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Immortal Worms and Unquenchable Fire

"Where their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched."—Mark 9:44.

THESE words from the lips of our Master, the Great Teacher, have been grievously misunderstood. The teaching of our Protestant childhood was to the effect that only the saintly elect would go to heaven and that others would not only lose heaven, but gain an eternal life in torment. Thus our text was understood to portray what practically the whole world of mankind would be compelled to endure. This hell was pictured to our childhood minds from outside the Bible as heated to a white heat. If we expressed wonder or surprise that any human creature could endure such conditions so long the answer was that God would exercise his omnipotent power to make us fire-proof and pain-sensitive. Some theologians of the Thomas à Kempis school of thought went so far as to picture the poor creatures in their sufferings and to show that the heat would form a kind of an asbestos covering which would shield them from a measure of its intensity. But those deluded theologians proceeded to explain that these outer coverings would crack and shell off every little while, leaving the poor victim freshly tender that his suffering might be the more intense.

Of course, these theologians of the past had their difficulty in dealing with the worms. They could imagine devils who would oversee the torture as being made immune to pain by the chief torturer, the Almighty God. But just how to imagine the worms getting along in so great a heat and how they would in any wise increase the torture of the poor sufferers was to many a perplexity. But patient thoughtfulness along these cruel and devilish lines enabled some to formulate the theory that the worms would be fiery ones, living in fire, delighting in fire—worms that would bore through the incrustations and add still further to the horrible sufferings of the world of mankind.

Was This What Jesus Meant?

Did the Great Teacher intend that such conclusions should be drawn from his language? And did he stop short of the description from reasons of sympathy or modesty or shame? Is this the general teaching of God's Word or has a great and terrible mistake been made? And have we mistaken a figure of speech and treated it as literal? We erred. We misunderstood. The Great Teacher who rebuked his disciples, James and John, when they desired to call fire from heaven upon the City of Samaria, because the people thereof refused to sell them food for the Master—the sympathetic One who said to them, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of; the Son of man came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them"—could that Son of man in any wise intend to tell us that our great Heavenly Father had less of the spirit of love and righteousness than the two impetuous disciples? Did he mean to intimate that while the disciples might impetuously have been willing to destroy the earthly life of the Samaritans, the Heavenly Father, of still more demoniacal disposition, would treat practically all mankind ten million times worse than that and use Divine Power to all eternity to perpetuate the sufferings of his earthly creatures which his own Word declares were born in sin, shapen in iniquity, in sin did their mothers conceive them—earthly creatures, too, whose environment was unfavorable and whose Adversary, the devil, God neither destroyed nor bound?

Such an interpretation, my dear

readers, is not supposable. We must look for some explanation of the Master's words more consistent with his own character and with the Heavenly Father's character, and more consistent with our conception of what a Just, Loving, Wise and Powerful Creator would do. It does not answer the purpose to say, as so many do, "Bosh, do not discuss such a matter. Nobody now believes such things!" This one Scripture repudiated would shake our confidence in the whole Bible. But rightly explained and understood it would settle and increase our faith in the Scriptures as a Divine message.

Entering Into Life

Let us go back to Jesus' day and in mind place ourselves with those who heard him utter the words of our text and context. The Teacher had just said, "If thy hand offend thee, cut it off—it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than, having two hands, to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched, where their worm dieth not and their fire is not quenched." He said the same in the following verses respecting the foot and the eye. Was he speaking literally or figuratively? Does any sane person suppose today that Jesus advised a literal cutting off of a hand or a foot or the plucking out of an eye? Assuredly not. And the person who would follow his counsel in that way would be considered unbalanced in mind.

All recognize what he did mean, namely, that if any who desired to have eternal life found that they had hindrances of appetite or pleasure or what not, as dear to them as an eye, foot, hand, these precious, but disqualifying sins or wrong-doings, should be put away—no matter how precious they were—no matter how highly esteemed. By way of contrast, the Master suggested that if the retaining of these things would hinder them from entering into life they could not afford to retain them—that even if they were to carry the figure further and suppose that in the future life they would be deprived to the extent of being maimed to all eternity it still would be preferable to them to practice the self-denial now and to enter into life.

Be it noted that the reward here indicated is in the entering into life, and the intimation is that those who fail will not have life at all—that they will fail to attain life; that they will have no eternal life, either in pain or in pleasure. Let us examine our text further and see this.

Gehenna Typed the Second Death

The word hell in our text is from the Greek word *gehenna*, which, in turn, was a corruption of the Hebrew word *geh-hinnon*, which signifies valley of death. There are two other words in the New Testament Greek, translated hell in our common version. One of these, *tartarus*, has no reference to humanity whatever, but merely signifies our earth's atmosphere—the place where Satan and the fallen angels are restrained in chains of darkness (II Peter 2:4). The other Greek word rendered hell in the New Testament is *hades*, which corresponds exactly to the word rendered hell in the Old Testament, namely *sheol*. And all scholars know that both of these words signify the same thing. They are used interchangeably in the Scriptures to designate the state or condition of death—the tomb. No person, of even slight education, would for a moment attempt to claim that eternal torment is taught by *sheol*, *hades* or *tartarus*. The

great stress of all who teach eternal torment falls, therefore, upon the word hell found in our text—in the original Greek, *gehenna*.

A Valley Outside Jerusalem

I wish that those of you who have modern Bibles with maps at the back would turn to the map of the City of Jerusalem and there notice on the Southwest side of the City, just outside the wall, the Valley of Hinnom. That is the Valley that in brief was called Geh-hinnon, the Greek of which is *gehenna*. All of our Lord's uses of the word *gehenna* stand related to that Valley. For the sake of our large number of readers it will be worth while for us to take a glance backward at the history of that Valley during many centuries before Jesus' day.

The first mention of this Valley in the Bible is found in Joshua (15:8), where it is given as one of the boundaries of the tribe of Judah, according to the lot cast by Joshua in the division of the land that had come into possession of the Israelites. It is again mentioned similarly in Joshua 18:16. The next reference to this Valley is found in II Kings, 23:10. There we read how Josiah, the good King of Judah, instituted a great reform in the nation and abolished idolatry, one of the most heinous forms of the idolatry having been practised in this Valley of Hinnom, which had gotten a new name, namely Topheth. History tells us that the Israelites built in this Topheth, the Valley of Hinnom, a great brass image to the heathen god Moloch.

In various places they had groves in which a licentious form of worship was enacted and then they resorted to this Valley of Hinnom to offer sacrifice of a most revolting kind to the heathen deity. Sometimes it was a boy and sometimes it was a girl that was placed naked in the arms of the great image after it had been fired to a red heat with fuel piled underneath the image and passing through it as a flue. The cries of these infants so horribly sacrificed were drowned by the cheers of the worshippers and various musical instruments.

All of this, indeed everything akin to suffering, was strictly forbidden by the Divine Law given to Israel. And they had been specially warned against this very form of idolatry (Lev. 18:21; Deut. 18:10). It is a gross mistake and slander of the Divine character and Law to suppose that it ever sanctioned torture. And it is a still worse slander upon God to suppose that he would himself do, and that for all eternity, what he condemned in his fallen creatures.

The Lord declares all this through the Prophet Jeremiah (7:31-34). Here God particularly warned the Israelites that their wrong course would eventuate in the terrible time of trouble which came upon Jerusalem in the year A. D. 70, when it was estimated that over a million died at the siege of Jerusalem. In fulfillment of this prophecy the Jews cast the dead bodies over the wall of Jerusalem into this very Valley. Thus we read, "Behold, the day is come, saith the Lord, that it shall no more be called Topheth, but, The Valley of Slaughter; for they shall bury in Topheth till there be no place. And the carcasses of this people shall be meat for the fowls of the heaven, and for the beasts of the earth."

After the reformation made by King Josiah the Valley of Hinnom was desecrated to the intent that it might never afterward be considered fit for any kind of religious worship, sacrifice or ceremony. It became the valley of defilement. It was used at certain times for the burning of the offal and rubbish of the city. It became the dumping place of dead cats and dogs,

etc. If any of these fell upon the ledges of the rock, no one thought worth while to interfere, and the maggots and worms destroyed them. Fires also were lighted occasionally to burn the combustible rubbish, and brimstone was added so that the fumes might destroy any malarial tendency, in the interest of the health of the city.

The Lesson Jesus Taught

We have before our minds now the *gehenna* fire which no one ever attempted to quench, but which was designed to consume utterly everything cast into it. We have in mind also the worms of which he spake—worms which were permitted to feed on the carcasses undisturbed until the carcasses were consumed and the worms themselves died. Another item here should be noticed, namely, that a saying amongst the Jews was, Whosoever commits such a misdemeanor will be in danger of going from bad to worse until he will be brought before the tribunal of the Sanhedrin, a culprit. Jesus took the same line of proverbs and declared that anyone violating the Golden Rule to the extent of calling his brother a fool would be in danger eventually of such digression from righteousness as to bring him under sentence of the greater tribunal of Messiah's Kingdom, and, "Whosoever shall say unto his brother, Thou art a fool, shall be in danger of *gehenna* fire."—Matt. 5:22.

What the Great Teacher meant was that the earthly Jerusalem was a picture or type of the heavenly Jerusalem, which represents the Divine Government or Kingdom—the New Jerusalem, which by and by, will come down to earth—when God's will shall be done on earth as it is done in heaven.

As *gehenna* lay outside of the wall of Jerusalem, so our Lord intimated there would be an antitypical *gehenna* outside the New Jerusalem. As the trash and offal of the typical city were consumed in the Valley of Hinnom, so the offal and trash of humanity who will refuse all of God's favors, mercies, blessings and opportunities, will be treated as disgraceful wretches and be consumed, destroyed, in the antitypical *gehenna*—which is the Second Death. Concerning this antitypical *gehenna*, the Second Death, we are definitely informed of the characters which will there be destroyed utterly, as Peter says, "as natural brute beasts."

We have a description of this symbolical New Jerusalem or Divine Kingdom (Rev. 21), composed primarily of the Church, and secondarily of all from the world who, during Messiah's reign, will enter in through its gates and enjoy the blessings of Divine favor and life eternal. And hence we read, verse 8, "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the Second Death."

Note that this lake of fire and brimstone into which all the offscouring of humanity will be cast is a symbol, and the meaning of the symbol is plainly stated in the words, "Which is the Second Death." The first death passed upon all mankind on account of father Adam's disobedience. Our Lord Jesus was appointed the Savior of Adam and his race and gave his life a ransom for all, to rescue all from death, to give to each and every member of Adam's race one full, fair opportunity for a test of loyalty to God and righteousness and to secure life eternal in the New Jerusalem. Contrariwise all who will reject that full opportunity will die the Second Death, from which there will be no redemption, no resurrection, no recovery of any kind.

Which is the True Gospel?

"I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ."—Romans 1:16.

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Prophecies thousands of years old are fulfilling before our eyes. The wilderness is being made to blossom as the rose, not only in the arid regions of our far Western States, but in the supposed cradle of the human family in the land of Mesopotamia, where Abraham lived. The power which is accomplishing these things, in fulfillment of God's Word, is human. The force behind the energy is not spiritual, but financial. The motive is not the fulfillment of the Scriptures, but selfishness—the desire for wealth.

All classes of people seem to be amazed at the increasing preparations for war, and these, notwithstanding the cry of "Peace! peace!" and the realization on the part of all that warfare has become more terrible than ever before, by reason of the advancement made in the production of destructive explosives and every conceivable device for hurling them at opponents. Statesmen seem to be impelled by an unseen but dreadful power to almost bankrupt their governments in adding battleship to battleship, device to device, for the destruction of those whom they profess to recognize as fellow-Christians.

"I have never united myself to any church, because I have found difficulty in giving my assent, without mental reservation, to the long, complicated statements of Christian doctrine which characterize their Articles of Belief and Confessions of Faith. Whenever any church will inscribe over its altar, as its sole qualification for membership, the Savior's condensed statement of the substance of both law and gospel, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbor as thyself,' that church will I join with all my heart and all my soul."—Abraham Lincoln's Confession of Faith.

A scientific gentleman in England startles the world with the declaration that he has discovered a certain electric ray that can be focused like light and be used to paralyze armies as easily and as quickly as though lightning had desolated their ranks. This new weapon of destruction, it is said, has been tendered to the British War Department. It is called an "attribute of high-frequency electric current," which can be separated and, by mechanical contrivance, be deflected and aimed in much the same way as a stream of water from a hose pipe.

The "Scientist" has the following to say: "The most striking experiment of all had a horse for its subject. By a mechanical device, which is, of course, a secret invention, it was brought to bear upon the horse at a range of four miles. The results could not have been more rapid or more destructive had the range been four yards. The brute staggered as though dazed by a blow from some unseen hand, then fell stone dead. The same thing would have happened had the range been doubled or trebled, and the fate of a horse might have been the fate of an army corps."

Surely the increase of knowledge of our day can be safely entrusted only to perfect beings controlled by the Law of Love, or controlled by a higher power, until their uplifting shall have been effected—or their destruction in the Second Death, exactly as the Bible shows.

"Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is done in Heaven."

CHRISTENDOM was startled recently by a communication which announced that the Christian Alliance had lifted a collection of \$60,000 in a few minutes—\$300 in cash, the remainder in promises. Then followed the startling announcement of Brother Simpson, its President, that the collection lifted would probably be the last at Old Orchard, because the Camp Grounds directors had rented its Auditorium for three days for the use of the International Bible Students Association. He declared that he dis-agrees with the Association's theology. This was a veiled threat that the directors of the camp ground must break their contract with the Bible Students. This they promptly did, and the money paid in advance was accepted back, rather than go to Law. It was for that reason that it held its convention "outside the camp." We are glad that its fence does not separate us from our great Redeemer and Teacher.

Explanations Surely in Order

Since Brother Simpson may not care to tell the whole truth about the matter and since the Christian public is interested and ought to know the facts, we shall tell them. The unpleasant duty, however, will not necessitate the saying of an unkind word concerning Mr. Simpson and the Christian friends who are in alliance with him.

There are two reasons why Brother Simpson thought it doubtful if he could come next year following the Bible students' three days of this year.

(1) He knew instinctively that his collections would be smaller, hardly worth coming for, if the people should begin to get the eyes of their understanding more widely opened respecting what really constitutes the Gospel of Christ.

(2) The \$60,000 "raised" was not cash and a large proportion of it never will be. Some of it is promised over and over again and telegraphed over and over, as was the case with the young woman who in the spectacular manner offered her jewels from time to time and had it mentioned in the papers. Such repetitions of "charitable work" are considered entirely proper by many in connection with religious work in various denominations, "for the good of the cause." Subscriptions are given publicly without hope of payment, to influence others who are more sincere—some of whom in the excitement give more than they can afford.

Chicago Stockyard Method

This same method is illustrated in the Chicago Stock Yards. A fine, large, trained bull gallops out to meet the cattle designed for slaughter. He waltzes before them and becomes their leader. Following him in a grand rush for a narrow passage they crowd one another to the executioner, who knocks them senseless. A special place, just large enough, is provided for the decoy bull, who, later, goes out to lead on another herd for the slaughter.

We do not mean to say that those who give their money are slaughtered or otherwise injured. We believe that they are blessed—that everyone is blessed who sacrifices anything heartily unto the Lord or to what they suppose to be his service, whether it is or not. It is the method of getting the money from the people and the deception practiced which we deplore. However, the Alliance has plenty of company in this method in larger Christian denominations. It is part of the "business" method of recent years. Some who did not understand this "business" method wondered where all the money apparently contributed to the "Christian Alliance" work was spent. An investigation of its financial accounts was made, which revealed the fact that they were chaotic, and other "business" methods were advised.

"The Darkness Hateth the Light"

Some one may inquire why the Christian Alliance should fear us and whether or not we have ever done them harm. We reply, Never have we injured them in the slightest degree, nor ever even publicly mentioned their name before. Their opposition to us is on the lines of general principles

mentioned by the Great Teacher, "The darkness hateth the light;" "All things that are reproved are made manifest by the light" (Eph. 5:13). Our work is to proclaim the true Gospel—to incite Christian people to Bible study in the light of the Bible's own testimony and without sectarian spectacles, which, in the past, have so distorted the Word of God and set it forth in false colors.

As Christian people come to see the grossness of the errors by which they have been blinded, the light not only has a blessed and transforming effect upon their minds, but it influences their pocketbooks also. They no longer appreciate the "business" methods of the Alliance nor the brand of Gospel which it sets forth. The more God's people come to a correct understanding of the teachings of his Word, the smaller will be the collections of the Christian Alliance. That is the real secret of their opposition. We would that it were true that they would never take up another collection at Old Orchard! The heathen have already had too much of their Gospel of damnation. God's name has already been slandered and blasphemed enough by the false Gospel message—that nine hundred and ninety-nine out of every thousand of humanity ever born are to suffer eternal roasting because of father Adam's sin and the ignorance, stupidity and meanness which have resulted.

Which Is the True Gospel?

Catholic and Protestant orthodoxy have set forth for centuries two general views of the Gospel of Christ. To whatever extent they now disagree with these they should publicly disown and abandon them. Until then they are besmirched with whatever odium attaches.

The Catholic Gospel (Good Tidings) is that all the heathen, all Catholics and all Protestants, except a mere handful, go to a Purgatory of awful suffering, terrible anguish, lasting for decades, centuries and thousands of years, roasting, boiling, agonizing, and thus purging away their sins and dross that they may ultimately attain to heavenly bliss for the remainder of eternity.

Our Protestant Gospel

Our Protestant Gospel, of which we are so proud that we want to thrust it upon Jews and Catholics and heathens everywhere, we should thoroughly understand, enjoy and appreciate before we waste good time and money giving it to others. Here it is: Four centuries ago our forefathers were not Protestants but Catholics and believed in Purgatory, etc., as above. Then what was known as the Reformation Movement set in. Catholics, Jews and infidels will admit with Protestants that a great blessing of enlightenment and civilization has come to the world in the train of the Reformation Movement.

The Reformers criticized the Catholic teachings which they had formerly believed. They examined their Bibles and found nothing there to the effect that Mary was the mother of God, nor that we should pray to saints, nor that we should use pictures or images in our worship, nor that their sacrifice of Christ in the mass was proper, nor that there was a Purgatory anywhere. The Reformers threw out these things as unscriptural. They completely demolished Purgatory in their minds, declaring that it had never been anything more than imagination. Then came another thought, viz: What must we do with the thousands of millions of mankind that we and our fathers for centuries supposed were in Purgatory, roasting, stewing, tortured, but hoping for heaven. They looked at one another in consternation. They had hearts and sympathies and felt that as it had devolved upon them to smash Purgatory, it must also devolve upon them to re-locate all those thousands of millions whom they had on their hands. They felt the weight

of the responsibility. Could they demand of God that they should be put into heaven? Surely not! Surely only the saintly few are fit for heaven! They, as well as all, recognized that fact. Then, with blank consternation, they determined that they must crowd the entire mass into a hell of eternal torture and shut the gates upon them forever and write upon the gates, "Who enters here abandons hope."

Brother Calvin to the Rescue

Taking from practically all humanity all future hope made the Reformers for the time heartsick. It would be awful to do that for one person, but to thus "do" all humanity seemed terrible.

But Brother John Calvin helped them amazingly and took from them their burden. He told them that they should not worry, because it was all God's fault and not theirs. God had predestinated them to that awful future long before he created man. Now they should merely try to think of themselves as the "elect" and try to forget everybody else. Of course, it seemed horrible to charge all these things against the God of all Justice, Wisdom, Love and Power. But it was the only solution which occurred to them. John Calvin's theories were afterwards embodied in the "Westminster Confession of Faith." And that confession of faith became the foundation of nearly all Protestant creeds. Brother John Wesley afterward objected, but admitted that only the saintly went to heaven and everybody else went to eternal torment. His protest was that, instead of this being by Divine foreordination and intention, it was, on the contrary, because of Divine unwisdom and incompetency.

"Good Tidings of Great Joy"

Surely no sane person can any longer defend any of the above "Gospels" as the true one, of which St. Paul was not ashamed! Surely St. Paul never preached any of those Gospels, nor did any of the Apostles—nor does the Bible support such theories, except by the turning and twisting of language, mis-translations of the original and misinterpretations of some parables. The plain statements of the Scriptures are all directly to the opposite.

The Bible teaches that "the wages of sin is death," not Purgatory nor eternal torment. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Adam, the perfect, was placed on trial for life eternal or death eternal. He sinned and the sentence against him was, "Cursed is the earth for thy sake; thorns and thistles shall it bring forth unto thee. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread until thou return unto the ground from whence thou wast taken" (Gen. 3:17-19). St. Paul declares the same: "By one man's disobedience sin entered into the world; and thus death passed upon all men, because all are sinners" (Rom. 5:12).

Looking about us we find this true. Everybody who is not dead is dying. As the Bible says, we are living under a reign of Sin and Death. Nothing that man can do can either eradicate sin or lift him out of the dead and dying condition. God alone can help us! He proposes to help us, and the message respecting that help is, in the Scriptures, called the Gospel. Its announcement by the angels on the night of Jesus' birth is full, complete, satisfactory, viz: "Behold, we bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be unto all people; for unto you is born this day in the City of David a Savior (life-giver) which is Christ the Lord."—Luke 2:10.

Ah, now we have the Truth! The penalty of sin is death! And the "good tidings" is that God has provided for our recovery from sin and death. The Savior gave his life for the cancellation of our sin, for the satisfaction of Justice, that in due time Adam and all his condemned and imperfect race might be released from the condemnation and be lifted out of the sin and death conditions which now prevail. That uplifting is Scripturally called the resurrection of the dead. Hence, the preaching of the early Church was, "Jesus and the Resurrection"—the Redeemer and his work.

Thieves in Paradise

Luke 23:43.—This greatly misunderstood text explained in Peoples Pulpit, Vol. I, No. 7.

Send post card for free sample.

"WHERE ARE THE DEAD?"

This sermon was published in PEOPLES PULPIT, Volume one, Number 3. The interest aroused and the great demand for copies of this sermon have been remarkable. A sample copy will be mailed to any one free.

The Seas in the Hollow of God's Hand

"Who hath measured the seas in the hollow of his hand."—Isaiah 40:12.

THE wonderful force and immensity of the thought of our text cannot be appreciated by those who have never been upon the great Ocean. As we travel through the water at railroad speed and keep watch in every direction, yet seldom see a vessel, large or small, day after day, we begin to get a little conception of the world in which we live. It is so much larger than previously we were able to comprehend. Yet by the aid of the telescope and the mathematical calculations we perceive that our earth and its seas are small, in comparison to many other worlds. We perceive that our solar system (our sun and his planetary satellites) constitutes but a small fraction of God's creation. Astronomers tell us that by the aid of sensitive photographic plates they are able to count about one hundred and twenty-five millions of suns, around which planets are revolving, as our earth revolves around our sun. And they estimate that only a small portion of these suns is visible to our naked eye—so far distant are they. Astronomers estimate that there are millions of other suns so far distant that their light cannot even be discerned by photography.

We stand appalled at the immensity of space and the law and order which everywhere reign. We heartily assent to the words of the Prophet David, "Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge; there is no place where their voice is not heard." The person who can look upon this wonderful display of superhuman power and who can believe that these worlds created themselves, shows to the majority of us that, if he has brains, they are sadly disordered, unbalanced. The person who, after intelligent thought, concludes that there is no God, that everything came to be what it is by chance or by the operation of some blind force—that person is described in the Scriptures in the following words, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God."—Psa. 14:1.

"The Half Was Never Told"

On first reading our text some of us might have been inclined to say, Ah, a beautiful poetic extravagance! But not so, dear friends! As scientific instruments demonstrate to us the immensity of the universe we perceive that the Prophet used very moderate language indeed in his description of the majestic power and greatness of the Creator, representing him as weighing the mountains in his balances and holding the seas in the hollow of his hand and that, from his standpoint, a thousand years are but as a watch in the night. How insignificantly small we all feel in the presence of our God! No wonder some great men have been inclined to say that humanity is too insignificant from the Divine standpoint to be worthy of the least consideration—much less to be objects of Divine care and providence! The Scriptures encourage us to reason from the known to the unknown. They tell us that although God is so great, so wise, so powerful, he is also just and loving. And the more we consider the matter, the more reasonable this Bible description of the Almighty appears. His power we see demonstrated. The wisdom of One so great cannot be doubted. Then we come to consider, Could One so wise and so powerful be unjust or ungenerous? Our hearts answer, No; no one is really great who is devoid of justice and love. So surely as our God is Jehovah he must possess these qualities.

When we came in contact with the Bible, and particularly after we learned something of its teachings and got rid of the misrepresentations which gathered about it during the dark ages—then we began to recognize it as the message of Jehovah to his creatures. It informed us that the great Creator of the Universe is not only Almighty and All-wise, but loving and kind, with Justice as the very foundation of his Empire. From the Bible we learned, too, that our Creator had been pleased to make us in his own image, in his own moral likeness, to the intent that we might enjoy him and the fruits of his righteousness to all eternity. From this standpoint we began

to realize that the loftiest sentiments of the human mind and heart are merely the reflections of this Creator.

Thus coming into sympathetic accord with our Maker we can comprehend the principles of his character—what justice signifies, and mercy and kindness—what is wisdom as contrasted with foolishness. From this standpoint we were enabled to see the glorious perfection of our Maker's character and attributes, which justify the name which he has taken to himself when he declares through his ambassador, "God is Love." As we come to realize this more and more, we are grasping the Infinite; we are getting near to the heart of the great Eternal One, who weighs the mountains as in a balance and measures the seas in the hollow of his hand.

"Like Unto Your Father"

Godliness is love-likeness, and, as the Scriptures declare, "Love is the fulfilling of the (Divine) Law" (Rom. 13:10). Our great Creator, the only living and true God, is thus seen in contrast with all the gods of the heathen, who are pitiless, merciless, vengeful, devilish. From the Bible we learn that Jehovah, the True God, takes delight in doing good—in the exercise of his Almighty power and wisdom in the creating of beings in whose everlasting life and enjoyment forever he takes pleasure. With such glorious intentions his creative work began with the celestial beings, who are still enjoying his favor. With similar benevolence he created man a little lower than the angels, crowning him with glory and honor as the king of all creatures, on the animal, the human, plane, the likeness of his Maker, who is a spirit.

Harkening to the explanations of the Divine purposes by the Apostles and Prophets, we have received assurances that nothing has befallen humanity in all the dire experiences of the past six thousand years that the great Creator did not foresee. Further, we have the assurances that Divine Wisdom purposes eventually that the tears and sorrows, cryings and dying, the penalty for Original Sin, under which man has suffered all these centuries, the great Creator purposes shall work no real disadvantage to his creatures. Instead, the end of the Divine Program will attest the various elements of the Divine character as nothing else could have done. The holy angels, who have known no sin, will in mankind read to eternity a valuable lesson of the exceeding sinfulness of sin and the wisdom and blessedness of righteousness.

And even mankind, although at present suffering seriously under the weight of Divine displeasure and condemnation to death, will ultimately be so blessed and the weight of blessing so outweigh the sorrows of the curse, that every creature shall bow the knee and every tongue confess to Divine Justice, Wisdom, Love and Power, in connection with the Divine dealings with humanity.

"Joy Cometh in the Morning"

A night of weeping six thousand years long, involving suffering and sorrow to twenty-thousand millions, is an awful thought. But the proposition is a different one when we remember that the majority of Adam's children die in infancy and that to those who live their three score years and ten with labor and sorrow, there are pleasing and happy experiences, as well as tears. And when we read that even the tears of a few years are a part of the disciplines, instructions and experiences which God designs shall be valuable lessons in preparation for a glorious and joyous eternity—then the whole matter begins to have a new aspect to our minds.

The night of weeping, six thousand years long, is about to be followed by the morning of joy. The New Day, in which darkness and sin will be abolished and in which the Sun of Righteousness will bless and heal the world of mankind, is a Thousand-Year Day for the blessing and uplifting of our race (II Peter 3:8). The Bible describes that day in most glowing terms. It is the day of Messiah, the day in which God's Kingdom shall come and his will be done on earth as it is done

in heaven, the day in which the poor and needy will be lifted up from the dunghill of superstition and depravity, the day in which the knowledge of the glory of God shall fill the whole earth.

And there shall be no more fear. That day will not end as do others. It will not be followed by a night, but lead on to a glorious eternity for all of God's creatures who appreciate Divine goodness and, using the Divinely provided opportunities, will return to full harmony with their Creator. Such he will in turn recognize as his sons and, at his right hand of favor, they will enjoy pleasures for evermore.

The Revelation of Our God

One of old truly said, "Thou art a God which hidest thyself" (Isa. 45:15). How true! As a result the world by wisdom knows not God. He is near in his wisdom and love, yet he can be seen only by those whose eyes of understanding have been opened. But we are glad that the time is coming when all the blind eyes shall see clearly. "As I live, saith the Lord, the whole earth shall be filled with my glory." "The knowledge of the glory of God shall fill the whole earth as the waters cover the great deep" (Habakkuk 2:14). Then all shall see what God hath wrought and our temporary blindness will but accentuate the glorious brightness of his Wisdom, Justice, Love and Power:

"Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan his work in vain;
God is his own interpreter,
And he will make it plain!"

In the end it will be seen that the Divine permission of the reign of sin and death in the earth, instead of being a blot upon Divine character and a demonstration of Divine unwisdom and incompetency, will reveal the great Creator to his subjects, his children, as nothing else could have done. Besides, the experiences of mankind during the seven thousand years from Adam's creation to the end of Messiah's mediatorial Kingdom will demonstrate traits of the Divine character which could not otherwise be manifested to angels or to men.

For instance, without the permission of sin, the element of Divine Justice and the unalterable opposition of God to all sin would never have been known to his creatures. His sentence upon father Adam and his race and the permission of the reign of death and sin for all these centuries have demonstrated the fact that Divine Justice cannot be trifled with. And this reign of sin and the strength of the Divine opposition to sin, and the sentence upon sinners, in turn gave opportunity for the exhibit of Divine mercy, compassion, sympathy, love. Undoubtedly God's love was known to the angelic hosts before, but not to the same extent. His dealing with humanity will prove the depth of his sympathy to angels and to men. "God commended his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). Surely, as the poet declares, we have in this a manifestation of

"Love Divine, all love excelling."

More than this: Some of us at one time were, perhaps, inclined to criticize our Maker and to say that he had no right to redeem us at the cost of Calvary; that it was wrong to cancel the sins of one and require their payment of another. But we erred. It was not thus. Rightly understood, the dealings of the Father with the Son add still further to his glory—magnify still more his Wisdom, Justice, Love and Power. With all power and authority the Almighty would not command the death of his Son. For Jesus to become man's Redeemer meant his voluntary sacrifice of himself. And how shall we understand this—the Redeemer's willingness to be man's ransom-price? The Scriptures, replying, tell us that it was because of his great love for the Father, his great confidence in him and his willingness to submit to the Divine will and pur-

pose and arrangement in everything. Yet, notwithstanding the willingness of the Redeemer, the Father would not permit him to engage in this great undertaking which would cost himself so much, unless he would give him a corresponding reward. Thus we read of Jesus, that "for the joy that was set before him he endured the cross and despised the shame."

"No! It Is Just Like Him"

The Divine plan being set forth to an old colored woman, she was asked if it was not strange that God should do such great things for us. Her answer was, "No, Master, it is just like him!"

So we say respecting the great God who made the heavens and the earth and sun and stars, It is not strange that he should have a glorious Plan for all of his creatures—a Plan which will fully exemplify his character—his Justice, Wisdom, Love and Power!

And amongst these wonderful things of the Divine Purpose none is more wonderful than that which relates to the Church class, "the elect," drawn and called and begotten of the holy Spirit during this Gospel Age. These, justified by faith instantly, are a separate class from the world, who will be justified, perfected, through works during Messiah's glorious reign. The arrangement for their faith-justification through the merit of the Redeemer in advance of the world's justification is for the purpose of allowing these, who, by nature are "children of wrath even as others," to become sons of God on the spirit plane, "partakers of the divine nature."

Dealing on lines of impartiality, God's offer to these members of Adam's race, a "little flock" in all, is that, if they join with their Redeemer in sacrifice and walk in his footsteps, his merit shall cover their blemishes and they may become for all eternity his glorious Bride and joint-heirs with him in his Kingdom—that they may sit with him in his Throne and be associated in the great work of uplifting the children of men.

How wonderful is our God, infinite in all his qualities! "Who hath known the mind of the Lord; who hath been his counsellor!" (Romans 11:34). How came all these wonderful things which are written in his Book, unless by his own knowledge? Let us bow before him and adore him and be faithful followers in the footsteps of Jesus until the end of the race—until we receive the crown of life.

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Jesus a Wonderful Man

"What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him."—Matt. 8:27.

WE have always sympathized deeply with the Apostles in their experience with the storm on the Sea of Galilee. The storm was so violent that even the experienced fishermen were in terror and wakened their Master Jesus. The latter, weary with travel and preaching, was sound asleep in a little cabin at the stern of the vessel. They appealed to him, "Master, carest thou not that we perish?" Then Jesus arose and, at his command, the storm ceased and a great calm prevailed. Then it was that his fishermen disciples exclaimed, "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and waves obey him?"

Although more than eighteen centuries have since passed, the same question is going the rounds of most civilized peoples of the world—What manner of man is this? Some of the best thinkers and noblest hearts of all nationalities, Jew and Gentile, agree that Jesus of Nazareth was a most wonderful man. It is still agreed, as in the days of his presence, that "never man spake like this man!" Some, indeed, called him a deceiver. Others said that he was under the control of evil spirits. Others, going to the opposite extreme, declared that this great Jew was Jehovah himself, who, for the time, was masquerading as a man.

"Wonderful Words of Life"

A man should be judged by his own words and not by the words of others, whether friends or foes. As we promptly reject the testimony of his enemies as contradictory to the facts, so, when the friends of Jesus contradict his own words in their endeavor to honor him, they should not be followed. Their counsels respecting what they do not know should be as thoroughly rejected as those of his enemies, when they contradict his own testimonies. Pastor Russell contends that the greatest of all Jews told the truth about himself, as well as about other matters in his "wonderful words of life." He declared, "My Father is greater than I." (John 14:28.) He declared that he delighted to do his Father's will and that he had come into the world to do it, even at the cost of self-sacrifice and every self-denial even unto death (Hebrews 12:2). When he prayed to the Father with strong cryings and tears in Gethsemane (Hebrews 5:7), he was not shamming. He was not perpetuating fraud and deceiving his disciples then and since.

Jesus declared that the Father sent him and that he delighted to come in obedience to Jehovah's will, to be his agent and servant in the outworking of a great plan for human redemption. Those who deny all of this, and who have awakened so much confusion amongst Christians, and have made the Gospel of Christ impossible to the Jew, should give an account of themselves and explain by what authority they contradicted the Great Teacher—"The Father is greater than I." And when they claim that the death of Jesus was merely a farce, and that he as Jehovah merely stepped out of the Body of Jesus and perpetrated a fraud and pretended to be dead and aroused his disciples so to think and so to teach, and pretended later to be raised from the dead—those who thus teach and who thus confuse the minds of all Christendom and Jewry, should explain away, if they can, the plain statement of the Apostle that God raised up Jesus from the dead by his own power on the third day.

"God Manifest in Flesh"

"Adam was created in the image and likeness of God," hence God was manifested in Adam's flesh. Still more so was he manifested in "The man Christ Jesus" (I Timothy 2:5). The Scriptures declare most positively that Jesus had a previous existence on the spirit plane and that he voluntarily consented to be made flesh for the outworking of Jehovah's plan. He was not a sinner like others. His life was directly transferred at his birth from the spirit to the human plane. Thus he was a partaker of human nature on his mother's side only, and his life was unimpaired—"holy, harmless, separate from sinners." Thus as a perfect man he was the corresponding price for Father Adam at thirty years of age. And he was "God manifest in the

flesh" in the same manner that Adam was before he sinned.

But more than this, he obtained a special blessing which Adam never knew. At the time of his consecration to death at his baptism he received the anointing of the holy Spirit and begetting again to the spirit plane as the Anointed One—the Anointed Priest and King for Israel and through Israel for the world. By virtue of that anointing he became the special ambassador of Jehovah—his special representative amongst men. Thereafter he was God manifest in the flesh in a far higher sense than was Adam. Thus was this Wonderful One The Son of The Man, and, by the begetting of the holy Spirit, specially also the Son of God.

Michael One Like God

The Hebrew prophets had foretold this greatness of the Messiah, who at the Divinely-appointed hour will assume the dominion of earth, setting up by Divine authority his Mediatorial Kingdom, which, for a thousand years, will reign triumphantly, binding Satan and sin in its every form and setting at liberty every good principle of righteousness for the blessing of Israel under the New Covenant (Jeremiah 31:31), and through Israel the blessing of every nation. "Unto him every knee shall bow and every tongue confess, when the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the earth."—Hab. 2:14.

Jehovah, through the Prophet Daniel, called this great Messiah Michael, and tells that when he shall stand up, when he shall take his authority and begin his rule, there will be a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation, incidental to the inauguration of the Empire of Righteousness, for the purpose of bringing peace on earth and good will amongst men.

Michael, the arch-angel, signifies One like God—a god-like one. Whoever, therefore, believes in Messiah from this standpoint must not expect a human Messiah of flesh and blood. He must expect just such an One as the Scriptures declare Jesus now to be—the glorified Son of the Highest. Moreover, the New Testament, after telling that this Great Messiah must reign until he shall have put all enemies under his feet, in subjection, tells also that then he will in turn, at the close of his Mediatorial reign, deliver up the Kingdom to God, even the Father, that Jehovah may be all in all. There is no suggestion, therefore, on the part of Jesus or his Apostles that at all corresponds with the absurd suggestions and contradictions of those who claim that Jesus was his own Father—that the Father and the Son are the same person under two names.

WORRY WILL SURELY KILL.

Worry injures beyond repair certain cells of the brain, and the brain being the nutritive center of the body, the other organs become gradually injured, and when some diseases of these organs or a combination of them arise death finally ensues.

Thus worry kills. Insidiously, like many other diseases, it creeps upon the brain in the form of a single, constant, never lost idea, and, as a dropping of water over a period of years will wear a groove in the stone, so does worry gradually, imperceptibly and no less surely destroy the brain cells that lead all the rest, which are, so to speak, the commanding officers of mental power, health and motion.

Worry, to make the theory still stronger, is an irritant at certain points which produces little harm if it comes at intervals or irregularly. Occasional worryment the brain can cope with, but the iteration and the reiteration of one idea of a disquieting sort the cells of the brain are not proof against.

It is as if the skull were laid bare and the surface of the brain struck lightly with a hammer every few seconds with mechanical precision, with never a sign of a stop or the failure of a stroke. Just in this way does the annoying idea, the maddening thought that will not be done away with, strike or fall upon certain nerve cells, never ceasing, diminishing the vitality of the delicate organisms that are so minute that they can be seen only under the microscope.—"Journal of Physiological Therapeutics."

When God Was Alone

From Only One Standpoint Can Divine Wisdom and Love be Discerned in Connection with Mankind.

THE Scriptures declare a "beginning of the creation of God," and this evidences the fact that God was previously alone—the self-existent One. His qualities and attributes then were the same as they are now, for the Scriptures declare his unchangeableness—"the same yesterday, today and forever."

Moreover, the completeness of the Divine perfection is such that companionship was not necessary to the happiness of Jehovah. The only one who inhabiteth eternity is self-centered. The creation of angels and of men was indeed his pleasure, because, benevolently, he desires to do good, to give capacity for pleasure and to afford it opportunity for gratification. Furthermore, the highest good of his creatures called for an exhibition to the full of all the elements of the Divine character—Divine Justice, Love, Power and Wisdom. The scope of the exercise of Divine power is the Universe, but it is difficult for our finite minds to comprehend the meaning of this word—Universe.

Astronomers tell us that by the aid of photo-astronomy they can see nearly 125,000,000 suns—solar systems like our own, with supposedly more than a billion of worlds more or less like our earth. These, we may assume, are in process of development, are in preparation for inhabitants whom the great Creator will in due time provide. From the Scriptural standpoint, however, the great work of Creation began with our earth. What a boundless thought we have in the bare suggestion that the billion worlds are to be peopled, and that the lessons of righteousness and sin, of life and death eternal, now being taught to humanity, will never need to be repeated.

The Permission of Evil

From only one standpoint can Divine Wisdom and Love be discerned in connection with the history of mankind. It must include the Age about to be ushered in—the period of Messiah's reign of righteousness; the time in which every member of Adam's race, sharing the penalty of sin and death because inheriting his weakness, will be set free from these; the time when the full knowledge of the glory of God shall be granted to every human being; and when a full opportunity will come to each by obedience to gain life everlasting.

The lesson thus far taught is the goodness and the severity of God—his goodness in bringing us into being, and his severity in the punishment of father Adam's wilful transgression; also, to both men and angels, Justice, unswerving Justice. The next lesson will be, that God is love. The foundation for these lessons is already laid in the Ransom sacrifice of Jesus, through and on account of which he becomes the world's Redeemer and Restorer. A few can believe this message by faith; but not many have the ear of faith nor the eye of faith. Only the saints are able to appreciate this great fact at the present time.

That which is now secret and understood only by the few is shortly to be made manifest to every creature in heaven and in earth. All will then see and be able to appreciate the great fact that the redemption accomplished by the sacrifice of Jesus is world wide and means a full deliverance from the sin-and-death condemnation, which passed upon Adam and all of his race, to all who will accept the same as a gift from God. The remainder will he destroy in the "Second Death."

The Scroll With Seven Seals

The Divine purpose, originally known only to Jehovah himself, was indeed declared through the prophets and in the Law, but those who declared it understood not their own visions and prophecies. Not until Jesus appeared and received the anointing of the holy Spirit at his baptism did the Divine Plan begin to be unfolded; and then it was unfolded to Jesus through the holy Spirit which came upon him, witnessing his consecration to death and begetting him to a new life, beyond the veil.

This is shown symbolically in the picture of Revelation. During the time preceding the undertaking of the work by Jesus the announcement was made everywhere, "Who is worthy to take

the scroll and to unloose the seals thereof?" None was found worthy. Many were found perfect, but something more was required—the testing and demonstration of loyalty to God, even unto death, even the death of the cross. Until Jesus came into the world and vowed his consecration to death, no one had been found worthy even to understand the great Plan of the Ages which Jehovah God had purposed in himself before the foundation of the world. As soon as Jesus made his consecration and began his work, to him the scroll of the Divine Purpose was committed and the announcement was made, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive honor and dominion and might and power" (Revelation v:9). And to him was given the scroll with full authority to read, to understand and to fulfill its glorious prophecies, which specially related to the blessing of our race.

In the opening of this scroll, in the revelation of the Divine purpose, God's love would be manifested both to angels and to men—the love which he had before he began his creative work, but which there was no intelligent creature to understand; the love which God had even when he permitted sin and death to mar the happiness of Eden—the love which neither angels nor men could fully see and appreciate during all the centuries of the reign of sin and death.

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