

OBLIVION NOT ANNIHILATION

Question.--Is it correct to speak of the condition in Hades as being a condition of *oblivion*, or of *annihilation*?

Answer.--The word *annihilation* would be a very improper one to use in respect to the condition of a man in death, except it be the Second Death. The thought connected with annihilation is that of being absolutely wiped out of existence. Hence annihilation would be an improper term in respect to the Hadean condition. The word oblivion is not the same as annihilation. Oblivion means the condition of absolute unconsciousness; for instance, when a man falls into a sound sleep he goes into oblivion. He might say, I was wholly oblivious for an hour. He was ignorant of the things taking place.

It is well for us, so far as possible, especially in speaking along the lines of the Bible, to use the right term, to avoid any possible confusion. The Bible is written in very good form. Our Common Version contains very beautiful language. It is a marvel in the purity of its English. We do well to keep ourselves within the terms of the Bible and to use the language which the Bible uses, and thus we shall not be in danger of misunderstanding or of being misunderstood. And if any one thinks we have not a wide enough range, we shall know at least that we are avoiding misunderstanding and misrepresentation of the Word of the Lord. In the case of Hades, Sheol, these words are not in the Common Version Bible, but they have been brought into the English language during the past few decades. Therefore it is proper that we should use these words, because they have become *naturalized* --common words.

Question.--What would be the difference between the expressions used in the Old Testament: "They shall be as [page 300] though they had not been," and "They shall be utterly destroyed," and the word *annihilation*?

Answer.--We would understand them to have the same meaning. These Scriptures have reference to the Second Death only. They might be used as showing what the first death would have been, had there been no redemption from it. But God's proposition was otherwise from the beginning; and the Redemption-price has been given. But the expression, "They shall be as though they had not been," is used in connection with certain systems of the present time, which shall utterly fall, shall go down completely. The same expression might be applicable to humanity. Those who sin wilfully now and die the Second Death, and those who will sin wilfully during the Millennium and die the Second Death--these will be blotted out of existence, *annihilated*.

But to use any of these terms in respect to the first death is a mistake. The most we can say is, that as it is with the brute, so would it be with man, if God had not provided something better. God assured our first parents that the Seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head. Thus early He gave a vague promise of a future redemption. There is no recovery from *annihilation*; it is the end of all hope.

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