

Destiny of the Wicked



Articles from Selected
Adventist Pioneers

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E. J. Waggoner

What Shall Be the End of the Ungodly? – PTUK Aug 6, 1903

"A few weeks ago the Christian published a criticism of Mr. R. J. Campbell, on account of his unscriptural teaching that all men will ultimately be saved. The writer of the criticism, however, acknowledges that the doctrine that he himself is upholding, -everlasting torment, -is a 'terrible one,' if there no escape from universalism on the one hand or eternal torment on the other? Must one of these doctrines necessarily be the truth? Or have we any scriptural ground for believing in the annihilation of those who will not receive salvation through the atonement?"

The best answer that can be given to this question is to give a plain, straightforward, although necessarily brief exposition of the Scripture teaching concerning the atonement. It is not by any means as complicated as theologians have made it, but is so simple that a child can understand it; and when we once understand it, all difficulty as to universalism and eternal torment will vanish.

"The redemption that is in Christ Jesus," is comprehensive enough to include the whole human race, as will presently be made plain; but God, who sees the end from the beginning, has made known to us the sad fact that many souls will go to destruction because they will not walk the way of life. Christ says: "Enter ye in at the strait gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat; because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." Matt. vii. 13, 14. These words occur in Christ's "sermon on the mount," which even infidels often profess to accept as a perfect standard; they require no explanation, for nobody can misunderstand their meaning; they are only to be believed or disbelieved; but whoever believes them cannot believe in universal salvation; and, on the other hand, whoever believes in universalism thereby shows that he does not accept the teaching of Christ.

Shall we have a few more texts before we take up the principles of the atonement? In the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth chapters of Matthew we have one of the last talks that Christ had with His disciples before His crucifixion. It was but the week before He was betrayed. It is wholly concerning His second coming, and at the close He describes the two classes that will be on earth when He shall come: those who have served Him, and those who have not. "And these," He says, speaking of those who have not followed Him, "shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal." Matt. xxv. 46.

Now we want to know what this everlasting punishment will be, and we read the words of the Apostle Paul, with reference to the second coming of Christ. He says that "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power." 2 Thess. i. 7-9. The punishment is to be everlasting, it is true, but it will be destruction; and this is emphasised in Rom. vi. 23, where we read: "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." Eze. xviii. 4. Thus we see that the punishment is death; and since the punishment is to be everlasting, it will be everlasting death-death from which there will be no resurrection. {August 6, 1903 EJW, PTUK 499.5}

Bear in mind that this death, which is the wages of sin, is the direct opposite of life. It is not eternal life in torment, for life, no matter what its conditions, is not death in any sense. The righteous, who have the gift of life, often suffer grievous affliction; but they are alive, and not dead. Death means cessation of existence, even as God said through His prophet: "All the heathen . . . shall be as though they had not been." Obadiah 16.

So we read again: "The wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs; they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away." "For evil doers shall be cut off; but those that wait upon the Lord, they

shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be; yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace." "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace. But the transgressors shall be destroyed together; the end [future] of the wicked shall be cut off." Ps. xxxvii. 9, 10, 20, 37, 38.

We cannot suppose that men who stand as preachers are ignorant of these statements of Scripture, and many more like them; therefore we are obliged to suppose that they ignore them. But if one is to follow one's own mind, regardless of what the Bible says, one should announce that fact, and not preface one's sermons with texts of Scripture. The texts that we have quoted make it very plain that there is a middle ground between universalism on the one hand, and eternal torment on the other. We will now turn our attention to the foundation principles which make all these statements plain.

It should not be overlooked, that the root of all this difficulty is the unscriptural idea that man is by nature deathless,-that God, having once given him life, cannot withdraw it. Many sincere Christians hold this idea, seemingly wholly unconscious of the fact that it was the serpent who said to Eve, "Ye shall not surely die," in direct contradiction of God's declaration that they should surely die if they disregarded His commandment. To say that man cannot die, is to say that God spoke falsely, and that the devil told the truth. It is this grave error that has led to all others. Believing it, one is forced to accept either universalism or eternal torment. Believing the Word of God, one is not involved in any difficulty whatever.

An expression that occurs several times in the thirty-seventh psalm will give us a starting point. Evildoers shall be cut off;" "they that be cursed of Him shall be out off;" "the end of the wicked shall be cut off." The question is, "From what shall they be out off?" It is evident that they will be out off from that with which they have been connected; and one needs only to use the faculties that God has given him, to know that all men, whether good or bad, exist solely because of their connection with the life of God, given them in Christ. "For in Him we

live, and move, and have our being;" "for we are also His offspring." Acts xvii. 28. No one can keep himself alive for a single minute. If God thought only of Himself, "if He gather unto Himself His Spirit and His breath, all flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust." Job xxxiv. 14, 15. {August 6, 1903 EJW, PTUK 499.10}

In the beginning "the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living, soul." Gen. ii. 7. "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life." Job xxxiii. 4. The Spirit of God in our nostrils (Job xxvii. 3) is what alone keeps us from returning to the condition of non-existence; that is, to the condition that was when we were not. Recall the statement in Obadiah, that those who know not God "shall be as though they had not been."

Jesus Christ is the living bread that came down from heaven, to give life to the world. John. vi. 51. He is "the way the truth, and the life." John xiv. 6: There is no life in the universe except the life of God in Christ. God is our dwelling place, as He has been in all generations. Ps. xc. 1. "In His hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind." Job xii. 10. God is; that is His name, His distinctive title; He is the only one of whom it can be absolutely said that He is; all others have existence only by being in Him. Although God gave man dominion over the earth, he had that dominion only as he acknowledged his absolute dependence on God. Assuming himself able to live and reign alone, he fell, and lost the dominion. God is "above all, and through all, and in all" (Eph. iv. 6); but in the fall man cast off his allegiance to God, asserting his right and power to live independently. This is what constituted the fall.

If God had at once taken man at his word, and had allowed him to go his own way from the beginning of the rebellion on earth, man would at once have ceased to be. But God "is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." 2 Peter iii. 9. He is liberally long-suffering: He is love, and love suffers long, and is kind. God bears the earth, and all its inhabitants, with all their sins and sicknesses. Thus He actually suffers in the sins and sorrows of mankind. Isa. xliii. 24; liii. 4, 5. The cross on

Calvary is a demonstration of this; it shows what God has suffered ever since sin entered into the world.

Although men believe not, yet God abides faithful; He cannot deny Himself. 2 Tim. ii. 13. So although men have cast off allegiance to Him, denying that they live by Him, or owe Him anything; some even denying that there is a God; He patiently waits and supplies them with His own life, in order that they may repent of their rebellion, and return to their allegiance to Him. He forces none to come into subjection to Him, but gently and quietly draws all by the power of His love.

But there comes a time at last when it is useless to wait longer. Christ comes the second time to earth, not as before in humiliation, but in power and great glory. "Every eye shall see Him," and nobody will need any proof that He is Lord of all. Every knee will bow to Him, and every tongue will confess that God is, and that Jesus Christ is Lord. Rom xiv. 2; Phil. ii. 10, 11. But even then the wicked will continue to do wickedly. Still they will say, "We will not have this man to reign over us." They acknowledge that God is just; but they hate justice. They still desire to have nothing to do with Him, and insist that they are competent to manage their own affairs. So presumptuous are they,-so blinded by the Deceiver,-that they will undertake even to cast God down from His throne, and to seize upon His place. Ps. ii. 1-6; Rev. xx. 7-9. Then at last God will take them at their own word, and will allow them to try their idea of existing wholly separate from Him. There can be but one result, namely, extinction; for in the first place it is impossible for any creature to live a moment without God's sustaining power, and in the second place, there is no place where men can go away from God. God fills all space, so that the wicked must go into nothingness, where there is no place, in order to set up their independent kingdom. Literally, their place shall not be.

Now it must be apparent to all that there is no injustice in this, and that it is also perfectly consistent with everlasting love; because it is only giving to men what they have worked for, and what they have persisted in having. It certainly would be no kindness to rebellious haters of God, to compel them to live with

Him. If there were a place in the universe where God is not, the wicked, who hate His presence, might be sent there to live if they could; but there is no such place, and they can have their hearts' desire only by going out of existence. God's mercy endures for ever, even in the complete destruction of the wicked.

Thus it appears that the extinction of the incorrigibly wicked is a necessary part of the atonement. For the atonement contemplates the extermination, the blotting out of sin; and when sin is completely blotted from God's universe, those who have so fully identified themselves with sin that they are nothing but sin, must be blotted out with it.

Nor does this fact that there will be incorrigibly wicked men at the last, indicate the least defect in the atonement; it does not show any weakness on God's part. On the contrary, it shows how firmly God has maintained His original purpose of having an earth filled with righteousness, and ruled over by absolutely free men. Man has his choice, either to reign with God in life, or to ally himself with Satan in death; and in the Judgment every lost sinner will acknowledge that God is clear of his blood, since He has made ample provision for the salvation of all. The wicked will fall by their own counsel; they will be self-condemned and self-destroyed. The strong shall be as tow, and his work a spark, and they shall burn together (Isa. ii. 31); "for the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them." Prov. i. 32. And then when sin and sinners shall have been blotted from God's creation, from every part of it only one song will be heard, of blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, unto Him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the lamb for ever and ever.

Justice and Mercy PTUK February 23, 1893

There are other texts that might occur to one, but these are sufficient to show what the Scripture teaches as to the destiny of the wicked. The statements are plain, and there can be no contradiction in the Bible. And now let us once more

return to the original thought about the mercy of God in connection with His justice. His mercy endures even to the midst in the execution of His judgments. "O give thanks to the Lord; for ever. . . . To Him that smote Egypt in their firstborn; for His mercy endureth for ever; . . . to Him which divided the Red sea into parts, for His mercy endureth for ever; and made Israel to pass through the midst of it; for His mercy endureth for ever; but overthrew Pharaoh and his host in the Red sea; for His mercy endureth for ever." Ps. cxxxvi. 1, 10, 13-15. {February 23, 1893 EJW, PTUK 55.6}

God's mercies endure for ever, even though there are some who will have none of it. In His mercy He bears long with them, but God could not tolerate rebellion for ever in His dominions and be just to His loyal subjects. So in justice no less than mercy to those who willingly yield to His control, He must let the wicked suffer the punishment which they have worked for. Indeed, it would be doing the wicked an injustice not to give them that for which they have so long and diligently laboured. They have taken counsel together against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying, "Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us." All their desire has been to be left to themselves and now God gives them their desire. But as there is no place in the universe where God is not, the only thing for them is extinction. So we read, "For evildoers shall be cut off; but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be; yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be." Ps. xxxvii. 9, 10. {February 23, 1893 EJW, PTUK 55.7}

Then will be fulfilled the purpose of God, "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth." Eph. i. 10. Then will Christ have accomplished the purpose for which He ascended to heaven, namely, "that He might fill all things." Eph. iv. 10. "And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all." 1 Cor. xv. 28. And then from "every created thing which is in the heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and on the sea, and all things that are in them," will be heard with one voice,

"Unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, be the blessing, and the honour, and the glory, and the dominion, for ever and ever." Rev. v. 13.

Everlasting Punishment' and 'Eternal Life

The Present Truth 18, 11. March 13, 1902.

"Will you kindly explain the last verse of the 25th chapter of Matthew? Are the words 'everlasting' and 'eternal' synonymous terms?"

They are not synonymous, but identical. The first reads thus: "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal." The two words, "everlasting" and "eternal" are from one and the same Greek word, so that the verse is correctly rendered in the Revised Version: "And the shall go away into eternal punishment; but the righteous into the eternal life." There is absolutely no difference in the meaning of the two words, "everlasting" and "eternal;" and it is very evident that there cannot be in this instance, since, as just stated, the very same Greek word is used in each clause of the verse.

Does not this then prove that the punishment of the wicked will last as long as the reward of the righteous?-Most assuredly it does; the punishment of the wicked and the reward of the righteous are alike eternal.

Then the wicked will be, after the Judgment, tormented to all eternity, will they?-Not by any means. The verse affords no warrant for such a conclusion. Note well that it contains no hint of torment, and we have no right to substitute "torment" for "punishment."

The text before us says that the wicked shall go into everlasting punishment; but let us now read another text, which tells what this punishment will be. 2 Thess. i. 7-9 says that "the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, who shall be punished

with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power." The punishment into which the wicked will go at Christ's second coming, will be destruction, and it will be everlasting, eternal. The wicked will be destroyed for as long a time as the righteous will live.

Let us have a few parallel texts. Rom. vi. 23 tells us: "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Death then is the punishment of the wicked; and it will be eternal death, since the punishment is to be eternal. To say that the wicked will be conscious through all eternity, is to make nonsense of the Word; for they could not be conscious without being alive; and if they were alive to all eternity, no matter how deplorable their condition, they would have eternal life as surely as the righteous, and there would be no contrast. It would be folly to say that the wages of sin is eternal life; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord; yet that is just what the text would really say, if "death" meant eternal life in misery or in any condition whatever. There is a sharp and decided contrast between death and life. The two terms have nothing in common. The punishment of the wicked will in every respect be the exact opposite of the reward of the righteous, but just as lasting.

Again: 2 Thess. i. 9 says that the wicked shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power. The destruction comes from the presence of God. Now read Ps. cxii. 3: "A fire goeth before Him, and burneth up His enemies round about." Also Ps. lxxviii. 3: "As wax melteth before the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God." These text most clearly show what the punishment of the wicked will be.

It is true that the Scriptures say that the wicked shall be tormented, and shall suffer. It could not be expected that they could be destroyed by fire without pain and suffering; and this torment will be proportionate to the guilt of each individual. But there will it last come an end, no matter how extended the period of torment may be; for we read: "The Lord God of hosts shall make a consumption, even determined in the midst of all the land." "For yet a very

little while, and the indignation shall cease, and Mine anger in their destruction." Isa. x. 23, 25. And again:-

"The day of the Lord is near upon all the heathen; as thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee; thy reward shall return upon thine own head. For as ye have drunk upon My holy mountain, so shall all the heathen drink continually; yea, they shall drink, and they shall swallow down, and they shall be as though they had not been." Obadiah 15, 16.

All this is in the text first quoted; for the Greek word there rendered "punishment" means to cut off; to prune, as a branch from a vine. See John xv. 1-6, where we read Christ's statement that the branch that does not bear fruit is cut off, "and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." So we read that "evildoers shall be cut off." Ps. xxxvii. 9. "The seed of the wicked shall be cut off." Verse 28. "The end of the wicked shall be cut off." Verse 38. But in contrast to this, God saints "are preserved for ever."

This is not told for the purpose of frightening us into being good, much less that we should gloat over the threatened fate of the wicked. The keeping of the commandments is love, not fright. No person ever could be frightened into goodness; if he could be, he would be a cringing slave, and not a free child of God.

But the sure destiny of the wicked is foretold for our comfort. What comfort can there possibly be in it? you ask. Just this, that it shows how completely God destroys sin. Sinners will be destroyed only because they are inseparably joined to sin, and sin must be rooted out of God's universe. So as sinners will be destroyed by the glory of the Lord's presence, against which they have rebelled, that same glory will also destroy our sins, if we delight in God's presence; and it will destroy them to all eternity, so that they will have no more existence, and will never rise up to plague us. Is not that a blessed revelation.

Punishment of the Wicked ST Dec 18, 1884

DIRECT TESTIMONY

In the preceding articles on the punishment of the wicked, we have confined ourselves principally to a consideration of those texts which are popularly supposed to teach the endless existence of the wicked in torment. We have found that, on the contrary, they teach most emphatically their final utter extinction. Indeed, the strongest proofs in favor of the position which we have taken concerning the future destiny of the impenitent, is to be found in those texts which are generally used by the opponents of that doctrine. We will now proceed to the consideration of a few texts that are so plain that they of themselves should be allowed to settle the question. Some of these we shall quote without comment.

"Fret not thyself because of the evil-doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass and wither as the green herb." Ps. 37:1, 2.

"For evil-doers shall be cut off; but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while and the wicked shall not be; yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be." Ps. 37:9, 10. Compare this with Obadiah 16: "For as ye have drunk upon my holy mountain, so shall all the heathen drink continually, yea, they shall drink, and they shall swallow down, and they shall be as though they had not been." We should like to know how these texts can be harmonized with the doctrine of the endless existence of the wicked. That theory cannot be held except by denying these texts, or, what is the same thing, ignoring them.

"For such as be blessed of him shall inherit the earth; and they that be cursed of him shall be cut off." Ps. 37:22.

"Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! . . . which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the righteousness of the righteous

from him! Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have cast away the law of the Lord of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel." Isa. 5:20-24.

"And now they sin more and more, and have made them molten images of their silver, and idols according to their own understanding, all of it the work of the craftsmen: they say of them, Let the men that sacrifice kiss the calves. Therefore they shall be as the morning cloud, and as the early dew that passeth away, as the chaff that is driven with the whirlwind out of the floor, and as the smoke out of the chimney." Hos. 13:2, 3. Dr. Scott, after quoting this text, says, "i.e., violently and speedily made to banish and disappear." The "Speaker's Commentary" says of this passage: "The tone of indignant derision passes into that of stern wrath the inflexibility of the purpose to punish is expressed by the accumulation of four several images, all describing utter extermination." That is just what the language signifies,—"utter extermination." If it does not mean that, we do not see how it can be anything.

The preceding texts have compared the wicked to the most combustible material—stubble and chaff. In the following, the prophet makes the case stronger yet; the wicked are declared to be stubble:-

"For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch." "And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts." Mal. 4:1, 3. With this agree the words of John the Baptist: "Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." Matt. 3:12.

We turn once more to the 37th psalm. In verse 20 we read: "But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lamb; they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away." The psalmist could have given

no illustration of the final destiny of the wicked that would have been more forcible to the minds of the Jews. Every morning and every evening, according to the law, a lamb was placed on the altar and consumed. Beside this, the fact every sin-offering, whether it was a bullock, a goat, or a lamb (Lev. 4), was burned upon the altar. They sought the fat of lambs continually vanishing into smoke, and in that column of the ascending smoke they had an ever-present reminder of the fate of the incorrigibly wicked. They knew that when the fat was placed in that sacrificial fire, it was not preserved, but was speedily destroyed; and so when the psalmist said, "The enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs; they shall consume; and the smoke shall they consume away," they knew that the fate of the unrepentant sinners would be utter extinction. The last part of the verse only confirms the first clause: "The wicked shall perish;" for as we have already seen, the word "perish" means, "To be destroyed; to go to destruction; to pass away; to come to nothing; to be blotted from existence."

"Why," says one, "you are an annihilationist." Our reply is, We believe what we have just been reading from the Bible; if that is what you call and annihilationism, all right; we shall not be frightened from our position, whatever name may be applied to us. This word "annihilation" is a great bugbear to many. Say they, "It is impossible for a matter to be annihilated." Now while we should not dare place any limit to God's power, we do not believe that he will blot out of existence any of the matter which he has created; but that he will and does change the form or combination of parts of many things, we have the most abundant evidence. Webster defines "annihilate" thus: "1. To reduce to nothing; to destroy the existence of; to cause to cease to be. 2. To destroy the form or peculiar distinctive properties of, so that the specific thing no longer exists, as, to annihilate a forest by cutting and carrying away the trees, though the timber may still exist." The Bible says that the wicked "shall not be;" that "they shall be as though they had not been." There was a time once when they were not; they had no existence; but the matter of which they are composed was even then in existence. So likewise the matter of which they are composed will remain after they cease to be. When the fat was placed on

the altar it was destroyed; no one removed it, yet in a little while there was no fat there. What had become of it? It had become smoke. The fat was annihilated, if you please; but the matter which had composed it was not. Thus, we are told, will it be with the wicked. If any one disagrees with the statements concerning the wicked, his quarrel is with the Bible, not with us. E. J. W.

Punishment of the Wicked ST Jan 1, 1885

E. J. Waggoner

THE SABBATH-SCHOOL.

LESSON FOR THE PACIFIC COAST—JAN. 17

1. How many classes of people does the Bible recognize as existing in the world? Matt. 13:24, 25.
2. What are these classes? Verse 38.
3. How long do they remain mingled together? Verses 28-30.
4. When is the harvest? Verse 39.
5. Is there any class between these two? Matt.12:30.
6. Can one be in both these classes at the same time? Matt. 6:24.
7. When will the separation between these two classes be made? Matt. 25:31-33.
8. Briefly describe the character of these two classes? Verses 34-45.
9. What will finally become of them both? Verse 46.
10. When it is said that the righteous shall go into "life eternal," what is meant? Luke 20:35, 36.
11. Define the words "everlasting" and "eternal."
12. How much difference in duration will there be between the reward of the righteous and the punishment of the wicked? Matt. 25:46.
13. What is to be punished with the wicked? Rom. 6:23.
14. Since their punishment is to be everlasting, or eternal, what can you say of the death which is the wages of sin?

15. What is said of the punishment of those who do not obey the gospel?
2 Thess.1:7-9.
16. What is it that comes from God and destroys the wicked? Rev. 22:9.
17. Will any wicked person escape the wrath of God? Nahum 1:3.
18. How many of earth's inhabitants have never sinned? Rom. 10:23.
19. Then how will it be possible for anybody to escape eternal death? 1
John 1:7.

There are innumerable classes of people in the world, according to a human reckoning, but according to God's standard-the Bible-there are only two. These are the righteous and the wicked. God made man upright, and designed that he should remain so; but the enemy came in and marred the handywork of the Creator. Since the fall of Adam there has not been a time when there have not been wicked persons on the earth. Indeed, so great has been the contamination that there has been no man since that time who was not to a greater or lesser extent a sinner. It is evident, then, that if at that time the tares-the wicked of earth-had it been plucked up, there would have been no wheat left. Both are to grow together until the harvest-the end of the world. Then a separation will be made by the only one who is able to distinguish between the good grain and the worthless matter.

From these facts two things are evident. 1. There are only two classes. Christ said: "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad." Matt.12:30. There is no provision made for people who are "as good as the average." To be only as good as the average of mankind, is to be very bad. The standard is-good. Anything different from that is bad. 2. None receive the reward until the Lord comes. In the end of the world-the harvest-the master sends for his angels, and they "sever the wicked from among the just." The farmer does not reap one portion of his wheat-field in the spring, another in midsummer. And still another in the fall. There is a special harvest-time, and then all his grain is reaped. So the Lord has not been all the time gathering from this field that he has sown, but has "appointed a day in the

which he will judge the world." "The harvest is the end of the world," not the beginning, middle, and end.

From Matt. 25:35-45 we learn that the Lord weighs not only actions but intentions. Those to whom the king says, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom," etc., have not an opinion of their merit. They have had such exalted ideas of right that their humble deeds seem as nothing in comparison. But love to Christ is the mainspring of all their action, and that glorifies every deed however small. Christ identifies himself with his people so closely that whatever is done to them is accounted as done directly to him. On the other hand, we learn that no act, however worthy in itself, is of any value in the sight of God unless done for love to Christ. The heathen did many good things. Their philosophers taught what they called "virtue," some things in which were really good. But all their boasted virtue was only for the exaltation of self. Selfishness was the motive that prompted all their deeds; and since a fountain cannot send the forth at the same time both sweet water and bitter, neither can a good accompany evil, it follows that even their seeming good deeds were really evil. On this same basis, whatever is done "In order that we may have eternal life," with the idea that good deeds are going to make one worthy of reward, is all in vain. Love must be the ruling motive. If we serve God because of gratitude to him for his love that has already been manifested to us, his love will be still further manifested in giving us eternal life. His love will always be as much greater than ours as he is greater than we; consequently the utmost efforts that our love can prompt will fall infinitely short of compensating for his benefits to us.

"And these [the wicked] shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life the eternal." Matt. 25:46. The words of "eternal" and "everlasting" are from the same word in the original, and mean the same. We know that in this case they mean "without end," for Christ tells us that those who obtain that world, cannot die anymore (Luke 28:35, 36); hence eternal life means life without end. Then eternal or everlasting punishment means punishment without end. This will be the fate of the wicked. But mark; this

verse; does not tell the nature of the punishment; only tells us that the punishment will be inflicted, and that it will last eternally. Rom. 6:23 tells us what the punishment is to be: "The wages of sin is death." Then Matt. 25:46 might very properly be paraphrased thus: "And these-wicked-shall go away into eternal death; but the righteous into eternal life." This is exactly what the text teaches. In harmony with this Paul says of those who know not God, and do not obey the gospel, that they "shall be punished with everlasting destruction." This cannot be the case if they are never destroyed. The agent of this destruction is to be fire, which is to come "from the presence of the Lord." See 2 Thess. 2:8; Rev. 20:9.

"The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked." Nahum 1:3. No guilty person can escape the wrath of God. How then can anybody escape eternal death, since "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"? Only by having their guilt taken away by the blood of the Lamb of God. If we do not come to Christ, we can never have life; but if he is "made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification," he will also be unto us "redemption."

Fate of the Wicked – ST Jan 1, 1885

LESSON FROM THE JEWISH SACRIFICES

The prophet David had in his lifetime an experience similar to that of many others. That to which we refer is recorded in the seventy-third psalm. He thought things were very unequally and unjustly divided. He saw that the wicked were as a rule in better circumstances than the righteous; and in contemplating this, he came very near making shipwreck of this faith. Said he: "But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped. For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. For there are no bands in their death; but their strength is firm. They [are] not in trouble as other men; neither are they plagued like other men. . . . Their eyes stand out

with fatness: they have more than heart could wish. They are corrupt, and speak wickedly concerning oppression; they speak loftily. They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth. . . . And they say, How doth God know? and is there knowledge in the most High? Behold, these are the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase in riches." Verses 2-12.

As he contrasted his condition with theirs, he concluded that the service of the Lord didn't pay. His words were: "Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency. For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning." Verses 13, 14. How many people we have heard reason in the same way. "If God is just," they say, "why does he allow Mr. A, who is a humble, devoted Christian, to suffer so much of poverty and sickness, while Mr. B, his blasphemous neighbor, has an abundance of everything, with nothing to trouble him?" It is short-sighted reasoning, as David himself found out, although not from his own reasoning as to what God ought to do. He continues: "When I thought to know this, it was too painful for me; until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end. Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors. As a dream when one awaketh; so, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou shalt despise their image." Verses 16-20.

In these verses we find a striking confirmation of the texts which have before been quoted as proving the final utter extinction of the wicked. Their present security is only apparent, not real; they are in slippery places, and are to be cast down to destruction. As in a moment they are to be brought into desolation. More than this, when the Lord arises to take vengeance on his adversaries, they are to be as a dream when one awakes from sleep-vanished into nothingness. As elsewhere expressed, they are to be "as the early dew that passeth away."

All this the psalmist found out when he went into the sanctuary of the Lord. Let us then, go in with him, and see for ourselves what is there taught

concerning the fate of the wicked. It is evident that we must consider that part of the sanctuary service which has to do with sin, if we are to learn anything concerning the end of the wicked. This service is given somewhat at length in the fourth chapter of Leviticus. We will quote enough of the chapter to bring the matter directly before us:-

"And if any one of the common people sin through ignorance, while he doeth somewhat against any of the commandments of the Lord concerning things which ought not to be done, and be guilty; or if his sin, which he hath sinned, come to his knowledge: then he shall bring his offering, a kid of the goats, a female without blemish, for his sin which he hath sinned. And he shall lay his hand upon the head of the sin offering, and slay the sin offering in the place of the burnt offering. And the priest shall take of the blood thereof with his finger, and put it upon the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and shall pour out all the blood thereof at the bottom of the altar. And he shall take away all the fat thereof, as the fat is taken away from off the sacrifice of peace offerings; and the priest shall burn it upon the altar for a sweet savour unto the Lord; and the priest shall make an atonement for him, and it shall be forgiven him." Lev. 4:27-31.

With some modifications, of a minor character, this was the ceremony to be performed when sin had been committed. The victim to be offered might be a bullock, a goat, a lamb, or a pidgeon, according to the rank or wealth of the sinner, the poor not being required to bring so costly an offering as the wealthy. But in all the principle was the same, and that principle is so simple that a child can easily grasp it. The sinner, by laying his hands upon the head of the offering, transferred, in figure, his sins to the victim, which represented Christ, "who his own self bear our sins in his own body on the tree." 1 Peter 2:24. The offering having thus, in figure, received the sins of the transgressors, was slain, thus prefiguring Christ, who was "delivered for our offenses," and who "died for the ungodly." When this was done and the blood or flesh of the victim had been carried into the sanctuary, the man's sins were forgiven him. If he remained penitent until the day of atonement, his sins were blotted out entirely when

the sanctuary was cleansed. Lev. 17. In all this reference was had to Christ, who "appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself."

As a victim, when it had in figure received the sins of the transgressor, was slain, so Christ, when the Lord had laid on him the iniquity of the all, "poured out his soul unto death." He died for us, "the just for the unjust;" thus showing what would be man's fate had the offering not been made, or should he not accept it. And so, in the figure, the penitent Jew, as the victim bearing his sin was slain before his eyes, was reminded that "the wages of sin is death." The victim was then burned to ashes, thus showing both the instrument and the completeness of the sinner's destruction; and so the penitent was taught in a manner that he could not misunderstand nor forget, "the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs; they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away."

Now no one can deny that these sacrifices typified Christ's sacrifice, nor that Christ himself did really die for sinners, unless he denies the truth of the Bible. Then the conclusion is unavoidable that if Christ had not died all men must have died, for all men are sinners; and further, since "he was manifested to take away our sin," thus saving us from death because he saves us from sin, it is just as evident that those who do not wash their robes of character and make them white in the blood of the Lamb, will in the end perish. Their fate will be the same as though no sacrifice had been made. This is what David learned when he went into the sanctuary of the Lord, and this made him content with his hard lot.

One text more must suffice for the direct testimony concerning the destruction of the wicked. We give it because the contrast between the righteous and the wicked is so marked. It is Ps. 37:37, 37: "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace. But the transgressors shall be destroyed together; the end of the wicked shall be cut off." Note the contrast: The end of the upright is peace, but the end of the wicked shall be cut off. Dr. Barnes says that the word rendered "end" means properly "the last or extreme part; then, the end or issue of any thing, that which comes after it; then, the

after time, the future, the hereafter. Isa. 2:2; Micah 4:1; Gen. 49:1. Dan. 10:14. It may, therefore, refer to anything future; and would be well expressed by the word hereafter." The Septuagint has engkateimma, the meaning of which is, according to Liddell and Scott, "a reminder." Substituting this meaning in the place of the word as translated, we get the full force of the text. Thus: "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the remainder of that man is peace. But the transgressors shall be destroyed together; the remainder of the wicked shall be cut off." And this agrees with what the psalmist says in the earlier part of this, and in the seventy-third psalm. The righteous, although they may be plagued and afflicted in this earth, will, in the new earth, "delight themselves in the abundance of peace" all the remainder of their lives, which will last to all eternity. But the remainder of the wicked, who now have all that they desire, shall be cut off. Nothing could more clearly express their other extinction. "The end [remainder or hereafter] of the wicked shall be cut off;" i.e., there shall be no remainder to their lives. E. J. W.

James White

The Destiny of the Wicked. RH Oct 30, 1855

What shall the end be of them that obey not the Gospel?

THEY SHALL DIE

EZE.xviii,4. Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth it shall die. Eze,xviii,20. The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. Verse 24. But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doeth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doeth, shall he live? All his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned: in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die. Verse 32. For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God: wherefore turn yourselves, and live ye. Rom.vi,21-23. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness; and the end, everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. James i,5. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. James v,20. Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins. Rev.xx,14,15. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire. Rev.xxi,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.

THEY SHALL PERISH

John iii,15,16. That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. 2Cor.ii,15. For we are unto God a sweet savor of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish. 2Thess.ii,10. And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 2Pet.iii,9. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Ps.xxxvii,20. But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away. Ps.xcii,9. For, lo, thine enemies O Lord, for lo, thine enemies shall perish: all the workers of iniquity shall be scattered. Rom.ii,12. For as many as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law. 2Pet.ii,12. But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption.

THEY SHALL BE CONSUMED

Ps.lix,13. Consume them in wrath, consume them, that they may not be: and let them know that God ruleth in Jacob unto the ends of the earth. Selah. Ps.civ,35. Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more. Bless thou the Lord O my soul. Praise ye the Lord. Isa.i,28. And the destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners shall be together, and they that forsake the Lord shall be consumed. {October 30, 1855 JWe, ARSH 70.8}

THEY SHALL BE DEVoured BY FIRE

Heb.x,27. But a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries. Rev.xx,9. And they went up on the breadth

of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

THEY SHALL BE CUT OFF

Ps.xxxvii,9,22,34,38. For evil-doers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth. For such as be blessed of him shall inherit the earth; and they that be cursed of him shall be cut off. Wait on the Lord, and keep his way, and he shall exalt thee to inherit the land: when the wicked are cut off thou shalt see it. But the transgressors shall be destroyed together: the end of the wicked shall be cut off. Ps.xciv,23. And he shall bring upon them their own iniquity, and shall cut them off in their own wickedness; yea, the Lord our God shall cut them off. Prov.ii,21,22. For the upright shall dwell in the land, and the perfect shall remain in it. But the wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it.

THEY SHALL BE DESTROYED

Job xxi,30. That the wicked is reserved to the day of destruction? they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath. Job xxxi,3. Is not destruction to the wicked? and a strange punishment to the workers of iniquity? Ps.v,6. Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing: the Lord will abhor the bloody and deceitful man. Ps.lxxiii,18,19. Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors. Ps.xcii,7. When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish; it is that they shall be destroyed for ever. Ps.cxliv,6. Cast forth lightning, and scatter them: shoot out thine arrows, and destroy them. Ps.cxliv,20. The Lord preserveth all them that love him: but all the wicked will he destroy. Prov.i,27. When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Prov.xiii,13. Whoso despiseth the word shall be destroyed: but he that feareth the commandment shall be rewarded. Matt.vii,13. Enter ye in at the straight gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat.

Acts iii,23. And it shall come to pass, that every soul which will not hear that Prophet shall be destroyed from among the people. Phil.iii,19. Whose end is destruction whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things. 2Thess.i,9. Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power. Rev.xi,18. And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldst give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldst destroy them which destroy the earth.

THEY SHALL BE BURNED UP ROOT AND BRANCH

Ps.xcvii,3. A fire goeth before him, and burneth up his enemies round about. Matt.iii,12. Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire. Luke iii,17. Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will gather the wheat into his garner, and the chaff he will burn with fire unquenchable. Isa.i,31. And the strong shall be as tow, and the maker of it as a spark, and they shall both burn together, and none shall quench them. Matt.xiii,30. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn. Mal.iv,1. For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. Matt.x,28. And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. Matt.xiii,40. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity. Mal.iv,2. But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. Obadiah 16. For as ye have drunk upon my holy

mountain, so shall all the heathen drink continually, yea, they shall drink, and they shall swallow down, and they shall be as though they had not been. Matt.xiii,42. And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Mal.iv,3. And ye shall tread down the wicked, for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts. Isa.xli,11,12. Behold, all they that are incensed against thee shall be ashamed and confounded: they shall be as nothing; and they that strive with thee shall perish. Thou shalt seek them, and shalt not find them, even them that contended with thee: they that war against thee shall be as nothing, and as a thing of nought. Ps.xxxvii,10,11. For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be; yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. But the meek shall inherit the earth, and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

ENDLESS LIFE IS ONLY OBTAINED THROUGH CHRIST

Jno.xi,25,26. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die. Believest thou this? Rom.ii,6,7. Who will render to every man according to his deeds: to them, who, by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life. Jno.x,28. And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. Jno.xvii,2. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

J.N. Loughborough

Future Punishment

From the book "An Examination of the Scripture Testimony Concerning Man's Present Condition and His Future Reward or Punishment

By J.N. Loughborough written in 1855

We now come to the investigation of the subject of the destiny of the finally impenitent. We have already shown that both righteous and wicked shall live again, and that in the resurrection, the wicked are to be raised as literally as the saints.--We have found no testimony to show that they are to have immortality; but we shall proceed to inquire, Are the wicked raised in a condition to suffer the punishment which it is said they are to receive; viz., eternal misery? Not if they are raised corruptible; for the eternity of their existence depends on their receiving immortality at the resurrection.

HENRY, claims in his Commentary, that "By the damnation of the wicked the justice of God will be eternally satisfying, but never satisfied."

BENSON, in his Commentary, says: "They must be perpetually swelling their enormous sum of guilt, and still running deeper, immensely deeper, in debt to divine and infinite justice. Hence, after the longest imaginable period, they will be so far from having discharged their debt--that they will find more due than when they first began to suffer."

Others tell us, that their capacity for suffering will increase, and that at the expiration of 10,000 years, one sinner will be capable of suffering more than all hell did when he came there; and thus their capacity for suffering will increase to all eternity. This is represented as the reward of a finite act of the poor frail worm of the dust, man.

The Bible represents God as a being of love and mercy, but these attributes must be cast out of sight in the minds of those who would have us believe in such an eternal state for sinners as that presented in the above testimonies.

Future punishment we shall admit; for we have found no Scripture to sustain the doctrine of punishment in this life; but we contend that the wicked are "reserved to the day of Judgment to be punished." We have shown that the testimony of the Word is, that the dead, both righteous and wicked, shall be raised to life again to receive their just due.

We are aware that many contend that the love of God will be made manifest in the eternal salvation of all men; but, when we remember that God has a law, indestructible as his own throne, and that sinners have openly trampled this law under their feet, and neglected to comply with the plan God devised through the death of his Son, for the pardon of their sins, we need no longer claim that the God of all the earth does not do right in inflicting punishment on the sinner. A law would not be a complete law unless a penalty was inflicted for disobedience. Paul says, "The wages of sin is death." Sin is defined by the apostle John to be, "transgression of the law."

This death which is here spoken of as the wages of sin, cannot be the death men die in Adam; for that death is a consequent on the sin of Adam, and not our own sins. By transgression Adam became mortal, and has transmitted mortality to us. Men die the first death, because they are mortal. The second death is the wages of sin; and this all must suffer whose names are not found in the Lamb's book of life. But, says one, this second death has been already described in the quotations you have made. It does not destroy the sinner, but places him in eternal torments.--Who can conceive of a death that passes upon living beings and leaves them still alive. Yea, and more alive than they were when they died that death.

The fact that the transgressor of God's law is marked by his word as a victim for the second death, is sufficient of itself to show that there must be a punishment after this life. No man can die the second death, without a resurrection from the first. We cannot agree with the sentiment published in the Methodist Almanac about four years since: "They that are born but once must die twice;" but shall claim, that "except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."--Why? Because his first death carried him out of this life, and with the dead is no knowledge. Stop says one, that birth is conversion. Then you would have it that none could see the kingdom, unless they were Christians. But to the very class Christ told they should die in their sins, he said, "Ye shall see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of

God, and ye yourselves thrust out;" they will certainly see the kingdom, if they see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in it.

Job testifies, [Chap. xxi, 30,] "The wicked is reserved to the day of destruction? they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath."

We shall proceed to investigate the Scripture testimony concerning the future destiny of the wicked. Christ says, [John iii, 36,] "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life," (but that life is hid with Christ in God,) and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him. We here have a positive statement that the wicked shall not see life (everlasting.) Says the objector, the word life, in the text you have quoted, does not mean simply existence, but happiness. The righteous will have everlasting happiness, but the wicked will have "the wrath of God" abiding on them. See Isa. lvii, 16, "For I will not contend forever, neither will I be always wroth." Compare this with Ps. ciii, 9, also Jer. iii, 5. These texts plainly state that God's anger is to cease. How is it to cease with them? Says Isaiah, [Chap. x, 25,] "The indignation shall cease, and mine anger, in their destruction."

Job says, of the wicked, [Chap. iv, 9,] "By the blast of God they PERISH, and by the breath of his nostrils are they CONSUMED."

We will now notice the testimony of the Psalmist, concerning the punishment of the wicked, Ps. i, 6, "The way of the ungodly shall perish."

Ps. ii, 8, 9, "I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance."

Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt DASH THEM IN PIECES like a potter's vessel;" also Ps. xxxiv, 16.

Ps. xxxvii, 1, 2, "Fret not thyself because of evil doers.

For they shall soon be CUT DOWN like the grass, and WITHER as the green herb."

Read verse 10, "For yet a little while, and the wicked SHALL NOT BE; yea, they shalt diligently consider his place, and IT shall not be." Verse 20, "But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away."--Verse 38. "But the transgressors shall be destroyed together; the end of the wicked shall be CUT OFF." Ps. [lix, 13,] "Consume them in wrath, consume them that they may not be." Ps. civ. 35, "Let the sinners be consumed out of the earth, and let the wicked be no more.

Compare the three following testimonies, from the book of Proverbs: Prov. xi, 31, "Behold the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth: much more the wicked and the sinner." Prov. x, 30, "The wicked shall not inhabit the earth." Prov. ii, 22, "The wicked shall be cut off from the earth, and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it."

Who can harmonize the above testimony concerning the destiny of the righteous and wicked on any other principle than that the righteous are finally to receive the earth as an eternal possession, while the wicked are cut off. Prov. xxix, 1, "He that, being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy."

See Eze. xviii, 4, "The SOUL that sinneth, it shall die." Obadiah, [verse 16,] speaking of the heathen, says, "They shall drink, and they shall swallow down, and they shall be as through they had not been. Mal. iv, 1-3, "All that do wickedly shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet, in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts.

The doctrine of the New Testament is the same as that of the old. Matt. iii, 12, "He will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." Says the objector, to my mind it conveys the idea of eternal misery; they are to be burned up with unquenchable fire.

The text says, the chaff will be burned up. But the point of objection is in regard to the fire.

What is the import of this unquenchable fire? The original term is *puri asbesto*. To show the understanding of this term among the Greeks we will make a quotation from Eusebius, who was born A.D. 267, and became Bishop of Cesarea, A. D. 315. In his history of the Christian Church, book vi, chap. 41, he gives an account of those who were martyred at Alexandria. He spoke as follows:--

"The first of these was Julian, a man afflicted with the gout, neither able to walk nor stand, who, with two others that carried him, was arraigned. Of these, the one immediately denied, but the other, named Cronion, surnamed Eunas, and the aged Julian himself, having confessed the Lord, was carried on camels through the city.--a very large one as you know--and in this elevation were scourged, and finally consumed in an immense fire. (*Puri asbesto*.) After these, Epimachus and Alexander, who had continued for a long time in prison, enduring innumerable sufferings from the scourges and scrapes, were also destroyed in an immense fire." (*Puri asbesto*.)

If this expression in the Greek text of Eusebius, be rendered the same as in the Bible it would read, unquenchable fire. No one would claim that the fire that was kindled in the third century to burn those martyrs, is still burning: neither is there proof in the text before us, that the unquenchable fire which destroys the wicked will eternally burn. If the fire was quenched, some of the wicked might perhaps escape, but as the fire is unquenchable it will burn them up.

We will now notice the substances used in Scripture to represent the wicked which are to be cast into "unquenchable fire." 1st. Chaff. Ps. i, 4; Job xxi, 18; Isa. xxix, 5, 6; Hos. xiii, 3; Matt. iii, 12. 2nd. Stubble. Ps. lxxxiii, 13; Isa. v, 23, 24; xlvii, 14; Nah. i, 10; Mal. iv, 1: 1 Cor. iii, 12. 3rd. Thorns. Isa. xxxiii, 12. 4th. Briers. Micah vii, 4; Isa. x, 17-19. 5th. Fat of lambs. Ps. xxxvii, 20; Eze. xxxiv, 16.

Here we see the wicked are represented by substances easily destroyed, and these are to be cast into the "devouring," "unquenchable fire." Can they exist in it? Will they dwell there to all eternity? What has the Lord said about it? Isa. xxxiii, 14, says, "Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings? (The wicked? No! but) He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly;" etc. But of the wicked it is said, "It shall leave them neither root nor branch."

Matt. x, 28, "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." On this text it is claimed that, although man to show his persecuting spirit upon the people of God, may take the life of their bodies, yet

"The soul secured in her existence,
Smiles at the drawn dagger,
And defies its point."

It is said the soul, in this text, is the reasoning faculties which are separated from the body at death; and, as it (the soul) is immaterial, it cannot be brought under the control of man so as to be killed. But man can kill (take the life of) the body. How is this? if the position of our opponents is true, man cannot take the life of the body, for that life is immortality. Jesus says, "The body without the spirit is dead." From this it has been urged that death is the separation of soul and body. The marginal reading of the text in James is "breath." The body without the breath is dead.

But, what shall we understand by the text before us? We will read it like this: fear not them that can take your present life, but cannot kill the soul (take away your eternal life,) but fear him that can deprive you of both temporal and eternal life. (We have already shown in another part of this work, that life is sometimes meant by the word soul.) Compare the above idea with the testimony of Christ in Matt. xvi, 25. "For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall find it;" or, as John has it, "shall keep it into life eternal." We consider the idea Christ wished to inculcate

was this: Fear not man, and through that fear seek to save your life but fear God; and, although you may lose your life, here, he will give you eternal life.

The text before us is proof positive, that the final reward of the impenitent is utter destruction of soul and body. "Fear him who is able to DESTROY both soul and body in hell." (Gehenna -- see appendix.) We may not only learn from these works, that God can destroy the soul, but, that this is the punishment that is to be inflicted on those who shall neglect to obey Christ's testimony. See Acts iii, 23. "And it shall come to pass, that every soul which will not hear that Prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people."

If the soul spoken of in Matt. x, 28, is an immortal entity, it could not be destroyed. But God can, and will deprive those who neglect to obey him, of eternal life. Read the testimony of Christ, as recorded by Luke. Chap. xii, 4, 5. "And I say unto you, my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, but after that, have no more that they can do. (Can't touch your eternal life.) But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell: (deprive you of eternal life:) yes, I say unto you, Fear him." They are not to be cast into hell for preservation, but they are there to be destroyed. Destroy.--To ruin; to annihilate a thing by demolishing or by burning.-- Webster. Some perhaps would object to applying this definition of destruction, to the wicked; for, say they, matter cannot be destroyed. We reply if you mean man cannot destroy matter, we admit it. But, that God cannot destroy matter, we should hardly dare to claim. Neither shall we claim that the wicked are to be destroyed as matter: they will be destroyed as men. In the flames of gehenna they will consume away into smoke, and the result of the decomposition will leave them "ASHES under the soles of" the saints' feet.

The Scriptures clearly teach in other portions that the soul can die; and not only that, but, "The soul that sinneth it SHALL die." The soul is often represented in Scripture as being delivered from death and the grave. David says of Christ, (Ps. xvi, 10,) "For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell." Peter in commenting on this text, [Acts ii, 31,] says, "He seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell." (Hades, the grave.)

Why, say you, his soul never went there. Then it would be folly to say it was not left there. Read the following texts, which speak of the soul as connected with death. Job xxxiii, 18, 22, 28-30; Isa. xxxviii, 17; Ps. lvi, 13; cxvi, 8.

Says the objector, It cannot be that the punishment of the wicked is simply death; for the Bible represents their punishment as being of the same duration as the life of the righteous. Christ says, [Matt. xxv, 46,] "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." Here is it positively stated that the punishment of the wicked is everlasting. We freely admit that the punishment of the wicked has no "remedy," and is therefore everlasting. But this would not prove that it was everlasting suffering.

Their punishment is everlasting, but what is it? Rom. vi, 23. For the wages of sin is death." James i, 15. "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth DEATH." Sin is to be finished: but what is to be its end? Eternal misery? No, but death. In 2 Thess, i, 9, Paul says, the wicked "shall be punished with everlasting DESTRUCTION from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." Says the objector, it is an everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord. Will you tell where the sinner is when he is out of the presence of the Lord? He must be out of existence. According to Christ's testimony in parable, sinners are to be punished in the presence of the Lord. But their punishment is to be destruction from his presence.

See Luke xix, 37. "But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me." For that destruction there is no remedy. Prov. xxix, 1. {1855 JNL, MPC 174.2}

But say you, how can the punishment be everlasting if it is simply death? We may look on punishment as deprivation, in that case, the greatest possible punishment would be to be deprived of an eternal blessing. The Scriptures, we think, hold forth the punishment of the wicked as the deprivation of the blessing the righteous are to enjoy; namely, eternal life. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see LIFE." Jno, iii, 36. This life is everlasting punishment. {1855 JNL, MPC 175.1}

We consider the case of the wicked to be this: God has taken pains to reveal to them just how long life they can have if they obey him: eternal life. If they disobey him they will receive the opposite: death. They will be eternally deprived of life. "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life."

Says Christ, [Matt. vii, 13, 14,] "Broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat. Narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." John says of Christ, [Chap. iii, 15] "That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." Here the opposite of everlasting life is, to perish. To come to nothing.--Webster.

Paul says, [Rom. ii, 12,] "As many as have sinned without law, shall also PERISH without law." But the objector is ready to claim, without doubt, that the word perish in this text merely applies to the body, but that the soul is undying. Read James v, 20, and see: "Let him know that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death." Peter says, speaking of the wicked, [2 Pet. ii, 12] "And shall UTTERLY PERISH in their own corruption."

See also Rom. i, 32; viii, 13. 1 Cor. i, 18; iii, 17. 2 Cor. ii, 15, 16. Phil. i, 28; iii, 19. 2 Thess. ii, 10. Heb. vi, 8; x, 26-39. 1 Jno. ii, 17. In these texts the sinner is spoken of as to pass away, to be destroyed, to perish, etc. In Rev. xx John has a view of the final destiny of the wicked. Verse 9, "And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city, and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." Devour--To destroy; to consume with rapidity and violence.--Webster.

Paul tells us in 1 Cor. xv, 26. "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." Death itself is to be destroyed, as John states, [Rev. xx, 13-15.]--Chap. xxi he says, "there was no more death. Sinners, death and the grave are all to die, and once more will spring forth a clean universe, and all heaven and earth will then raise one mighty shout of "Alleluia, for Lord God omnipotent reigneth."

Uriah Smith

Bible Student's Assistant Published 1858

Destiny of the Wicked

"What shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?" 1Pet.4:17.

I. THEY SHALL DIE. - "The soul that sinneth it shall die. Eze.18:4,20,24,31; Gen.2:17; Deut.30:15,19; 2Chron.25:4; Prov.2:18; 5:5; 7:27; 8:36; 14:12; 15:10; 19:16; Jer.21:8; 31:30; Eze.3:18,19,20; 33:8,11,13,18; Matt.10:39; John 5:24; 6:50; 8:51; 11:26; Rom.6:21; 8:6,13; James 1:15; 5:20; Rev.20:6,14; 21:8.

[Die: To cease to live, to expire, to de cease, to perish. - Webster.]

II. THEY WILL BE DESTROYED. - "All the wicked will he destroy Ps.145:20; 5:6; 9:5; 37:38; 52:5; 92:7; Prov.1:32; 11:3; 13:13; Isa.1:28; Matt.7:13; 10:28; Acts 3:23; Rom.9:22; 1Cor.3:17; Phil.3:19; 2Thess.1:9; 2Pet.2:12, Rev.11:18.

[Destroy: To kill, to slay, to extirpate, applied to men, etc. In general, to [put an end to, to annihilate a thing or the form in which it exists.

Destroyed: Demolished, pulled down, ruined, annihilated, devoured swept away, etc., - Web.]

III. THEY SHALL PERISH. - "The triumphing of the wicked is short; . . . he shall perish forever." Job.20:7; Ps.2:12; 36:20; 49:12,20; 68:2; 73:27; 92:9; Prov.19:9; 21:28; Isa.41:11; Luke 13:3,5; John 3:15,16; Rom.2:12; 1Cor.1:18; 2Cor.2:15; 2Thess.2:10; 2Pet.2:12.

[Perish: To die, to lose life in any manner, to wither and decay, to be destroyed, to be destroyed eternally. - Web.]

IV. GO TO PERDITION. - The present world is "reserved unto fire against the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men." 2Pet.3:7; John 17:12; Phil.1:28; 2Thess.2:3; 1Tim.6:9; Heb.10:39; Rev.17:8,11.

[Perdition: Utter ruin or destruction. - Butterworth.]

V. THEY SHALL BE CONSUMED. - "The destruction of the transgressors and of the sinners shall be together, and they that forsake the Lord shall be consumed." Isa.1:28; 50:28; 66:17; Ps.37:20; 59:13; 104:35; Zeph.1:2,3; 2Thess.2:8.

[Consume: To destroy by separating the parts of a thing by decomposition, as by fire, etc., to destroy, to bring to utter ruin, to exterminate. Consumed: Wasted, burned up, destroyed.- Web.]

VI. BE DEVOURED BY FIRE. - "The fire shall devour them."

Ps.21:9; Isa.26:11; Nahum 1:10; Heb.10:27; Rev.20:9.

[Devoured: Consumed, destroyed, wasted, slain. Web.]

VII. BE SLAIN. - "With the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked." Isa.11:4; Ps.62:3; 139:19; Luke 19:27.

[Slain: Killed. - Web.]

VIII. THEY SHALL COME TO AN END. - "The end of the wicked shall be cut off." Ps.37:38; Prov.10:25; and not be; "for yet a little while and the wicked shall not be." Ps.37:10; Prov.12:7; Isa.41:11,12; Jer.10:24; Obad 16.

[End: Conclusion, cessation, termination, a point beyond which no progression can be made. To be: To exist - Web.]

IX. THEY SHALL BE ROOTED OUT AND CUT OFF. "But the wicked shall be cut off from the earth and the transgressors shall be rooted out of it." Prov.2:22; Job.18:18; Ps.37:9,22,28,34,38; 52:4,5; 94:23; Luke 12:46[margin].

["Rooted out" and "cut off," would mean any thing else rather than eternal torment in the fire of hell.]

X. THEY SHALL BE BURNED UP. "Behold the day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord." Mal.4:1; Ps.21:9; 97:3; Matt.3:12; 7:19; 13:30,40,50; John 15:6; Heb.6:8; Rev.18:8.

[Burn: To consume with fire, to reduce to ashes by the action of heat or fire. To burn up: to consume entirely by fire. - Web.]

NOTE. - The wicked are compared to the most combustible and destructible materials, as chaff [Matt.3:12], stubble [Mal.4:1] tares [Matt.13:40], branches [John 15:6], bad fish [Matt.13:47,48], thistle-down [Isa.17:13, margin]; which would be utterly subversive of the idea of unending life in a consuming fire. {1858 UrS, BSA 42.1}

From Uriah Smith's book Man's Nature and Destiny Published in 1884

Chapter 33 The End of Them That Obey Not the Gospel

WHAT shall the end be of them that obey "not the gospel of God?" 1 Pet. 4:17. By this direct interrogation, inspiration calls us face to face to the great question of the final destiny of the lost, not to leave us at last in perplexity and doubt, but to give us full information in reference thereto.

By the foregoing examination of themes which have a bearing upon this question, we have been brought to a place where the way is all clear to listen unbiased to the direct testimony of the Bible on the point now before us. No immortality is anywhere affirmed of the soul; no eternal misery is anywhere threatened against the lost. What, then, is to be their fate? - Again and again the solemn declaration is made that they shall die.

The inquiry into the nature of the death threatened Adam, in chapter 25, brought very clearly to view the fact that the penalty pronounced upon his sin reduced him in his entire being back to the dust of the earth, leaving no part

of him conscious and active in the intermediate state. And the same penalty stands against sin now as at the beginning. For our personal sins, death is now threatened against us, as it was against him. This is the second death; and those who fall under this will be reduced to the same condition as that into which Adam was brought by death, with no promise nor possibility of ever being released therefrom.

Eze. 18:26: "When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them; for his iniquity that he hath done shall he die."

Two deaths are here unmistakably brought to view: first, the death common to this state of being, which all share alike, good and bad, which is called the first, or temporal, death; secondly, a future death to be inflicted on the following conditions: if a person dies the first death in a state of sin, that is, with sins upon him of which he does not repent before he dies, then for, or because of, those sins that he has committed he shall die again.

Another death awaits him. The first death was not for his personal transgressions; for this is entailed upon all alike through Adam, both good and bad. But every one is to die for his own sins unless he repents. How is this to be brought about? - He is to be raised from the first death, and judged; and if sins are then found upon him, for those sins he suffers the same penalty, death; and being thus reduced to death again, he will forever remain dead; for from this death there is no release nor redemption provided. This is the second death, and is the everlasting punishment in store for all the workers of iniquity.

Paul says (Rom. 6:23), "The wages of sin is death," and James (1:15) corroborates this testimony by saying, "Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth, death." In Rom. 2 Paul tells us of certain characters which are certainly deserving, if any can be, of eternal torture; but, in passing sentence upon them, he does not draw out before us a picture of unending conscious misery, a course for which he has the most appropriate occasion, if it be true but only tells us, in accordance with reason as well as revelation, that they are worthy

of death. But death is a state which can be reached only on a complete extinction of life. As long as there is any life about a man, he is not dead. "The death that never dies" is a contradiction of terms. Nor can a person properly be said to be dying, unless he is tending to a state of death which he will by and by reach. And yet the popular view of this subject is well expressed by Thomas Vincent in the following language:-

"The torments of hell will not be in one part only, but in every part; not in a weaker degree, but in the greatest extremity; not for a day, or a month, or a year, but forever: the wicked will be always dying, never dead; the pangs of death will ever be upon them, and yet they shall never give up the ghost; if they could die, they would think themselves happy; they will always be roaring, and never breathe out their last; always sinking, and never come to the bottom; always burning in those flames, and never consumed; the eternity of hell will be the hell of hell."

Again the Lord says, speaking of a certain class of his enemies, "For yet a little while, and the indignation shall cease, and mine anger in their destruction." Isa. 10:25. This is conclusive testimony that all those with whom the Lord has occasion to be angry, as he is with all the wicked (Ps. 7:11), will be finally destroyed, and in that destruction his anger toward them will cease. Yet the majority of divines tell us that God's "fiery indignation and incensed fury" toward them will never cease; that he will never literally destroy them alive expressly that he may torment them. Says Benson:-

"He will exert all his divine attributes to make them as wretched as the capacity of their nature will admit." And he continues, "They must be perpetually swelling their enormous sums of guilt, and still running deeper, immensely deeper, in debt to divine and infinite justice. Hence after the longest imaginable period, they will be so far from having discharged their debt that they will find more due than when they first began to suffer."

Thus the sinner is represented as being able to distance in sin the power of Omnipotence to punish. They go on accumulating loads of guilt in the rebellion

against the divine government; while God exerting all his divine attributes, follows tardily after, in fruitless efforts to make the terrors of his punishment adequate to the infinitude of their guilt. Oh horrid picture of perverted imagination! Did we not believe its authors labored under the sincere conviction that they were doing God service, and did we not know that many good and estimable persons still defend the doctrine under an earnest, though mistaken, zeal for God, it would deserve to be styled the most arrant blasphemy.

This condition of the finally reprobate, so often and so distinctly defined as a state of death, is also set forth by very many other expressions, by every variety of phrase, in fact, which expresses, in the most complete and absolute manner, an utter loss of existence.

Henry Constable, A.M., in his work on "The Duration and Nature of Future Punishment," p.12, says:-

"But it is not only by this phrase, 'death,' that the Old Testament describes the punishment of the ungodly. By every expression in the Hebrew language, significant of loss of life, loss of existence, the resolution of organized substance into its original parts, its reduction to that condition in which it is as though it had never been called into being, by every such expression does the Old Testament describe the end of the ungodly. 'The destruction of the transgressors and the sinners shall be together:' 'prepare them for the day of slaughter:' 'the slain of the Lord shall be many:' 'they shall go forth and look upon the carcasses of the men that have sinned:' 'God shall destroy them:' 'they shall be consumed:' 'they shall be cut off:' 'they shall be rooted out of the land of the living:' 'blotted out of the book of life:' 'they are not.' The Hebrew scholar will see from the above passages that there is no phrase of the Hebrew language significant of all destruction short of that philosophical annihilation of elements which we do not assert, which is not used to denote the end of the ungodly."

The wicked shall be destroyed. - "The Lord preserveth all them that love him; but all the wicked will he destroy." Ps. 145:20. Here preservation is promised only to those who love God, and in opposition to this, destruction is threatened to the wicked. But human wisdom teaches us that God will preserve the wicked in hell - preserve them for the mere sake of torturing them. Mr. Benson again says: -

"God is therefore present in hell to see the punishment of these rebels. His fiery indignation kindles, and his incensed fury feeds the flame of their torment, while his powerful presence and operation maintain their being, and render their powers most acutely sensible, thus setting the keenest edge upon their pain, and making it cut most intolerably deep."

The wicked shall perish. - "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16. A double enunciation of the truth is couched in this short text. It is that eternal life is to be obtained only through Christ, and that all who do not thus obtain it will eventually perish. John testifies further on the same point in his first epistle (5:11): "And this is the record: that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son." From which it follows, as a most natural consequence, that "he that hath not the Son of God hath not "life." Verse 12.

The wicked shall go to perdition. - "We are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul." Heb. 10:39. We either gain the salvation of our souls by a perseverance in faith, and obtain eternal life by a patient continuance in well doing (Rom. 2:7), or we sink back into perdition, which is defined to be utter ruin, or destruction.

The wicked shall come to an end; and be as though they had not been." "For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be; yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall "not be." Ps. 37:10. If this testimony be true, there will be neither sinner nor any place for a sinner, after God has executed upon them his just judgments. "They shall be as though they had "not been." Obad. 16.

The reader is requested to mark the significance of these texts. They are not figures, but plain enunciations of truth, demanding to be understood in the plainest and most literal manner. And though they are so abundant, and can be so easily produced, they are not to be passed over any more lightly on this account.

The wicked are compared to the most inflammable and perishable substances. Had the wicked been compared to the most durable substances with which we are acquainted in nature; had they been likened to the "everlasting hills," the enduring rock, or the precious metals, gold and gems, the most incorruptible of all substances; such comparisons would not have been without their weight in giving us an idea of an eternity of existence; nor can we think they would have been overlooked by the other side. We therefore claim an equal significance on our side of the question for the fact that they are everywhere compared to just the opposite of the above-named substances - substances the most perishable and corruptible of any that exist. For no idea can be drawn from such comparisons at all compatible with the idea of eternal preservation in the midst of glowing and devouring fire.

Thus it is said of the wicked, that they shall be dashed in pieces like a potter's vessel (Ps. 2:9), they shall be like the beasts that perish (Ps. 49:20), like the untimely fruit of a woman (Ps. 58:2; Prov. 10:25), like a waterless garden scorched by an eastern sun (Isa.1:30), like garments consumed by the moth (Isa. 51:8), like the thistle down scattered by the whirlwind (Isa. 17:13, margin). They shall consume like the fat of lambs in the fire (Ps. 37:20), consume into smoke (ibid.) and ashes (Mal. 4:3), melt like wax (Ps. 68:2), burn like tow (Isa. 1:31), consume like thorns (Isa. 34:12), vanish away like exhausted waters (Ps. 58:7).

The illustrations which the New Testament uses to represent the destiny of the wicked are of exactly the same nature. They are likened to chaff, which is to be burned entirely up (Matt. 3:12), tares to be consumed (Matt. 13:40), withered branches to be burned (John 15:6), bad fish cast away to corruption (Matt. 13:47, 48), a house thrown down to its foundations (Luke 6:49), to the

destruction of the old world by water (Luke 17:27), to the destruction of the Sodomites by fire (verse 29; 2 Pet. 2:5, 6), and to natural brute beasts, that perish in their own corruption (verse 12).

Such are the illustrations of the Scriptures on this subject. If the wicked are to be tormented forever, all these illustrations are not only unnatural, but false; for in that case they are not like the perishing beasts, the passing whirlwind, the moth-consumed garment, the burning fat, the vanishing smoke, or the melting wax; nor like chaff, tares, and withered branches, consumed and reduced to ashes: These all lose their form and substance, and become as though they had not been; but this the wicked never do, according to the popular view. There is an enormous contradiction somewhere. Is it between the writers of the Bible? or between uninspired men and the word of God? The trouble is not with the Bible; all is harmony there. The discrepancy arises from the creeds and theories of men.

The language of Moses and of Paul shows that an eternal existence of moral corruption and fiery torture is not the doom of the wicked. When Moses besought the Lord to forgive the sin of Israel, he said, "Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin - ; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written." Ex. 32:32. This book must be the book of life, in which the names of the righteous are written. By being blotted out of this book, Moses evidently meant being devoted to the doom of sinners. If Israel could not be forgiven, he would himself perish with that unfaithful people. But no one can for a moment suppose that he wished throughout eternity for a life of sin, pain, and blasphemy in hell. He only wished for an utter cessation of that life which, if his prayer could not be granted, would be an intolerable burden. And if this is what he meant by being blotted out of God's book, it follows that this will be the doom of the ungodly; for the Lord answered, "Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book."

In a similar manner, Paul speaks concerning the same people: "For I could wish that myself were "accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh." Rom. 9:3. We cannot suppose that Paul would desire a life of sin

and moral corruption, such as that of the sinner in hell is said to be, even for the sake of his people. But he was willing to give up his life for them, and cease to exist, if thereby they might be saved.

To notice more particularly some of the scriptures in which a portion of the foregoing figures are found, their testimony may be summed up in the following final proposition: -

The wicked shall be consumed and devoured by fire. "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness," etc. "Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust"! Isa. 5:20-24.

Reader, have you ever seen fire devour stubble or flame consume chaff? Then you have seen a figure of the destruction of the wicked. And let the advocate of eternal misery tell us, if such language does not denote the utter consumption of the wicked, what language would do it, if the doctrine were true. Let us know what language inspiration should have used, had it wished to convey such an idea. Is it such as this? "But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs; they shall consume, into smoke shall they consume away" (Ps. 37:20); or this? "And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." The word here rendered "devour," kataphagen, says Stuart, is "intensive, to eat up, devour," so that it denotes utter excision."

In the light of this scripture, we can readily understand how it is that the wicked are to be recompensed in the earth. Prov. 11:31. Coming up in the second resurrection, at the end of the one thousand years of Rev. 20:5, they come up around the New Jerusalem, the beloved city, the abode of the saints, then descended from heaven to earth (chap. 21:5), and then their fearful retribution overtakes them. It is then that they have their portion in those purifying fires that sweep over the earth, in which, according to Peter's testimony, the

elements of this great globe itself shall melt with fervent heat. 2 Pet. 3:10, 12. For it is at the day of Judgment (by which of course we must understand the execution of the Judgment) and perdition of ungodly men that this takes place. See verse 7.

So, too, the righteous, as they go forth upon the new earth (verse 13), destined to be their eternal and glorious abode, will receive their recompense in the earth. Then will have been fulfilled the word of the Lord by the prophet Malachi, which says, "For behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven: and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble: and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch. But unto you that fear my name, shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings; and ye shall go forth, and grow up as calves of the stall. And ye shall tread down the wicked; for they shall be ashes under the soles of your feet in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of hosts." Mark the distinctness of this language. It does not say that the wicked shall be as ashes, nor does it introduce any comparison here whatever, but plainly states a plain fact, that they shall be ashes, under the soles of the saints' feet, - not that the saints will literally walk on ashes, but the wicked, having been reduced to ashes, like all the sin-and-curse-polluted things, are incorporated into the substance of the new earth, which the saints are evermore to inhabit, as it emerges from the renovating fires of the last day.

Then will the universe be clean and pure. Then the stain of sin will all be wiped away forever; sinners, and the great enemy, Satan, that deceived them (for he, too, shall be destroyed, Heb. 2:14), being rooted out of the land of the living. Its every scar now impressed upon the handiwork of God shall be effaced; and this unfortunate earth shall be re-adorned, as only God, omnipotent in power and omniscient in wisdom, is able to adorn it. And then will arise that glad anthem of universal Jubilee, in which shall join every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, ascribing blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever. Rev. 5:13. There is no room

here for a great receptacle of fiery torment, where an innumerable company of human beings shall burn and blaspheme and sin and suffer forever and ever. There is no room in this great song of joy for the discordant and hopeless wailing of the damned. There is no provision made for an eternal rebellion against the government of God, and eternal blasphemy against his holy name! No! only the loyal subjects of the great Captain of our salvation, only such as love immortal life, and seek for it, and prepare themselves for its inestimable blessings, shall ever enjoy the glorious boon; while those who put from themselves the word of God, and "judge themselves unworthy of everlasting life" (Acts 13:46), will be remanded back to the original elements from which they sprung; and strict justice will write upon their unhonored and unlamented graves that the Judge of all the earth dealt impartially and mercifully with them, and that they themselves were the arbiters of their own fate, the authors of their own hapless doom.

Destiny of the Wicked

What happens to those who do not accept Jesus as their Lord and Saviour? The Pioneers had much to say on this subject because they were flanked by two opposing principles. The Orthodox church which claimed that the wicked burn in hell forever and on the other side were the universalists which claimed that all will be saved.

The Adventist doctrines of the non-immortality of the soul and cleansing of the Sanctuary, the judgment, the blotting out of the book of life and the final atonement made the answer to the question of the destiny of the wicked very plain.

The subject was addressed many times. In their contests with Universalists and Eternal Torment believes, the Adventist position was honed and anchored firmly in Bible truth.

These articles have been put together as a reminder of those who went before us to lay a solid immovable platform of truth. May we build on their foundations and be saved.