and abound in love." It is the Lord's doing; we can accomplish very little for ourselves, and the sooner we learn this the better. The springs of our love must come from the fountain of love and grace and truth—from God, for "God is love." We began to receive of His spirit of love from the time we made our consecration to Him, and began to live unto Him, and not unto the flesh. He has various agencies and channels through which He is pleased to increase our love, and to cause it to abound and overflow and cleanse away the natural selfishness against which we, like all others, must contend.

These channels of grace are represented to us under various figures in the Scriptures. One channel or agency is. the Word of God; another is Divine Providence; another is the fellowship of the Body of Christ, the saints. The Lord uses

all of these agencies in causing our love to increase and to abound. First, His Word, the basis of our faith and hopes, is also the basis of our love, for by giving ear to His Word, we taste and see that the Lord is gracious, that the Lord is loving; and in proportion as we see His love manifested, and discern His gracious character, in that same proportion, we have before us the pattern toward which we are to aim, and love serves as the incentive to our emulation; as our Lord expressed it, "Be ye holy, even as your Father, which is in Heaven, is holy." He is the pattern, and we are to copy that pattern as much as possible in our daily lives; but especially are we to have it as the accepted standard of our wills, our minds.

The Apostle refers to the Word of God as water= which cleanses us from defilements of sin and selfishness, speaking of the "washing of water through the Word," by which the Bride is to be cleansed and made fit for joint heirship with the Heavenly Bridegroom. (Eph. 5:25-27) The Word of Truth cleanses our hearts by showing us our imperfections, in contrast with the Divine perfections. And more than this, it encourages us with certain promises, the object of which the Apostle Peter declares, saying, "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these we might become partakers of the Divine nature." Were it not for these promises, these hopes held out, our strivings for increasing and abounding in love would, no doubt, succumb before the adverse influences of selfishness and sin in the present time; but by these promises of the Word the Lord invites us to press along the line "toward the mark for the Prize."

Divine Providence comes to our aid at various times, to assist us in making progress "toward the Mark"; to assist us in increasing and abounding in love; for if, peradventure, one who at heart is' fully consecrated to the Lord should tarry by the way; and become overcharged with the cares of this life, the Lord, in much mercy and love, will perhaps permit affliction or disaster of some kind to overtake him, to be a chastisement, a lesson, an assistance, and thus, as the Psalmist expresses it, "His rod and His staff they comfort us." (Ps. 23:4). It is by these providences of God that we are frequently taught lessons which we could never learn from the instructions of His Word alone. The lessons. are impressed, or embossed, so to speak, upon the tablet of our hearts, and do us Listing good.

Another channel of blessing and instruction which the Lord has provided and commended for the saints, and which surely has proven a blessing to all of the household of faith in running for the Mark, is the assistance which the Lord supplies to us through the "brethren." Sometimes it is "a word in season; how good it is"—perhaps a word of counsel, perhaps a word of reproof, perhaps a word of instruction. Perhaps it is merely the testimony of daily lives of the brethren, as we see them patiently enduring hardness as good soldiers, without murmuring—taking with joy, with thankfulness, with faith, with confidence, all things which Divine Providence may permit, assured that they are all working out future blessing. Although this channel of blessing might at first seem to be of the brethren we are sure, nevertheless, that it is of the Lord, though through the brethren. It is because the brethren who render such assistance in the. way are the brethren who themselves are receiving assistance from the Lord; and,so it has been from first to last; the Elder Brother, and all the brethren, as they become advanced members of the Body of Christ, joyfully assist, even to the extent of laying down their lives for the brethren, and all this is the work of God--the effect of His Spirit. By all these various agencies God is working in us to will, and working in us to do His good pleasure—that we may increase and abound in love.

But who are the "you" referred to by the Apostle? Does he mean that God makes all men to increase and abound in love? Surely not! The vast majority of men have no knowledge of the love of God referred to here. At the very most they know only the natural love, and frequently very little of that. When the Apostle says, "The Lord make you to increase and abound in love," he refers to the church; not nominal church members, but the members of the true church, "Whose names are written in heaven"; those who trust in the precious blood of Christ, and have made a full con, secretion of themselves to the Lord, And been begotten again by the holy spirit of love: These, and these only, are referred to. So long as we continue to be in and of this class we will be subject to the Father's discipline and instructions, for "What son is he whom the Father chastened not? If any be without chastisement . . . then are they spurious and not sons." (Heb. 12:7, 8).

These chastenings, providences, disciplines, instructions in the word of righteousness, and assistance through the brethren, will be ours as long as we are members of the Body of Christ; and here we are to distinguish between the Body of Christ in its embryo condition in the present life, and the Body of Christ in its perfected condition in the resurrection. We now join the Body of Christ, the Church, on probation, with the understanding that if we are faithful we shall be accepted fully, and be, members of the Body of Christ in glory'; and that if unfaithful to our vows, our covenant's, we cannot be members of that glorified Church. We are pupils in the school of Christ, ant } it is necessary for us to proceed to learn all the lessons appointed, of the Father, else we shall never be permitted to graduate—to enter into all the rewards which He has promised to those who attain to the character-likeness of His dear Son.

(To be Continued).

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“There shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them—2 Peter 2:1.

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FOREWORD.

The subject of this brochure is undoubtedly of interest to all, not only from a personal viewpoint, but in the interest of loved ones who have died outside of Christ, and who, according to the creeds of the dark ages, are, therefore, doomed to an eternity of torture. Yet many of these loved ones have been noble characters, even much better than the majority of professing Christians. We know that they are too good to be consigned to any such condition by a God of justice and of love, and yet they have not taken the steps of faith necessary for salvation, they have not walked the narrow way in footsteps of the Master, and, therefore, they have no heavenly hope. The Scriptures clearly reveal that there is a provision for these in God's great purpose and plan. Space is too limited in this booklet to deal with this matter, but we invite all interested to write to us for further literature, which we shall be glad to provide either on loan or purchase. To the earnest seeker for truth, we trust that what is here presented will be found to satisfactorily explain the Bible teaching respecting the punishment of the incorrigibly wicked, the condition in death, and the phenomenon of spiritualism.

Christendom in Grave Danger !

SPIRITISM, CONDITION OF DEATH, AND WHAT ABOUT HELL?

“God shall send them strong delusions that they should believe a lie; that they all might be condemned who believe not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”—2 Thes. 2:11, 12.

THE statement of the Apostle James, that God tempteth no man, is not to be understood as a contradiction to the language of our text. God tempteth no man to sin, to do wrong, but He has at various times sent or permitted siftings and testings among those who are nominally His people—to separate the true from the false. Sometimes a great truth becomes the sifting or separating cause, as at our Lord's first advent. There our Lord's presentation of Himself in the flesh to the covenanted nation, Israel, as the long-promised Saviour, Deliverer and King, became to that people as a whole a test—separating the Israelites indeed from the mass of the nation—separating the wheat from the chaff.

Our text tells of the end or harvest time of this gospel age, and of how the Lord will permit or “send” strong delusions for the purpose of sifting and separating the true from the false among those who have named the name of Christ. We hold that, according to the Scriptures, we are living in this “harvest” period, and that the sifting of the “wheat” from the “tares” has begun, and that the strong delusions mentioned in our text are coming upon Christendom.

THE FALLEN ANGELS.

The Scriptures bring to our attention a class of spirit beings which fell from divine favor before the flood. These, we are told, have from that time until the present day been confined in chains of darkness in Tartarus—the circumambient air of this planet. The story of these fallen angels is briefly stated four times—in Genesis 6:2; 1 Peter 3:20; 2 Peter 2:4;

Jude 6. The Old and New Testament records are thus in agreement. Additionally, however, we have a multitude of scriptures, both of the Old and New Testaments, which refer to these fallen angels as “demons”—unfortunately mistranslated “devils” in our common version. Without exception these demons are represented as cunning, deceitful, treacherous, devilish, and as having a special malignant attitude toward mankind, and as taking special delight in misleading and deceiving humanity, particularly along irreligious lines and immoralities.

We call to your remembrance the Apostle’s statement regarding this matter, to the effect that God’s people have their struggle or contention, not with flesh and blood, but with wicked spirits in influential positions. Again the same Apostle points out to us that Satan is the chief leader of these spirits or demons, and declares that we are not ignorant of his devices, his intrigues, his deceptions; again he styles him as wily, adroit, cunning. He informs us that the heathen world, while thinking they are worshipping God, are really deceived by these demons; their religious theories and practices are really demonology instead of theology.—Eph. 6:12; 2 Cor. 2:11.

TWO OPPOSING GOSPELS.

The human family is in great distress through the fall, mental, moral, and physical imperfections are manifest everywhere; “there is none righteous, no, not one.” As a consequence, all are agreed to the Apostle’s broad statement. “The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together waiting.” (Rom. 8:22.) Naturally enough the groaning ones seek for the cause of their trouble as well as for a remedy. The Bible sets forth as the cause of all earth’s woes and sorrows the brief statement, “By one man sin entered the world, and death by sin, and thus death passed upon all men, for all are sinners.” It sets forth the remedy also, namely “Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures,” and at His second advent He will introduce “Times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all the holy prophets since the world began.” (Acts 3:21; Rom. 5:12; 1 Cor. 15:3.) This, in brief, is the Gospel of Christ.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE DEMONS.

The doctrine of the demons contradicts this from first to last. It denies that man ever was created in God’s image and likeness; denies that he ever fell from it into sin and death; denies that Christ ever redeemed us, and holds that we need no Redeemer; that a process of evolution is at work which is lifting mankind from a mean and low brute beginning upward, to ultimately make of the race gods, and that all that is necessary for this grand result is time. As for death, demonology denies that there is death, and claims that what seems to be death is really a change from a low form of life to a higher form. This demon teaching is to be found among all the heathen peoples, and in all their religious writings, but is not at all sanctioned in the Scriptures. They teach to the contrary, as we have shown, that death is the penalty for sin; that it is a real penalty, a real death; that the dead are really dead, and that there is neither wisdom, nor device, nor knowledge in the grave (sheol), whither all go, and that the hope of a resurrection lies in the redemptive work of our Lord’s first advent, and in the glorious power and authority which He will exercise at His second advent.

WHICH SIDE DO WE CHOOSE?

A pertinent question for each of us is, to which of these teachings do we give adherence? Are we holding fast “the faithful Word of God,” or are we giving heed to these seducing spirits and doctrines of devils, against which the Lord and Apostle gave so many warnings? Is our theological faith an anchor of hope holding us firmly to the truth as set forth by the Lord, or are we to any extent accepting the original falsehood told by Satan and perpetuated by the lying spirits—the falsehood that death is not death, that our dead friends are more alive than ever before, etc.? If this be the case let us at once begin a thorough examination of the Divine Word, assured that error never sanctifies, but is always injurious, and that our Lord was right when He prayed for His disciples, “Sanctify them through Thy Truth, Thy Word is Truth.”

GOD’S WORD AND PLAN REASONABLE.

How consistent is the Word and plan of God, which, so far from speaking of death as the angel God has sent, assures us that death is our enemy, which already has taken from us many of our loved ones, blighted our lives, and will ultimately destroy us except as we become united to the great Life-giver, Jesus. Those who do not see that the dead are dead do not catch the full weighty import of the blessed assurance that Christ is the Life-giver, and that He came into the world and died for our sins that we might have life, and have it more abundantly. Nor do they see the real beauty that lies in the promise of a resurrection from the dead, for if none are dead, how could there be a resurrection of the dead? Only those who clearly and distinctly see the Scriptural teaching on this subject are fortified against the delusions of these demons, built upon this erroneous feature of theology, which not only has permeated all heathendom, but similarly has permeated all the creeds of Christendom, and to a large extent has made of no effect the word of God respecting our redemption from the grave and the hope of the resurrection from the dead at the second coming of Christ.—1 Cor. 15:12, 13.

“CHRISTENDOM” RIPE FOR DELUSIONS.

The erroneous belief that the dead are alive has been to some extent for centuries offset by another error, namely, that the majority of them are confined to a place of torment—purgatory or otherwise—and a small minority were far off enjoying the bliss of heaven, all of which hindered the thought that they might be communed with through mediums. Besides there has been a kind of horse sense prevailing which has restrained many from having great confidence in spirit communications. While faith was expressed, a doubting fear was associated with it, and this doubting fear was increased by finding that some of the spirits seeking communion were “lying spirits,” and, although others made different presentations, they were all more or less held in doubt and fear. Now, however, we are coming to a time when all intelligent people question the fables of the Dark Ages respecting hell and purgatory, fire, etc.

Consequently, it daily becomes easier for spiritists to find sympathy for their claims that the spirits of the dead are hovering around the living, that our atmosphere is full of them, that they are neither confined in heaven nor in hell.

This thought has been aided by many sermons on funeral occasions, depicting the dead as hovering over the friends gathered at the funeral, the assurance being given that if the dead could only speak he would say to the weeping ones; “Weep not,” etc. All of this unscriptural guess-work, presented as a Biblical truth, has had its effect upon the masses, who are now thoroughly perplexed as respects the place and condition of their dead friends. A growing intelligence forbids the thought that a God of love and justice has consigned them to eternal flames of fire or other torture.

CONFIDENCE IN GUIDES IS SHAKEN.

Inquiries of the clergy respecting the place and condition of the departed bring no satisfaction; the few who still tell of tortures in infernal regions are less and less believed, and the others of increasing number who deny that the dead are in tortures are unable to give any answer respecting their whereabouts. No wonder the confiding sheep are perplexed. Oh, that they would look to the Word of the Lord, that they would remember “the Lord is my Shepherd,” that they would seek from the inspired source the knowledge which their souls crave! Oh, that they might learn that the hope set ‘before us in the Gospel of Christ is the hope of the resurrection of the dead! Mark the clearness of the Apostle’s statement on this subject—’If there be no resurrection of the dead, then they that are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.’-1 Cor. 15:17, 18.

THE DELUSION IS SENT OF GOD.

The reason for the sending of the strong delusion mentioned in our text is plainly stated in the context, but before it can be appreciated it is necessary to have some grasp of the Divine plan of the Ages; it is necessary to see that the Lord’s work throughout this Gospel Age has not been, as many suppose, an attempt to convert the world, but, as the Scriptures declare, He has been merely electing or selecting out from the world a people for His name—to be the Bride of Christ. (Acts 15:14). We must see too, that this elect people does not include all who become nominal members of Christian churches, but merely those who through full faith and consecration become followers of the Lord Jesus in every truth, and receive the spirit of adoption from the Father. These, through the trials and difficulties of this life, shall be proved overcomers of the world and its spirit, and accepted as joint-heirs with Christ, as His Bride in His Kingdom. This class, the Scriptures distinctly tell us, is but a little flock. Our Lord’s words are, “rear not, little flock; it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the Kingdom.” The apostle declares also, “Not many wise, not many mighty, not many noble hath God chosen” —“Hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, heirs of the kingdom?”-1 Cor. 1:26; James 2:5.

After we once see that only the overcomers or kingdom class are being selected during this Gospel Age, we are ready to see that God’s great time for dealing with the majority of our race is in the future—after the second coming of Christ—during His Kingdom—whose reign of righteousness will bless and give opportunity of eternal life to all the families of the earth.

END OF THE AGE NOT END OF WORLD.

We are not of those who expect this world to be burned up. Quite the contrary, we expect its rejuvenation, its perfecting as the Garden of Eden, the paradise of God, the everlasting home of the majority of the human family—of all except the Church of this Gospel Age and those who shall ultimately die the second death. We have no sympathy of thought, therefore, with those who are looking for the destruction of the earth; but we nevertheless believe, as the Scriptures teach, that the present age or “aeon” will cease, and a new age begin. In error the translators have rendered the word aeon “world” and given a wrong impression.

More than this, we believe that the Scriptures clearly indicate that the present age is now ending, and the new age is about to begin. It is at this particular juncture that all the New Testament writings, as well as our Lord’s great prophecy

of Matthew 24, centre, indicating a time of confusion, a trouble such as the world has never known before, and pointing out that these are judgments of the Lord designed to prepare the world for the next dispensation, and the reign of the Kingdom of Righteousness. Furthermore, the Apostle distinctly points out that these judgments will begin at the House of God—the nominal church. Our Lord also points out the same thing, calling it a separation of wheat from tares in the harvest or close of this age—Matt. 13:30.

HARVEST SEPARATING OF WHEAT AND TARES.

It is because Christendom as a whole, though nominally a wheat field, is practically a tare field with a scattering of wheat intermingled that there is to be such a commotion in connection with the separation of the wheat and the tares. True, the Lord, who knoweth the heart, who knoweth them that are His, could easily separate them from the others, but He has chosen to make a separation publicly to demonstrate His own justice in the matter. Hence in this harvest time—at the proper time to separate the wheat from the tares—the Lord not only sends the sickle of truth to gather the wheat, but He also sends the strong delusions to gather the tares.

The Wages of Sin is Death.

OUR LORD'S PARABLES AND DARK SAYINGS USED BY SATAN TO CONFUSE MEN.

MANY sincere Christians, while pained and shocked at the doctrine of eternal torment, and totally unable to reconcile such teachings with the justice and love of God's character, as portrayed in the Scriptures, are persuaded that the Scriptures so teach, and that to discard eternal torment would be to abandon faith in the Bible as

GOD'S INSPIRED WORD.

To such specially we write, reminding them first of all of the Lord's words, "Their fear toward me is not of me, but is taught by the precepts of men."—Isa. 29:13.

As we begin to get our understanding opened on this subject it is surprising to find that most of our difficulty has resulted from attaching wrong meanings to words. For instance, 'die,' 'to be destroyed,' 'perish,' etc., many unconsciously pervert these when reading them in the Scriptures. They know the meanings well enough, yet somehow in the Bible they attach the very opposite thoughts i.e., live eternally, torment, flames and anguish unutterable, etc. Let us get rid of this wrong practice which has caused so much confusion to our minds, so much anguish to our hearts, and so much dishonour to our God.

THESE AWAY, LITTLE IS LEFT.

Investigation will surprise you as to how little of "eternal torment" is left after correcting your estimation of the meaning of words. You will find not one suggestion throughout the Old Testament to confirm your false fears. You will find not one sentence in the writings of the Apostles that gives the least hint that the world's future is lurid flames, etc. True, they do speak of the demons, but always in respect of our danger from them in the present life—"seducing spirits," "wicked spirits in exalted positions," and "doctrines of devils," such as this doctrine surely is.

This must seem strange to those accustomed to thinking of the "torment" as the principal feature of the gospel,—those who have never appreciated the fact that the word gospel does not mean bad tidings, but the reverse, "good tidings of great joy for all people."—Luke 2:10.

We are to remember, too, that the Epistles discuss every phase of faith and doctrine, more than any other parts of the Bible; so that the Apostle could say, "I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27), and again to declare, "The Scriptures are able to make thee wise unto salvation"—and are "sufficient that the man of God may be thoroughly furnished unto every good work" (2 Tim. 3:15, 17.). Indeed, from all that we know of Peter and Paul, they would be the last of men to keep back any important truth, no matter how unpleasant the duty.

On the contrary, however, we find them continually using the words die, death, destruction, etc.; when referring to the end of the ungodly, who repudiate God's grace, and bring upon themselves "swift destruction." St. Paul, referring to the end of those of the Gospel Church, who repudiate Christ, says,—There remaineth for them no more a share in the sacrifice of Christ, but a sure and fearful outlook of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour them as adversaries. (Heb. 10:26, 27.) "Fiery indignation" no more means eternal torment than does "fiery trials," or a "fiery horse"; and surely "devour," like "destroy," means the reverse of preserve. In referring to the incorrigible of the coming

age the same Apostle says, they “shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power.” Their punishment will be destruction, not preservation. It will be everlasting in that there is no resurrection for them.

DID JESUS ALONE TEACH ETERNAL TORMENT?

The thought would be painful if true, but we must make sure of it before so deciding.

When James and John, full of zeal for the honour of their Master, asked, “Lord, wilt Thou that we call down fire from heaven, to consume these Samaritans and their city?” Jesus answered and said unto them, “Ye know not what spirit ye are of. The Son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them.” (Luke 9:56). We sometimes think that we and others who have held to the still more terrible thought of eternal torment, did not at the time know what spirit we were of—nor truly interpret the spirit of Christ.

Our Lord’s “parables and dark sayings,” not understood by the people of His day, and not generally understood yet, are very few. Excepting the figurative symbols of Revelation, which few claim to understand as a whole, these are fewer than many suppose; for they are repeated in the various gospels in varying terms. The fact is that the translators were befogged by the “smoke” of the dark ages on this eternal torment subject.

An examination of the Scriptures in regard to the Occurrence of the Word “Hell” in the Old Testament.

THE word “hell” occurs 31 times in the Old Testament. It comes from the Hebrew “sheol.” It contains no such meaning as has been suggested in Church creeds. Quite the reverse, instead of a place of blazing fire, it is described as a place of darkness.—Job 10:21. Instead of a place of shrieks and groans, it is described in the context as a place of “silence.”—Psalm 115:17. Instead of a condition of suffering and pain, it is “where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.”—Job. 3:17. A place of forgetfulness.—Psalm 88:11, 12. See also Eccles. 9:10.

The meaning of “sheol” is, the hidden state as applied to man’s condition in death, in and beyond which all is hidden, except to the eye of faith, which looks forward to the glad resurrection morning. By proper association the word is often used in the sense of the grave. The word “sheol” is translated 34 times by the word grave, and once by the word pit; by the same translators who translated it 31 times ‘hell!’

When these translators of the authorised Bible used the word hell, it had a different meaning from what it has since come to convey, because of what has been read into it. The old English word simply meant to cover up, as thatching a cottage, or burying potatoes to ‘guard from frost.

The word “sheol” occurs 66 times in the Old Testament; 34 times it is properly translated ‘grave,’ and once it is rendered “pit,” and the 31 times it has been rendered “hell.”

” HELL,” ITS THIRTY-ONE OCCURRENCES IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

On account of lack of space the entire texts here referred to are not printed, but the reader is urged to turn to the Scriptures themselves as the matter is dealt with. In the following passages it is obvious that the state of death—the grave—is intended. —Psalm 16:10, quoted in Acts 2:31; 3:15; Psa. 55:15; Job 26:6; Prov. 5:5; Prov. 7:27; Prov. 15:11; Prov. 27:20; Isa. 5:14; Isa. 14:9-15; Ezek. 32:27; Heb. 2:5. Job 11:8; Amos. 9:2.—Figurative expressions, certainly pits of the earth are the only hells men can dig into.

Psa. 116:3; Psa. 18:5; and 2 Sam. 22:6.—A sensuality going into premature graves from diseases which also hurry on their posterity to the tomb.

Psa. 9:17.—See Revised Version, “The wicked shall return to sheol.” (the grave). This will be the punishment of all who, having been brought to a knowledge of God and His righteous ways, still prefer their evil course. “All the wicked will He destroy.”—Psa. 145:20.

Psa. 86:13; Deut. 32:22.—The “lowest hell” would refer to utter destruction from which there would be no recovery. “Wrath to the uttermost as the Apostle calls it.” See also 1 Thes. 2:16.

Psa. 139:8.—Speaks of God’s unlimited power; even over those in “sheol,” the tomb, and He will exert it and bring forth “all that are in the graves.” —John 5:28.

Prov. 9:78.—Here the harlot's guests are represented as dying, and many of the victims of sensuality going into premature graves from diseases which also hurry on their posterity to the tomb.

Prov. 15:24.—This illustrates the hope of the resurrection from the tomb.

Prov. 23:14.—Wise correction will save a child from vicious ways which lead to premature death, and may also possibly prepare him to escape the "second death."

Isa. 57:9.—Is figurative of deep degradation.

Ezekiel 31:15, 17.—This is a figurative and prophetic description of the Fall of Babylon into destruction, silence, the grave.

Ezekiel 32:21.—This is a continuation of the same figure representing Egypt's overthrow as a nation to join Babylon in destruction.

Jonah 2:1, 2.—Jonah was buried in the fish, it was his grave for the time being.

Isa. 28:15-18.—God thus declares that the prevalent idea that death and the grave are friends will cease. Men shall learn that the wages of sin is death. It is now in Satan's power and not an angel sent by God.—Rom. 6:23; Heb. 2:14.

THE WORD HELL IN THE NEW TESTAMENT.

The Greek "Hades" in the New Testament is the equivalent of the Hebrew word "sheol." This will be seen by comparing Acts 2:27 with Psalm 16:10, of which it is a quotation. Also 1 Cor. 15:54; 55, is no doubt derived from Isa. 25:8, and Hosea 13:14. "O death I will be thy plagues; O sheol I will be thy destruction."

HELL TRANSLATED FROM "HADES."

Matt. 11:23.—Capernaum had enjoyed much privilege of knowledge and enlightenment, and because of misuse of opportunities, and neglect of God's message, this prophecy was uttered. It has been literally fulfilled. This city has been buried so completely that there is difference of opinion today as to its site. Capernaum has certainly been brought down to the grave, covered up and lost to sight.

Luke 15:23.—The rich man in this parable represented the Jewish nation, which has been buried among the nations, cast out of Abraham's bosom, the place of God's favour, while the Gentiles, represented by Lazarus, have been brought into the Gospel favour, see Romans 11. Further explanation is given in a booklet on "Some of the parables," price 8d., posted.

Rev. 6:8.—Here the word is used as a symbol of destruction, or the grave.

Matt. 16:18.—Here is intimated that, though the church must suffer with Christ, and pass into the tomb, yet the grave could not hold the members in Christ. The dead in Christ shall rise first "at His coming."

Acts 2:1, 14, 22-31.—The Apostle Peter is here declaring that, though Christ had been slain and had gone to the tomb, "hades," yet it was impossible that He should stay there and go to corruption, for David had prophesied that "his soul should not be kept in hades, nor his flesh see corruption." (Psalm 16:10). In this way David spoke of the resurrection of Christ. While He descended to "Hades," the grave, He was raised again the third day.

Rev. 1:18.—Jesus, having died for humanity, declared that He had the keys of death and of "hades," that is that He has purchased the whole race, and can give life to whomsoever He will (John 5:21, 28; John 11:25; Rom. 14:9.).

The Scriptures give no support to the God dishonouring Papal tradition of "eternal torture" as the wages of sin. Had such been the penalty, then Christ has not paid such a price, none of us could have been redeemed, but the Scriptures are reasonable and just. The wages of sin is death. (Rom. 6:23.) "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. (1 Cor. 15:3, 20-22; 1 John 2:2).

Rev. 20:13, 14.—The lake of fire symbolises the second death. Satan and the incorrigibly wicked, both of men and angels, are to be everlastingly destroyed. Death and hell (grave) are then to be also destroyed, and then there shall be no more death.—Revl 21:4.

“GEHENNA.”

There is another word, “Gehenna,” which occurs twelve times:—Matt. 5:22, 29, 30; Matt. 10:28; Matt. 18:9; Matt. 23:15, 33; Mark 9:43-47; Luke 12:5; Jas. 3:6. Gehenna has reference to the “Valley of Hinnom,” which lay outside the city of Jerusalem. It served the purpose of a destructor of garbage. All waste and rubbish were cast in there and fires were kept burning to consume everything; brimstone was added to ensure complete destruction. No living thing was cast in, the Jews were not permitted to torture any creature, their laws prohibited cruelty to the lower animals.

Jerusalem was a figure of Christ’s Kingdom,, which is to be established for the blessing of all the willing and obedient, and this “Gehenna” is part of the figure showing how everything that is unclean is to be destroyed. Just as the Jews would cast in there the carcasses of vile criminals, with the thought that they were unworthy of any resurrection, so those who prove themselves incorrigible after the favourable opportunity of knowledge and life in the Messianic Age, will be destroyed in the “second death,” from which there is no recovery. “But the fearful and unbelieving, the abominable, murderers, whoremongers, sorcerers, idolators, and all liars, shall have part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone; which is the second death.”—Rev. 21:8, 23-27.

In Rev. 20:10, 14, 15; Rev. 19:20, the same symbol is used in these passages. We notice that the symbolic beast, and symbolic false prophet, the devil and his angels, also death and hell (grave) are to be utterly destroyed. (See also Mat. 25:41).

When Christ’s Kingdom has done its work, all who will have been assisted by its righteous laws will be rewarded with eternal life, but those who, under such favourable conditions, love sin and wickedness, will go into the second death. As a consequence of Adamic transgression condemnation passed upon all men.—Rom. 5:12-21. As a consequence of the Ransom Sacrifice of Jesus-1 Tim. 2:3-6—all are redeemed from that condemnation, and are to have one perfect, full opportunity of life. As a result of Adamic sin all die, go into hades, (1 Cor. 15:22) but “Hades” will be destroyed in the great destruction at the end of Christ’s reign (1 Rom. 15:25, 26). Then any who die will go into “gehenna,” the second death prepared for the devil and his angels.—Matt. 22:41. Then there will be no more death, there will be no more Beast, the great Roman Catholic system, and there will be no more false prophet, such as the great Mahomimedan system. There will be no more devil, and no more evil spirits operating as they do to-day— through mediums in spiritism.

Matt. 25:31-46.—The parable of the sheep and the goats is further explained in the booklet, “Some of the Parables,” price 8d., posted.

Matt. 10:28; Luke 12:5.—The Lord is here encouraging His followers against the persecutions which He knew would come upon them. He reminds them that all that man can do is to kill the body and send us to “hades,” the tomb, but they cannot send us to “gehenna.” Christ has the keys of “hades,” and will restore the soul in the resurrection morning. But God has power to send the soul to “gehenna,” to utter destruction, which will be the doom of the wilfully wicked after they have had the opportunity of righteousness and life, and rejected God’s grace in Christ. It is worthy of note that it does not say that God will preserve the soul alive in gehenna, so that it may suffer eternally, but that He is able to destroy both body and soul, and this is in line with Ezekiel 18:4. The soul that sinneth, it shall die, “all the wicked will God destroy.”—Psa. 145:20.

Matt. 5:21, 22.—The Lord is here showing that the Law, “Thou shalt not kill,” was even more exacting than they supposed, and that when the new covenant operates even malice and anger will be violations of God’s Law, requiring punishment, and those failing under that favourable time to bring their hearts and minds as well as hands and physical strength into harmony with righteousness and love, will be counted worthy of “Gehenna,” or second death.

Matt. 5:22-30.—A similar thought is contained in this connection. The Lord is impressing the lesson, the necessity of perfect compliance with the Divine Law, and the necessity of self control. That it matters not how precious some wrong course, some sinfulness, or some idol of self-gratification, which would hinder obedience to the Divine Law, may be, it must be overcome, even though it is precious as a right eye, or right arm. It would be better to go through life short of a right arm or right eye than to incur the second death, and be entirely destroyed in “gehenna.”

Matt. 18:9; Mark 9:43-48. Here again the Lord is impressing the thought of cutting off everything that would interfere with the attainment of the entrance into the Kingdom of God. He certainly does not mean that we should ever cut off our hands or pluck out our eyes, but He reasons that it is better to lose these members than to lose life entirely. So, however precious a thing may be to us, even as precious as a right arm or right eye(if it is a hindrance to our gaining life in the Kingdom of God, the reasonable and necessary thing to do is to cut it off. Otherwise, the whole body will be destroyed in “gehenna,” “where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.” This mention of the worms dying not and unquenchable fire, is also a reference to “gehenna.” In casting in the refuse, frequently the bodies of animals fell upon ledges and not into the fire below. These would be destroyed by worms as completely as the other matter

which was burned. The worms and fire together did the work of destruction; the worms were always there and the fire was never quenched. The thought appears to be that the worms did not die before completing the work of consuming the body, nor did the fire go out until all was destroyed. So we say respecting a house on fire, the fire could not be controlled or quenched, but burned until the building was entirely consumed. In the same way Sodom and Gomorrah are said to have been destroyed by eternal fire.—Jude 7. That is that the fire was not quenched, but burned itself out in utterly destroying these cities, not that these wicked people are not to be resurrected, for we distinctly read that they are to be restored, and have an opportunity of learning righteousness and gaining life everlasting.

See Ezekiel 16:48-63. Here it is clearly stated that the Israelites were even worse than the Sodomites because the Sodomites had not had the advantage of light and knowledge with which the Jews had been favoured. Our Lord said the same thing in Matt. 10:15 and 11:24, namely, that it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for such as Capernaum.

Matt. 23:15, 33.—These words were not spoken to those who were ignorant, but to those to whom all the favours of the Law Covenant had been available, “to whom pertaineth the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the Law, the service of God, and the promises.”—Rom. 9:4. These were the leaders of the people and religious teachers, and instead of being true to their convictions, they were misleading the people, and were filled with bitterness and a murderous spirit against the Lord, although abundant evidences of the truth, and of His mission, had been given. They were thus resisting the holy Spirit of light and truth and grace “Though He had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him.”—John 12:37.

If such a wilful course were pursued in, it could but lead to the condemnation, to the second death “gehenna.”

James 3:6.—The Apostle is here explaining the evil influence of a tongue directed by an evil disposition. How often has it been that a few words evilly spoken in a malicious or bitter spirit have aroused evil passions with terrible results. Such words react upon the speaker, and a continuance in such an evil course will ultimately prove such an one unworthy of life, and bring him under the sentence of “gehenna,” the second death.

“TARTAROO “RENDERED “HELL.”

2 Pet. 2 A.—This is the only occurrence of this word, and it has no reference to mankind at all. It is spoken with regard to the “angels who sinned.” These angels had sinned in association with man kind. Compare Jude 6; 2 Pet. 2:4; 1 Pet. 3:19:20; Genesis 6:2-4.

These angels are reserved unto judgment, and are to be judged by the glorified Church of Christ.—1 Cor.6:3. In the meantime their power to openly materialise has been taken from them. They are degraded, and restrained in chains of darkness. These evil spirits can only operate through spiritualistic mediums, who give their will over to them. The word Tartaroo is translated “Cast down to hell”; its meaning is simply that they are restrained, imprisoned in chains of darkness. They cannot operate in the daylight, and irrespective of mediums.

Thus we conclude the examination of all the occurrences of the word “hell,” and find that there is no place of everlasting torture taught in the Scriptures. The teaching is but the tradition of men, and comes to us from the heathen mythological religions, added to the church creeds of the Dark Ages. We have found that “sheol” (Hebrew) and “hades” (Greek) refer to the condemnation of all our race on account of Adam’s sin—all go to this “hell,” or the tomb, “the great prison house of death.” God through the prophet Hosea 13:14, declared, “I will ransom them from the power of the grave (sheol). “As all in Adam die (go to hades), so all in Christ shall be made alive again.”—1 Cor. 15:21-22. Then we have seen that there is another “hell,” “gehenna,” which means utter destruction; it is called the second death. This is the penalty which is inflicted upon those who, having been delivered from the first or Adamic death, refuse the opportunity of life, and choose a course of wilful wickedness. Surely our hearts and minds agree that it is but just that such should be “cut off.” —Acts 3:22, and be as though they had not been.

Just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of Saints, who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy Name.--Rev. 15:3-4.

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A DARK CLOUD AND ITS SILVER LINING

BY JOHN G. WHITTIER.

In the Minister's morning sermon he told of the primal
And how, henceforth, the wrath of God rested on each and all ;
And how, of His will and pleasure, all souls, save a chosen few
Were doomed to eternal torture, and held in the way thereto.

Yet never, by Faith's unreason, a saintlier soul was tried.
And never the harsh old lesson a tenderer heart belied.
And after the painful service, on that pleasant, bright first day,
He walked with his little daughter thro' the apple bloom of May,

Sweet in the fresh green meadow sparrow and blackbird sung;
Above him its tinted petals the blossoming orchard hung,
Around, on the wonderful glory, the minister looked and smiled:
"How good is the Lord, who gives us these gifts from His hand, my child,

"Behold in the bloom of apples, and the violets in the sward,
A hint of the old lost beauty of the garden of the Lord."
Then up spake the little maiden, treading on snow and pink,
"O father! these pretty blossoms are very wicked I think,

"Had there been no Garden of Eden, there never had been a fall ;
And if never a tree had blossomed God would have loved us all."
"Hush, child !" the Father answered, "By his decree men fell ;
His ways are in clouds and darkness, but He doeth all things well,

"And whether by His ordaining to us cometh good or ill,
Joy or pain, or light or shadow, we must fear and love Him still."
"Oh I fear Him !" said the daughter, "and I try to love Him, too;
But I wish He were kind and gentle—kind and loving as you."

The minister groaned in spirit, as the tremulous lips of pain,
And wide, wet eyes, uplifted, questioned his own in vain,
Bowing his head, he pondered the words of his little one.
Had he erred in his life-long teachings, and wrong to his Master done ?

To what grim and dreadful idol had he lent the holiest Name?
Did his own heart, loving and human, the God of his worship shame?
And lo ! from the bloom and greenness, from the tender skies above,
And the face of His little daughter, he read a lesson of love,

No more as the cloudy terror of Sinai's mount of law,
But as Christ in the Syrian lilies the vision of God he saw,
And as when, in the clefts of Horeb, of old was His presence known,
The dread, ineffable glory was infinite goodness alone,

Thereafter his hearers noted in his prayers a tenderer strain,
And never the message of hatred burned on his lips again.
And the scoffing tongue was prayerful, and the blinded eyes found sight,
And hearts, as flint aforetime, grew soft in his warmth and light.