

BIBLE STUDY:

Suggestions and Illustrations.

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ABOUT thirty years ago or more I called at St. Paul's Churchyard upon the late George Hitchcock, introduced by the card of the Hon. Arthur Kinnaird, now Lord Kinnaird. Entering into a small room, which I still remember well, I found Mr. Hitchcock signing some cheques. After a little conversation he said, "What a pity you are not a Christian." I endeavoured to ward off the attack, but in vain; and ere I left that room he obtained a promise that I would read the *Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation*. I took it with me, read and re-read it, and called upon him afterwards, confessing that it had opened up to me the whole plan of salvation. I thank God for that faithful and true servant of His. It is strange that my cousin, the late Sir William Gordon, had once asked me to read the same book, but he did not put it into my hand.

BIBLE STUDY.

HEN I first began to examine the Scriptures very closely, my residence was in a retired part of Aberdeenshire, in Scotland; my time was entirely my own. Having been a student all my life, study had a charm; and being bound to no religious body whatever, it was pleasant year after year to weigh the Scriptures as a stranger, and had I found any peculiar unorthodox views therein, there was no reason why I should not hold any doctrines I pleased.

Never at that time fancying for a moment that I should ever address believers, or ever attempt to expound the Scriptures day after day, I sat down to study at ten o'clock in the morning, and rarely rose except at meal times until ten or eleven o'clock at night, and this plan I pursued for years.

Not having a single Bible commentary in the house, I could not consult one even if I had wished to do so. The examination of a single Hebrew word sometimes occupied my attention for weeks; tracing it from Genesis to Exodus, and right on through the various books, criticising its use, and ready to observe discrepancies if the word changed its meaning entirely, or contradictions seemed possible. On the broad margin of my Bible I recorded daily results, not trusting to memory.

Like a boy examining a new and complicated machine, I tested and tried all the wheels and screws—working them backwards and forwards so as to test the effect of each, and the effect also if a wheel were removed, or a small nut unscrewed or altered.

Every week I was more and more amazed, yes, even confounded, by the accuracy of the words, and the manifest connection between truths in one book with truths in another. I was quite prepared to expect the truths in Genesis to change their character in Leviticus, Ezra, Daniel, &c. It was very soon apparent to me that the translators of the authorised version had no idea of the accuracy of Scripture; they evidently laid down the chief parts of the building properly as regards general principles; but it was manifest they had no idea that every link was made to fit, every screw was exactly modelled, every word, like a nail, was sized and prepared for its *own* place, and would fit well nowhere else.

Our translators evidently travelled over a mine, and in thousands of places their translation never opens the mine at all. I was a Christian, but verbal inspiration I was not prepared for.

Who Wrote this Book?

was the solemn question I asked again and again. The writers evidently never explain even their own words, and the translators in many instances could not evidently translate them; they did *not* even lay down the principle that the same Hebrew word ought if possible to be represented by the same English word. Glancing at some theological books, it was evident that the writers rarely analysed a single chapter, and often found discrepancies that did not exist because they followed the English translators, not the Hebrew words.

I cannot describe my astonishment as I thus myself

travelled through a vast dark mine, rich to superfluity, laid out in its main thoroughfares with a wondrous regard to general principles, and yet in small matters with an accuracy that startled me, showing at every turn that I was in the presence of great and wondrous power, and yet a power that the world seemed quite unconscious of. I attacked words only as the severest possible test; but every word, like a star, seemed to have its own appointed place, and moved in its own orbit, and the same word kept moving in the same direction, whether I traced it in Genesis, Leviticus, Ezra, or Malachi.

Sometimes I selected the most useless-looking verse, one you might apparently dispense with, dissected it, examined why it was there, and always with the same result—some new and very interesting truths shone out of that verse.

Gradually my Bible became too full of notes, and I was obliged to begin upon another copy. No one excepting an early Deist can imagine the astonishment with which a Deist thus opens his eyes to Scripture treasures; and deeply grieved I was to find that young ministers were never *almost* Bible students. I admit exceptions, observe. They studied carefully Latin, Greek, mathematics, logic, natural philosophy, &c.; but listening to Bible lectures—and sometimes very good ones—was the extent of their Bible study. Close Biblical researches and *verbal criticism* they had no time for; elegant sermons they longed to compose; rhetoric they greatly admired. But lectures upon farming are not farm labour, and lectures upon chemistry do not make an analytical chemist.

To believe in the depths of a mine as a theory taught at college, and to get down one thousand feet into the earth and see a vast city underground and extraordinary wealth, far too great to be brought to the surface, are two different things.

The lecturer who tells you about the mine, as he heard it

lectured upon at college, is a very different man from the miner who has entered the great caverns, and travelled miles underground, seeing masses of rich minerals with his own eyes.

The sceptic can by questions somewhat confound the mere schoolman, but the actual miner only smiles at the childish ignorances of the sceptic. Sir Isaac Newton so corrected Halle, who knew astronomy, but not his Bible.

Want of Power

is our great deficiency; life is too short; health is not equal to the labour; the labourers are few; the harvest is great beyond conception.

Bible Expositors

are a little flock; truly every one carries as much as he can to the surface, feeding a small flock. But congregations in general love sermons, discourses, flourishes, compliments, worldly experience; and some converted ministers, who might even be miners, spend their time reading the literature of the day, digging only among other men's gathered minerals, turning over and over again other men's thoughts and expressions.

A Huge Army of Miners

is needed. Pray ye the Lord of the harvest to send them. One hundred miners, digging all their lives in Genesis alone, would not bring all the treasures of that one book to light.

Few congregations thank the accurate scholar, the exegetic expounder. Congregations in general will accept of the poorest mineral deposit, if the miner will only present it on an ornamental plate, or with a gilded framing; "the people love to have it so." I am only an infant in exposition, I hardly seem able to carry anything like a man's load to the surface; and yet if I were to give even a good congregation close exposition, they would think my infant

burden a perfect load, and be unable to endure it above once or twice.

Dr. Tregelles,

one of the deepest and most accurate Bible scholars England has yet seen, spent a lifetime in God's mine, and dug up rich mineral. He had also in his hands both Hebrew and Greek keys, but his income was not equal to a mechanic's in this colony of New Zealand. His scholarly works are worth their weight in gold, but his readers were a little flock, his admirers few; yet a bishop, when in a theological difficulty, would be glad to quote Tregelles as his Biblical authority.

How to Interpret the Bible.

What school shall we go to? How shall we know the exact meanings to be attached to old Hebrew words? Must we gather all the Rabbis together? How can a single very weak scholar like myself depend upon interpreting a Hebrew passage aright?

In my early life a learned Hebrew, from Constantinople, gave me great courage and boldness in one sentence that he uttered. I was in his hearing mourning over the fact that we Gentiles were under great disadvantages. "Do you not know," said the learned Jew, "that the old Hebrew Bible is our dictionary? If you can show in our old Bible any Hebrew word shut up to a certain meaning, that meaning is the meaning of the word in the eyes of Rabbis." "If," I replied, "I can show you a word like '*ah-rōhn*' shut up in a passage to mean a coffin for the dead, may I say that Rabbis will admit that to be one good meaning of the word?" "Yes," he replied; "*one* good meaning."

This short conversation gave to me LEVER power, opened up a whole library of truth, gave certainty for uncertainty, made prayerful study a real thing, able to bring forth actual and dependable results.

The Bible then its Own Interpreter.

A deed may be very valuable, but unless you can prove in court the exact meaning of the terms, your deed is practically useless. The legal terms used must be known terms. If you cannot define the words in the deed, the court cannot give you the benefit of the deed.

God's deed must evidently interpret itself, or a heavenly messenger must come and explain the exact language used in heaven's court.

The deed does define itself, and I have observed that difficult words and important words, such as "*ah-rōhn*," are often placed in such a position, when first used, that the reader is shut up to a certain meaning. Two meanings are scarcely possible; and as the Hebrew language is a *dead* language, it never alters. Its interpretations must be found in the past, not in the changes that belong to a living language.

But further, the ancient Greek language, in which the New Testament books were generally written, is a *dead* language also, and its words can therefore be accurately examined and weighed.

The Hebrews

had received from God some IDEAS that no other nation ever possessed.

"From everlasting to everlasting" we cannot even imagine. "Eternal" and "everlasting" were not words understood by any nation in the Hebrew sense.

The Jews have five words to express "eternal." Weiss, the learned Jew, would make them seven. No other language has a word that expresses without beginning and without end; no human being can even in imagination imagine "no beginning and no end." We cannot wonder that a thing not imagined has never been expressed. I

remember in our metaphysical class also the famous philosopher, Sir William Hamilton, saying that we have in the Bible an idea that is unthinkable—"Time shall be no more." Human power, he said, cannot grasp it.

Another idea, that even the learned and highly-intellectual Greeks had not, is "holiness." They have a word for its negative, but not for the positive idea of "holiness." They can fancy purified, sanctified; but "holiness," inherent and independent, they have no word for. Everyone acquainted with the HEBREW idea will admit this. Another unthinkable idea is, "A thousand years as one day," and "One day as a thousand years." An idea quite beyond our limited powers.

The Greek Language

therefore requires the Hebrew often to expound it; and the Holy Spirit in writing the Greek New Testament has so placed the Greek words in quotation, that the Hebrew becomes the original of the Greek, and the Hebrew quotation necessarily over-rules the Greek words. This is a most important point, and if New Testament critics had always observed it, they would have found the key by which to interpret Greek words that have not in themselves the Hebrew Scriptural idea.

The logical reader is compelled to give to the Greek word "*aiōnios*," for instance, the Hebrew meaning "eternal." When he writes the Hebrew quotation "eternal" from the Old Testament, and he admits that the Hebrew quotation is undoubtedly "eternal," the Greek verse, as in Hebrews i. 8, is only the repetition of the Hebrew verse in Psalms xlv. 6.

Some, like Canon Farrar, determine meanings by the Greek alone, forgetting that the Greek language is weak, and failing to observe the way in which the Hebrew interprets the Greek. If a scholar were translating the Bible into Maori, he would never allow the Maori to shut

up the Bible ideas within the limits of the Maori language, but would oblige the Maori to get by degrees the Bible ideas, even although they had no words at first to express Bible ideas correctly.

Let me illustrate it in another way. An Englishman has a large freehold property, and his deed has to be translated into Maori. Suppose that language has no word to express "freehold," only a word expressing "possession," will he allow the Maori word "possession" to be the actual substitute for his word "freehold"? "No," he says, "if you quote that Maori word as representing my rights, you must further call attention to the English word, and remember that the original over-rules the quotation."

Some of the New Testament critics have quite overlooked this, and one translator, who particularly wished to make the Greek word *aionios* only read "age during," has landed himself in perfect confusion by his effort, and has sometimes given *aionios* one meaning and sometimes another, according to his own fancy. When he was making his translation, I drew his attention to the confusion, and to his denial of the Hebrew reading; but he was against eternal punishment, and altered a quotation to suit his views, and when he ought also to have been consistent, and translated "age-during Father," not "everlasting Father." He only laughed as I pointed out the anomaly, and said it would appear too odd to say "age-during Father." In Hebrews i. 8, he actually writes "age," and the same words from which the quotation is written he translates "EVER," so that the quotation is not really a copy of the original at all; and this occurs in various other scriptures. Such a system is contrary to all rules of translation.

Once start upon the principle that the Bible is its own interpreter, and the mists and confusions clear away wonderfully. Our progress may be slow, but every step is a safe step, and the Book gradually unfolds itself; and, as in the

laws of nature, every discovery, however small, is opening the way to new channels, and explaining new passages.

Francis Bacon gave a new impulse to science when he threw away all the old theories, and insisted upon FACTS being collected.

WORDS are the facts to be studied and collected first by the Bible student; they inevitably lead to uniformity, and the doctrine founded upon the very words oftentimes repeated must be Bible doctrine.

Thousands hold sound doctrine who could not prove that it is sound doctrine if they were called to produce proofs. It is the duty of all to examine man's teaching. The apostle Paul said of some, "These were more noble . . . in that they searched the Scripture daily, whether those things were so." "Let error and truth," as Milton said, "wrestle together, truth never gets the worst of it;" only let the field be a fair field, and let the wrestler be one who really knows his Bible, and is not a babe.

To return to our former illustration. Every witness for God's word ought to go down into the mine himself, and there be established, "rooted and grounded;" and although it is indeed a great advantage at first to go down in the presence of a good teacher, yet will HE prove but a feeble preacher who only uses commentators or theologians as ladders, leaning upon them, and afraid to open a stratum or vein, and steadily work there alone leaning upon the Spirit.

One snare of the present day is religious pamphlets; and some who used to urge BIBLE reading, and told men to lay aside old theological works, are now flooding the land with religious literature, and urging men to read "our pamphlets;" yet some old theological writers like Owen and the Puritans are ten times deeper and more solid than the new ephemeral literature.

Let the Bible student only dig out of the mine one or two jewels for himself, discover in the mine a fuller meaning

only of one passage, and work the subject matter carefully, it will give him energy, power, and reliance; he will honour the Holy Ghost, and reap a confidence that not a score of commentators or teachers could inspire in him.

The REFORMERS and PURITANS were men to be dreaded by the enemy. They were actual miners, and experience made them bold and confident; they shook both Europe and America.

Follow Words Wherever they Go.

When studying Scripture at first, my opinion was that I should have to depart from all the usual adopted doctrines, and I was quite prepared to contend for Scripture, if need be. There was no reason, as already said, why I should be what is called orthodox. I never intended to witness, and love of the study alone drew me on.

But I must frankly confess that the words of Scripture, whether I would or no, shut me up within all the usual orthodox channels. Being suspicious that these old doctrines were superficial or traditional, I tested them in every direction; but the more I criticised, the firmer did the ground stand.

The natural heart rebels against many of these doctrines, and reason comes with its sledge-hammer to support the natural heart. "Why should I accept what I cannot understand?" says the mind. "One of the proofs of the Bible being God's word," says Webster—one of the greatest intellects America has produced—"is, that it reaches over me, and has what I have not," or words to that effect.

The principles of the Bible have pervaded all lands; and even a Deistical statesman does not know what a large number of principles he has borrowed from it, and used not only in politics, but in private affairs: his morality is built upon it unawares. Even Professor Huxley has publicly confessed in the *Contemporary Review* that "the

religious feeling is the essential basis of conduct," and he does not see how that is to be maintained "without the use of the Bible."

When the words of Scripture went exactly against my mind and heart, I felt the trial had come. Shall I compromise, admit the doctrines I approve, shut my eyes to others? Shall I accept as a fact God's words, "My thoughts are not as your thoughts"? Shall I cast self-down altogether? As soon as I did so—as soon as I shut myself and my own opinions out of court, and sat down to receive the word as it came—new power and light dawned.

I endeavoured to do the word of God justice, accepting its words in their full sense, giving to them all their weight, even when personally I did not approve them as wise in my sight. I cut down no statements, pared down no apparent contradictions, but gave to even the apparent contradictions full force. The result was that I fell upon deeper truths and larger principles than I was looking for; and apparent contradictions were generally found to be great branches spreading out in opposite directions, not rival roots, but only branches of one great stem, that was not in sight at the time. For instance, man's responsibility and will appeared to be opposed to God's sovereign election, but I found in a year or two the Spirit explaining them both by the word "foreknowledge." "Whom He did foreknow, them He did predestinate." "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God." Foreknowledge, of course, did not interfere with man's responsibility, and if God elected according to foreknowledge, as we are told in Peter, God's sovereignty could never crush man's responsibility; but I accepted both as truths before I found the key, or rather God gave the key.

A Miracle.

I once protested against miracles of any kind, and yet held that a few ignorant Galilean fishermen had composed

the New Testament, and a few ignorant Jews accepted the earlier books.

If the Jews wrote the books out of their own minds, and bound all the prophets to use the same words and principles EXACTLY for centuries, dealing with mysterious truths, and attacking themselves in every book; and if the Galilean fishermen wrote out of their own minds, and covered the deepest principles with the simplest language, and invented the character of a Man that no enemies are even yet after centuries able to find faults in, then such miracles are greater even than inspiration; and I was, in fact, believing a greater mental and moral impossibility—a miracle greater than God's intervention.

Having been led as a Bible student in this careful way to examine the subject of everlasting punishment, and having no special prejudices, not being bound, as many pastors are, to maintain the views or doctrines held by their friends, I have felt that young Christians may probably find the following pages useful—not as showing the opinions of the writer, seeing that the less we adopt the mere opinions of others the better, but as giving the mode of enquiry that appears to be scriptural, presenting the various important texts, and helping perhaps a little in the Hebrew and Greek words.

Everlasting.

Plato used the word "*aiōnios*" for everlasting or eternal in a Greek sense; but that sense certainly does not come up to the Hebrew meaning. It never means eternal from all eternity, or from everlasting to everlasting, and it often means age-during; still, it is the clearest and plainest word for time, eternity, and duration that the Greeks have.

In Hebrews vii. 16 "*akatalutos*" is translated "endless;" that word is strictly unbroken, not dissolved. Time is not its leading thought, but unbinding, unloosing, dissolving, separating. In this verse it contrasts with the "carnal,"

which breaks up. It certainly is not strictly time, eternity, duration.

In 1 Tim. i. 4 the word "*aperantos*" is used, and translated "endless" also. But space, not time; number, not time, is the leading thought of the word; as a boundless plain (which is really bounded, however), immense forests, innumerable fishes, impassable deserts. Even in 1 Tim i. 4 it does not really mean "endless" practically.

Aionios

is certainly the word to be used where time and duration are meant, and the strongest word as regards time. Any lexicon will convince the student that "eternal" and "everlasting" can only be properly represented by the two Greek words "*aidios*" and "*aiōnios*." The former is used only in Romans i. 20 and Jude 6; both very solemn texts, and presenting solemn truths. The latter, "*aiōnios*," is used about seventy times, and always in reference to time. And if you take any ordinary Greek lexicon, and look under the word "eternal" for the Greek words to represent "eternal," these two words are the ones almost invariably given. The Grecians therefore received this word as the best word they had to express their idea of eternity.

How could God make "Aionios" to mean "Eternal" in the Minds of Jews?

The Hebrews have at least five words meaning eternal and everlasting. Weiss, the Jew, as I have already said, makes seven. One is sufficient for our present purpose. We select the Hebrew word "*gad*." No man would endeavour to persuade the Jews that "*gad*" does not mean eternal and never-ending. It is a word very frequently used in the Old Testament. It is found, for instance, in Psalm xlv. 6, 7, and in Psalm cxii. 9. Psalm xlv. 6, 7

is quoted in the New Testament in Hebrews i. 8, and Psalm cxii. 9 is quoted in 2 Cor. ix. 9.

Aiōnios is in both places used for *gad*. If *gad* is not eternal, neither is *aiōnios* its representative; but if *gad* is eternal, *aiōnios* must also be. The Spirit has selected that word to represent His word eternal, and thereby fixed its meaning as eternal. And seeing that the Greeks have no word that among themselves is strong enough, it was needful that God should give the meaning of *gad* to some Greek word; and by quoting it for *gad*, its own weaker meaning is changed, and logically it must mean what its principal means, or it would not be God's quotation.

But the proof grows even stronger as we examine the subject. *Gad* is used for the "everlasting Father" in Isa. ix. 6, and *aiōnios* is used for the "everlasting God" in Rom. xvi. 26. -Again, *aiōnios* is used for the "eternal Spirit" in Heb. ix. 14.

Seeing now that the Spirit of God has so clearly fastened the meaning of eternal and everlasting to *aiōnios*, how comes it that some Christians try to unsettle the word?

Do they wish to proclaim God as not eternal? or the glory not eternal? or life not eternal? No; they contend for all these being eternal, but they wish to make an exception in the case of PUNISHMENT. "Naturally we dislike the idea," says one objector; the reason is manifest, but the objection is altogether out of place.

This leads me to refer to a pamphlet written by a dignitary of the Church of England; and as it fairly represents, I think, the general objections made to eternal punishment, and as it refers to many passages of Scripture, I shall take these passages *seriatim*; but first as to

The Primitive Fathers.

He assumes that they were generally against ETERNAL PUNISHMENT, and in answer I quote from the work of the

Rev. William Jones the very words of the Primitive Fathers.

Clemens Romanus says, "If we do not the will of Christ, nothing will deliver us from eternal punishment."

Justin Martyr says, "The punishment of the damned is endless punishment and torment in eternal fire."

Theophilus talks of "eternal punishment."

Irenæus, in his *Symbol of Faith*, makes this one article—"That God would send the ungodly and unjust into everlasting fire."

Tertullian declares "that all men are appointed to torment or refreshment, both eternal, and if any man," says he, "thinks the wicked are to be consumed, and not punished, let him remember that hell fire is styled eternal because designed for eternal punishment, and their substance will remain for ever, whose punishment doth so."

St. Cyprian says, "The souls of the wicked are kept with their bodies to be grieved with endless torments."

Eusebius says, "There is no measure nor end of their torments."

Origen reckons this among the doctrines defined by the church, "That every soul when it goes out of this world shall either enjoy the inheritance of eternal life and bliss if its deeds have rendered it fit for bliss, or be delivered up to eternal fire and punishment if its sins have deserved that state."

"Nothing can be plainer," says the Rev. William Jones, "than the fact that CLEMENS ROMANUS, IGNATIUS, POLYCARP, JUSTIN MARTYR, THEOPHILUS, and IRENÆUS, fathers of the *first two centuries*, believed and taught the doctrine of Endless Punishment."

The REFORMERS also expressly taught Eternal Punishment; no one denies that.

Matt. iii. 12 is quoted by the author, and he says it might teach annihilation. What learned author does not

know that no earthly figure can teach annihilation? Scientific men will tell him that annihilation is unknown. Is boiling water annihilated? Is solid silver annihilated when you melt it in aquafortis? The chemist appears, and with counteraction the silver is again made solid.

Matt. v. 22. Here the author clings to a theory that the Lord is talking of Jewish judgment, which is contrary to fact; the Jews never so adjudged for such a word, and dared not. The gehennah of the Jews was borrowed naturally as a symbol of God's judgment, and proved all the more how firmly the Jews held that the bodies even of the criminals went to fire.

Matt. x. 28 the author ought to have admitted as illustrating it, being both body and soul. The author surely does not wish his readers to think that the purgatory he advocates for "body and soul" was a little burning place outside of Jerusalem.

Matt. xii. 31, 32 with **Mark iii. 29** are clear as to *no* forgiveness, and are contrary to the author's theory altogether.

Matt. xviii. 8, 9, quoted by the author, may have a meaning he could not desire for bodily suffering, and a body in hell fire is here taught. He objects that this individual must be perfect in heaven; but our Lord only says "TO ENTER" mutilated. The passage distinctly teaches bodily suffering.

Matt. xxv. 41 gives the author great uneasiness, and he brings theories again to his aid. First he suggests that another Hebrew word stronger than *aiōnios* might have been used, and he suggests a word we formerly referred to, *akalutos*, as stronger than *aiōnios*; but if it even had been so, why is it not used for the everlasting Father, or Spirit, or glory? His argument, if it were worth anything, would go to prove that the Spirit did not use the strongest word about God or the Holy Ghost in order to show that they are not really eternal. The author ought to know that the

word he suggests is used in contrast to a carnal body, and his word means separating, unbinding, and is not a word that you could apply to Father, Son, Spirit, or hell.

His theory also comes out in another form; viz., that *aiōn* is applied to the Lord's kingdom in Luke i. 33, and His kingdom is to have no end; but he thinks it ends when the Son delivers it up to the Father, therefore he asks the reader to believe that *aiōn* probably does not mean "ever." But does our King and His kingdom end when the Father with whom He is ONE takes up His kingdom? So he argues that the Lord will not reign for ever over the house of Jacob. Why not? When are the saints of Jacob to be taken out of heaven?

Matt. xxv. 32 is treated in an extraordinary manner. The author says that the word translated "goats" is a kindly word meaning "kidlings." Let it be so. What does the Judge then say to the "kidlings"? "Depart from me, ye cursed." Then whose "kidlings" must they be? Not God's, certainly. Satan's children or "kidlings," and a diminutive word used in order to warn them that as Satan's they are being led blindfold as little ones following Satan. Sinners think they are their own masters. Are they not really "kidlings," led blindfold and ignorant?

Matt. xxv. 34. He admits the Judge of the Judge; but he founds his hopes upon God reversing the judgment of the Son, when He takes the kingdom. The Son is to give up His eternal Godhead apparently, and the Father is to reverse Christ's acts. If so, what is to hinder the author being put out of heaven when the Son's acts are reversed? What an extraordinary theory we have here—confusion, reversals, God's word and Christ's to be altered! And all this to happen in order that the author may carry out his little plan.

Mark ix. 43. He involves in clouds. Rightly dividing the word is the point this author has never considered. He

reads these verses as to sinners, not seeing that this address as a whole is to the saints to purify themselves; and rather cut off powers, earthly advantages and gifts, than fall into the place where "their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." If the author had observed the pronouns, he would not have got into such a mist. "Thy hand," "thy foot," "thine eye," is contrasted with the wicked—"their worm dieth not," "their fire is not quenched;" and verses 49 and 50 apply to the believer. Of course we are to make sacrifices of hands and feet, if required—that is, of useful powers even, and be willing to have grace and feel grace in our cutting off even of gifts that are injuring us; and we must not only be salt as gracious ones, but have it and show it. (So Col. iv. 6—salted with grace.) The "where," thrice repeated, points to a place, so in Luke xvi. 28. The reference to fire, as salting us here, is particularly instructive. Fire applied to coal separates the gas and the dust. The gas goes up, the dust down. So cutting off our impediments is cutting off dust, and letting the heavenly Spirit, as the gas, upwards and onwards.

Matt. xxvi. 24 is evidently a mystery also to the author. And he infers that if ever Judas reached the glory, Judas would probably regret he had ever been born. I venture to doubt it.

Luke xvi. 23 he objects to as a reality, and many endeavour to make it a parable. Why should the Lord make it up? He could see all cases. Surely even in doubtful parables we would all rather tell the Judge that we accepted His word too literally, than that we explained its power away, and made its edge weak and figurative. It is a most stirring narration, and I never yet heard a single interpretation of it that was not weak and tame.

The whole apostolic Church once could not receive the fact of Christ dying and being buried; the thing

appeared very unreasonable. No doubt they made it all figurative. But one simple woman, wiser than them all, anointed the Lord's body for His burial, because she believed His words as simple facts; and the Lord publicly confessed that she had done it for His burial. We saints are still tempted in the same way, and lose God's truths often by making mists and theorizing. "How could the Man be there in torment already in his body?" says the author. Has he not read that the sinners of Sodom and Gomorrah—a great host—are already an example of what will happen? even now suffering or

Undergoing the Penalty of Eternal Fire.

These are the literal words, and they are an example, we are told. Literal "fire" is there distinctly preached by the Spirit, and it is "eternal." (Jude 7.) What bodies have they got? We will know that hereafter probably; the fact is plain.

The righteous go to the Lord at once. "Far better to be with Christ." "To die is gain." Even a criminal saved is taken right off the gallows to paradise. "This day shalt thou be with me"—with Christ at once, although theories would find it hard to prove how that day he could be in paradise with Christ. But he was, and so are all saints at once. And the spirits of the lost are the property of Satan at once, and at once suffering the vengeance. Oh, how often lost souls have seen and felt that they are in the hands of Satan just at their last hour! Hume's death is recorded to have been agony and despair. And the physician that attended the death-bed of Tom Paine told the Bishop of Massachusetts that the death of Tom Paine was one of horror and dread. This agrees with the report given by a Quaker and his niece, who ministered to him in his last days. He repeatedly called aloud for Christ, and told the niece that if ever the devil had a hand in making

any book, he certainly had in his books. His end was the very consummation of fear and foreboding.

Ezekiel xxxi. 11 reads literally, "I have therefore delivered him into the hand of the God" (not "mighty one," but God) [Hebrew same as Psalm v. 4, and agrees with 2 Cor. iv. 4] "of the heathen; He shall surely deal with him." And

Ezekiel xxxii. 21 is equally strong—"God the mighty shall speak to him out of hell." The "strong among" is only one Hebrew word—"God," and the same word as in Ezekiel x. 5, xxviii. 2 translated "God." Surely the author of this pamphlet would employ his time better in giving a few new and interesting texts to the public, than in a vain endeavour to file off the edge of the word of the Lord.

2 Peter ii. 9, as he quotes it, indicates the same point that I have urged. The wicked of Sodom are kept "under punishment" unto the day of judgment, when Matthew xxv. 31, 41 takes place. But this translation is not necessarily correct, as quoted by the author, "And the unrighteous to a day of judgment." "To keep to be punished" are the literal words (see Bagster's translation), and we must remember the words, "the Lord knows," going before, so that no emphasis could be laid on this passage in the way indicated. The context seems also to imply that the sinners referred to are still on the earth, and self-willed, not afraid to speak evil of glories (not dignities, the plural of the word for glory).

Is purgatory the great aim of this author? His whole pamphlet urges it, and he has purgatorial punishments alone. Why does he not mention purgatory? Can he be driving his readers to adopt it unawares? Another pamphlet I have seen urges hades, and sends saints and sinners all there first. Such writers are certainly preaching purgatory, and preparing their hearers for Roman Catholic doctrines.

Rev. xxii. 11, the author admits, has a look of finality ; he only expresses a hope that these verses do not set aside the contrary teaching elsewhere, although he shows a distinct desire to set aside their clear teaching if he could.

Romans v. Here the author confuses the scriptural idea of abounding grace with abundance of persons, as if the leading thought here was multitudes to be saved. But the teaching from Rom. v. 15 to Rom. vi. 2, where the subject closes, is the abounding grace of God to multitudes of sins (not sinners), and the distinction in an argument is most important. The argument is quite as full and complete, whether there are many persons or not, so long as there are many sins. "They that receive abundance of grace" in verse 17 reads with "grace abounding" in verse 20, and "grace abounding" in chap. vi. 1. The "many" is applied to both saints and sinners, and "many" strictly applies to both saved and unsaved.

If *Universalism*, the author's pet idea, were taught, how easily it would come out here, saying that ALL would be saved ; but the Spirit instead of that words it thus, "They which receive ABUNDANCE of grace and of the gift of RIGHTEOUSNESS shall reign." There is abundance, and "they that receive," "but where are the nine?" said our Lord. Man can commit bodily suicide, moral suicide, mental suicide, spiritual suicide. By neglecting ordinary precautions he CAN do it, yet abounding grace is at hand if he will only take the antidote at once. And this was preached to all, even the "whole world" known to the Romans in early days. (Rom. i. 8 ; Acts ii. 36, 39.)

1 Cor. xv. 24, 26 reads, says the author, "Enemy shall be abolished." If he is a scholar he would observe that although the new translators have said abolish here, yet in Rom. iii. 31 they have translated the very same Greek word "non-effect ;" and again, in Rom. iv. 14, that non-effect and abolish does not in this passage mean more than subdue is

manifest from verse 28, where the SUM UP of the argument comes, and even the new translators have been obliged to translate it, "And when all things have been subjected."

The author does *not* see that it is not the persons or powers—for instance, Satan—that are to be abolished, but the RULE or power of Satan that is to be abolished. And abolished is not an unsuitable word in some respects; but it evidently misleads this writer, and "put down" or "annulled," as given in Bagster's excellent literal translation, would, for the general public, have been better words certainly.

Phil. ii. 9, 10 the author quotes to show that all are to praise Christ, and he quotes a Roman author in his favour. If he had gone to the Old Testament, from whence the passage is quoted, he would never have referred to it at all. It is a quotation from Isa. xlv. 23, and the two classes of persons who both kneel and confess are mentioned. Some boast in the Lord, some are "INCENSED AGAINST HIM," yet "I have sworn," said the Lord, "every knee shall bow;" and then the Lord records that the INCENSED shall be ashamed or, literally, CONFOUNDED. See the same Hebrew word in Micah vii. 16—"confounded."

Col. i. 20 is of no use to his argument to a preacher of the gospel to show how freely he may preach. If it had gone on to say that God was reconciling the damned, or those in hell fire, it would have availed him; but it is limited expressly, and the limit is an actual argument against the author. The passage, and even the Greek words used, correspond with 2 Cor. v. 18; the reconciliation is broad and complete, but the word is required—"We pray you . . . be ye reconciled." Without acceptance the reconciliation is absolutely useless; it proves God's abundant grace, but also man's abundant rebellion.

Luke xii. 47, 48 is quoted to show that the GODLESS receive "stripes," and no duration of time is attached to

their punishment; the godly are the ones that receive stripes, not the godless. In verse 46 (just the verse before), the "unbeliever" is mentioned, and his position stated. He receives no stripes; he goes, like Judas, to his "own place," or, as in the last words of Matt. xxiv., with the "hypocrites." Verse 47 is a servant that knew his lord's will, and certainly the first command of God in the Old or New Testament is

Faith. The first and primary will of God is, that men believe. This servant is distinguished from the "unbeliever." In verse 46 he is a believer, a son, not a mere

Servant. There are many servants in Scripture that are not sons, only hypocrites. (See Matt. xxv. 28, 31, and elsewhere.) They enter as servants; they are not BORN into God's family as sons. The new birth gives the sonship, whether of saints in the Old Testament or New. (Gal. iv. 28, 29; John iii. 7-10.) Noah's carpenters must have been good servants, but not sons.

Stripes God gives to all believers (but not to the wicked, Psalm xxxvii. 35). He chastens and scourges *every son* He receives. So also read in Psalm lxxxix. 29-37.

Luke xii. 47, 48 are valuable verses, as showing God's dealing with erring saints.

Matt. xi. 24 gives no limit of time to punishment, only shows that the punishment of some will be more tolerable, more endurable, than that of others.

Matt. xxiii. 15 is a very solemn word, showing that the learned "scribes and Pharisees" were themselves children of hell fire (literal words), and that they were making their proselytes twofold *more* the children of hell fire. Talk of plain preaching! This is plain, and the words are the *Master's own* words in preaching. Terrible words! Surely if He felt obliged to be so faithful, there was tremendous reason for it. Yet the Pharisees were in general a moral race, and valued FORMS and CEREMONIES of religion very much.

Ritualism and Romanism are marching on as steadily now as the scribes and Pharisees of old. The little sister Ritualism cannot keep pace with the elder sister Rome, and she pretends not to follow her; but she admires her mightily, and goes as far as the public will allow her. Rome would get on badly without her in England. The little sister gets into places that the elder sister is too tall to go into, and the little sister can put bridles on Protestants who would not allow the elder sister to come near to them. The younger sister is gradually binding all the thoughtless ones, all the half timid, all the ignorant, and preparing weak women and children to embrace her tall sister some day. The Ritualistic clergyman, with his crosses, candles, long dresses, priestly plans, and painted windows, is educating his hearers to endure a full-blown priesthood. He is only the bud; but a Protestant congregation would not allow a Roman priest to appear until they are educated by the Ritualist. I appeal to Romanist and Ritualist whether I am not stating **FACTS**—plain, simple **FACTS**—without any declamation or appeals to the passions.

Is Hell Fire only a Figure?

Could the Spirit of God so write the words about hell fire as to make it impossible for any reasonable reader to construe them as a **FIGURE**?

Was it possible to do so? Impossible, I would have answered; but it has been done, and I have in no commentator or book of divinity found a reference to it, although no doubt it exists somewhere.

In Parables. (Matt. xiii.)

Although there are many parables, we do not find hell fire mentioned in a single parable. It is carefully excluded from the parables or figures. If parabolic, why not in parables?

But when our Lord removes the parables as curtains or figures, and when He gives the interpretation, He shows that hell fire is part of the interpretation, not in one parable only, but in *two* parables; and even wailing and gnashing of teeth are added in the interpretation.

Satan also is not inserted in the parable, but he appears in the interpretation of a parable.

No logical reader can avoid the conclusion that hell fire is excluded from the parable lest it should be considered as a figure only; and Satan also is excluded, lest he also should be reckoned only a figure, and both are inserted in the interpretation, which is so clearly enunciated—"The field is the world, the good seed are the children of the kingdom," &c.

If it had been only a figure, the figure would have been often changed; but in Old Testament, as well as New, fire is always connected with judgment.

In **Isaiah lxvi. 24** they are told to "look upon the *carcasses* of the men that have transgressed against me; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched." No Hebrew scholar can read this otherwise, and the Jews attach the same terrible force to

Isaiah xxx. 33; and the Christian can read, alongside of these passages,

Rev. xiv. 9-11: "And he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone . . . the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night."

Numbers will record, if asked to do so, that they were first awakened by the fact of hell fire. They record it was that great reality, that great first fact, that opened the portals of their eyes to see sin as God sees it, to measure sin as God measures it; and then they turned to God's Son for pardon, grace, joy, and peace.

"Take it away," says the natural man; "I hate it. The very suggestion appals me; it haunts me." "Take it away,"

says the cold-hearted preacher; "it startles my good, sleepy congregation." "It is my experience," every experienced evangelist will say, "that God has made the fact of hell fire like a flaming sword in the hearts and consciences of hearers. It rushes like a flash of lightning among the sins of hearers, rousing them, awakening them, and calling them out." But

A Learned, Great, and Able Scholar,

would he not rather avoid the subject? A well-taught *critic*, would he preach hell fire? An experienced, wise, prudent, God-like divine, would he use it? If he used it, would he not do it with qualifications and critical doubts as to its reality?

These are very fair questions. Let us find out how the

Greatest Popular Preacher

preached—the inspired One, the only "divine" One. Let us quote His own words as He preached:

1. "Shall be in danger of hell fire." (Matt. v. 22.)
2. "Whole body should be cast into hell fire." (Matt. v. 30.)
3. "To destroy both body and soul in hell fire." (Matt. x. 28.)
4. "More the child of hell fire than yourselves." (Matt. xxiii. 15.)
5. "How can ye escape the damnation of hell fire?" (Matt. xxiii. 33.)
6. "But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear Him, which after He hath killed hath power to cast into hell fire; yea, I say unto you, Fear him." (Luke xii. 5.)
7. "But woe unto you, Pharisees! for . . . ye pass over judgment and the love of God." (Luke xi. 42.)

The word for "judgment" is here the same word as is used in Matthew xxiii. 33 for "judgment" or "damnation" in hell fire.

“Let the Same Mind”

be in us all as was in the Master Preacher, our model, our example. “Diminish not a word,” says the Holy Ghost to Jeremiah; and “diminish not a word” is the path to glory and success now.

His very words ought to be our words. We are, in fact, only *echoes* of the Master. Every word He uttered was uttered as a chosen word—chosen like the nails in Ecclesiastes xii. by the master of assemblies.

Every Bible scholar has observed that the choice of words in the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures is a miracle of itself, and carries truth like a flood before it. Observe how the word

Aiōnios

alone carries a torrent of truth before it. *Aiōnios* is the word used in all the following verses for everlasting:

Everlasting damnation (or sin, some read it). (Mark iii. 29.)

Everlasting fire. (Matt. xviii. 8; Matt. xxv. 41; Jude 7.)

Everlasting God. (Rom. xvi. 26.)

Everlasting life. (Matt. xix. 16, 29; John v. 24, 39.)

Everlasting punishment. (Matt. xxv. 46.)

Everlasting habitations. (Luke xvi. 9.)

Everlasting weight of glory. (2 Cor. iv. 17; 1 Peter v. 10.)

Everlasting consolation. (2 Thess. ii. 16.)

Everlasting honour and power. (1 Tim. vi. 16.)

Everlasting glory. (2 Tim. ii. 10.)

Everlasting salvation. (Heb. v. 9.)

Everlasting judgment. (Heb. vi. 2.)

Everlasting redemption. (Heb. ix. 12.)

Everlasting spirit. (Heb. ix. 14.)

Everlasting inheritance. (Heb. ix. 15.)

Everlasting covenant. (Heb. xiii. 20.)

Everlasting kingdom. (2 Peter i. 11.)

Everlasting gospel. (Rev. xiv. 6.)

If the Body

does not suffer, why does Christ say "both body and soul"? If the Lord spoke by inspiration, as He certainly did, why does He say "body" if He does not mean it? Have we not some professing Christians now who say, as the Pharisees said, "Nay, but He deceiveth the people"? Either our glorious Lord was telling truths that He wished to be received in popular language, or He was in popular preaching deceiving the people. We can shut the objector up to one of these positions.

He certainly told the people that body as well as soul would suffer. Was He unnecessarily alarming them? Was He?

I solemnly charge anyone who says He did not mean it with a most-daring attack upon the Lord's own character.

Would He unnecessarily alarm?

Would He say "body," and not actually mean body and soul?

Would He threaten, and not fulfil?

Would He not have qualified the words, if qualification was required?

Would He say "wailing and gnashing of teeth," when it would not really occur?

Would He interpret parables in this way, and mislead?

The Christian reader will draw now his own conclusions, I doubt not. The Bible is not only affected by this question, but our LORD'S OWN character as a popular Preacher and Teacher is here called in question.

The Nominal Christian

will still ask, How could the body we have endure fire and still exist? It is not natural; the body could not endure it.

How did the bodies of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego endure fire? You cannot tell, but they did endure fire.

When you can tell us how their bodies endured, we Christians will tell you how the sinner's body may endure fire and agony, and yet not be consumed.

This reply is not an unscriptural one. (See Mark xi. 29.) The Lord's people have borne the image of the earthly Adam, and they shall yet bear the image of the heavenly Adam. The lost have borne the image of the earthly Adam, is it not probable that they also shall bear the spiritual image of their spiritual "head" and chief—Satan? seeing that the Lord as He condemns them is to say, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

He holds out salvation to YOU this day; FULL, FREE forgiveness TO-DAY. (Acts xiii. 38.) He also will be your Judge soon—"the Father judgeth no man." (John. v. 22.)

If a SOCINIAN should read these pages, I only ask him to ponder the Son of man's own words in Matt. xxv. 31—mercy then gone, the CRISIS come.

The Reader

has this day his power of CHOICE. He can look up to Christ this day, or he may turn away; he CAN claim this day the righteousness of God as his own through Christ; he CAN obtain the EXPERIENCE that heavenly love is real, powerful, personal; he CAN this day ask and obtain a NEW Spirit.

The FEAR of DEATH will then vanish like darkness before the sun, and the Bible will be a plain book as regards his own salvation. Life will then be worth living—glorious objects before him—and to DIE will be GAIN.

Only turn, and past rebellion will be blotted out for ever.