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# BIBLE EXAMINER.

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NO IMMORTALITY, NOR ENDLESS LIFE, EXCEPT THROUGH JESUS CHRIST ALONE.

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## ENDLESS MISERY.

We copy the following from "*The Life and Correspondence of John Foster*," Baptist Minister, England. We give it place in the Examiner, not because we endorse all that he says, but to show the struggle of a powerful and pious mind to extricate itself from the horrible doctrine of Eternal Misery. Had he not held the corrupting doctrine of the natural immortality of the soul, he would not have been led to lean so strong to the doctrine of Restorationism: but endless misery he could not believe. He confesses he has "*not directed much thought to*" the doctrine of the "*literal interpretation of the threatened destruction*" of the wicked. Had he done so, he might have been saved much labor in arriving at the truth on the end of the wicked.

The editor of the work, J. E. Ryland, in the Preface says:—

"On one point only of dogmatic theology, Mr. Foster dissented from the religious community with which he was most intimately connected. Allusions to this subject (the Duration of Future Punishment) occur in two or three passages of his early correspondence; but it is discussed at some length in a letter to a young minister, written in 1841, (vol. ii., p. 262). Without offering an opinion on "the moral argument," which to a mind of so high an order carried irresistible force, or inquiring what exceptions may be taken to those views of mankind and the present life to which it may appear that that argument owes much of its cogency—and while those who differ from him, and not a few, probably, who would assent to his views, may regret that the statements of scripture are not more fully discussed—it may be permitted, in justice to his memory, to remark, that in Mr. Foster's mind, as is evident from his other writings, this belief was associated with the holiest views of the Divine being, and with a most elevated standard of moral excellence; nor among those who deem him mistaken on this subject, could any one be found who would more earnestly deprecate that a theological speculation should occupy the thoughts to the neglect of practical, personal piety."

Here follows the letter spoken of. Let it be read and pondered well. We commend it especially to all Baptists and Baptist Ministers: and we rejoice to know that many of that denomination have their minds exercised with serious reflections like Mr. Foster:

## TO A YOUNG CLERGYMAN.

*In answer to one in which he stated his inquiries and difficulties on the subject of the eternity of future punishments.*

SEPTEMBER 24, 1841.

Dear Sir:—If you could have been apprised how much less research I have made into what has been written on the subject of your letter than you appear to have done, you would have had little expectation of assistance in deciding your judgment. I have perhaps been too content to let an opinion (or impression) admitted in early life dispense with protracted inquiry and various reading. The general, not very far short of universal, judgment of divines in affirmation of the doctrine of eternal punishment must be acknowledged a weighty consideration. It is a very fair question, is it likely that so many thousands of able, learned, benevolent, and pious men should all have been in error? And the language of scripture is formidably strong; so strong that it must be an argument of extreme cogency that would authorize a limited interpretation.

Nevertheless, I acknowledge myself *not* convinced of the orthodox doctrine. If asked *why* not, I should have little to say in the way of criticism, of implications found or sought in what may be called incidental expressions of scripture, or of the passages dubiously cited in favor of final, universal restitution. It is the moral argument, as it may be named, that presses irresistibly on my mind—that which comes in the stupendous idea of eternity.

It appears to me that the teachers and believers of the orthodox doctrine hardly ever make an earnest, strenuous effort to form a conception of eternity; or rather a conception somewhat of the nature of a faint, incipient approximation. Because it is confessedly beyond the compass of thought it is suffered to go without an attempt at thinking of it. They utter the term in the easy currency of language; have a vague and transitory idea of something obscurely vast, and do not labor to place and detain the mind in intense protracted contemplation, seeking all expedients for expanding and aggravating the awful import of such a word. Though every mode of illustration is feeble and impotent, one would surely think there would be an insuppressible impulse to send forth the thoughts to the utmost possible reach into the immensity—when it is an immensity into which our own most essential interests are infinitely extended. Truly it is very strange that even religious minds can keep so quietly aloof from the amazing, the overwhelming contemplation of what they have the destiny and the near prospect of entering upon.

Expedients of illustration of what eternity is *not*, supply the best attainable means of assisting remotely toward a glimmering apprehension of what it is. All that is within human capacity is to imagine the vastest measures of time, and to look to the termination of these as only touching the mere commencement of eternity.

For example: it has been suggested to imagine the number of particles, atoms, contained in this globe, and suppose them one by one annihilated, each in a

thousand years, till all were gone; but just as well say a million, or a million of millions of years or ages, it is all the same as against infinite duration.

Extend the thought of such a process to our whole mundane system, and finally to the whole material universe: it is still the same. Or, imagine a series of numerical figures, in close order, extended to a line of such length that it would encircle the globe, like the equator—or that would run along with the earth's orbit round the sun—or with the outermost planet, Uranus—or that it would draw a circle of which the radius should be from the earth or sun to Sirius—or that should encompass the entire material universe, which, as being material, cannot be infinite. The most stupendous of these measure of *time* would have an end; and would, when completed, be still *nothing to eternity*.

Now think of an infliction of misery protracted through such a period, and at the end of it being only *commencing*—not one smallest step nearer a conclusion:—the case just the same if that sum of figures were multiplied by itself. And then think of *man*—his nature, his situation, the circumstances of his brief sojourn and trial on earth. Far be it from us to make light of the demerit of sin, and to remonstrate with the supreme Judge against a severe chastisement, of whatever moral nature we may regard the infliction to be. But still, what is man? He comes into the world with a nature fatally corrupt, and powerfully tending to actual evil. He comes among a crowd of temptations adapted to his innate evil propensities. He grows up (incomparably the greater proportion of the race) in great ignorance; his judgment weak, and under numberless beguilements into error; while his passions and appetites are strong; his conscience unequally matched against their power:—in the majority of men, but feebly and rudely constituted. The influence of whatever good instructions he may receive is counteracted by a combination of opposite influences almost constantly acting on him. He is essentially and inevitably unapt to be powerfully acted on by what is invisible and future. In addition to all which, there is the intervention and activity of the great tempter and destroyer. In short, his condition is such that there is no hope of him, but from a direct, special operation on him of what we denominate grace. *Is it not so? Are we not convinced—is it not the plain doctrine of scripture—is there not irresistible evidence from a view of the actual condition of the human world—that no man can become good, in the Christian sense, can become fit for a holy and happy place hereafter, but by this operation *ab extra*? But this is arbitrary and discriminative on the part of the sovereign Agent, and independent of the will of man. And how awfully evident is it, that this indispensable operation takes place only on a comparatively small proportion of the collective race!*

Now this creature, thus constituted and circumstanced, passes a few fleeting years on earth, a short sinful course; in which he does often what, notwithstanding his ignorance and ill-disciplined judgment and conscience, he knows to be wrong, and neglects what he knows to be his duty; and consequently, for a greater or less measure of guilt, widely different in different offenders, deserves punishment. But endless punishment! hopeless misery, through a duration to which the enormous terms above imagined, will be absolutely nothing! I acknowledge my inability (I would say it reverently) to admit this belief, together with a belief in the divine goodness—the belief that “God is love,” that his tender mercies are over all his works. Goodness, benevolence,

charity, as ascribed in supreme perfection to him, cannot mean a quality foreign to all human conceptions of goodness; it must be something analogous in principle to what himself has defined and required as goodness in his moral creatures, that, in adoring the divine goodness, we may not be worshipping an “unknown God.” But if so, how would all our ideas be confounded, while contemplating him bringing, of his own sovereign will, a race of creatures into existence, in such a condition that they certainly will and must—*must*, by their nature and circumstances, go wrong, and be miserable unless prevented by especial grace, which is the privilege of only a small proportion of them, and at the same time affixing on their delinquency a doom of which it is infinitely beyond the highest archangel's faculty to apprehend a thousandth part of the horror.

It must be in deep humility that we venture to apply to the measures of the divine government, the rules indispensable to the equity of human administration. Yet we may advert to the principle in human legislation, that the man tempted to crime should, as far as is possible without actual experience, be apprised of the nature and measure of the penal consequence. It should be something the main force of which can be placed in intelligible *opposition*, so to speak, to the temptation. If it be something totally out of the scope of his faculties to apprehend, to realize in his mind, that *threatened something is unknown*, has not its appropriate fitness to deter him. There is, or may be, in it what would be of mighty force to deter him if *he could have a competent notion of it*; but his necessary ignorance precludes from him that salutary force. Is he not thus taken at a fearful disadvantage? As a motive to deter him, *the threatened penalty can only be in the proportion to his (in the present case) narrow faculty of apprehending it*; but as an evil to be suffered it surpasses in magnitude every intellect but the Omniscient. Might we not imagine the reflection of one of the condemned delinquents suffering on, and still interminably on, through a thousand or a million of ages, to be expressed in some such manner as this:—Oh! if it had been possible for me to conceive but the most diminutive part of the weight and horror of this doom, every temptation to sin would have been enough to strike me dead with terror; I should have shrunk from it with the most violent recoil.

A common argument has been that sin is an *infinite evil*, that is, of infinite demerit, as an offence against an infinite Being; and that since a finite creature cannot suffer infinitely *in measure*, he must *in duration*. But surely, in all reason, the limited and in the present instance *diminutive nature of the criminal* must be an essential part of the case for judgment. Every act must, for one of its proportions, be measured by the nature and condition of the agent. And it would seem that one principle in that rule of proportion should be, that the offending agent should be capable of being aware of the magnitude (the *amount*, if we might use such a word) of the offence he commits, by being capable of something like an adequate conception of the being against whom it is committed. A perverse child committing an offence against a great monarch, of whose dignity it *had some*, but a vastly inadequate apprehension, would not be punished in the same manner as an offender of high endowments and responsibility, and fully aware of the dignity of the personage offended. The one would justly be sharply chastised; the other might as justly be condemned to death. In the present case, the offender does or may

know that the Being offended against is of awful majesty; and therefore the offence is one of great aggravation, and he will justly be punished with great severity; but, by his extremely contracted and feeble faculties, as the lowest in the scale of strictly rational and accountable creatures in the whole creation, he is infinitely incapable of any adequate conception of the greatness of the Being offended against. He is, then, according to the argument, obnoxious to a punishment not in any proportion to his own nature, but alone to that infinity of the supreme nature, which is to him infinitely unconceivable and unknown.

If an evil act of a human being may be of infinite demerit, why may not a good one be of infinite excellence or merit as having also a reference to the infinite Being? Is it not plain that every act of a finite nature must have, in all senses, the finite quality of that nature—cannot, therefore, be of infinite demerit?

Can we—I would say with reverence—can we realize it as possible that a lost soul, after countless millions of ages, and in prospect of an interminable succession of such enormous periods, can be made to have the conviction, absolute and perfect, that all this is a just, an equitable infliction, and from a Power as good as he is just, for a few short sinful years on earth—years and sins presumed to be retained most vividly in memory, and everlastingly growing clearer, vaster, and more terrible to retrospective view in their magnitude of infinite evil—every stupendous period of duration, by which they have actually been left at a distance, seeming to bring them, in contrariety to all laws of memory, nearer and ever nearer to view, by the continually aggravated experience of their consequences?

Yes, those twenty, forty, seventy years, growing up to infinity of horror in the review, in proportion to the distance which the condemned spirit recedes from them,—all eternity not sufficing to reveal fully what those years contained!—millions of ages for each single evil thought or word!

But it is usually alleged that there will be an endless continuation of sinning, with probably an endless aggravation, and therefore the punishment must be endless. Is not this like an admission of disproportion between the punishment and the original cause of its infliction? But suppose the case to be so—that is to say, that the punishment is not a retribution simply for the guilt of the momentary existence on earth, but a continued punishment of the continued, ever-aggravated guilt in the eternal state; the allegation is of no avail in vindication of the doctrine; because the first consignment to the dreadful state necessitates a continuation of the criminality; the doctrine teaching that it is of the essence, and is an awful aggravation, of the original consignment, that it dooms the condemned to maintain the criminal spirit unchanged forever. The doom to sin as well as to suffer, and according to the argument, to sin in order to suffer, is inflicted as the punishment of the sin committed in the mortal state. Virtually, therefore, the eternal punishment is the punishment of the sins of time.

Under the light (or the darkness) of this doctrine, how inconceivably mysterious and awful is the aspect of the whole economy of this human world! The immensely greater number of the race hitherto, through all ages and regions, passing a short life under no illuminating, transforming influence of their Creator; ninety-nine in a hundred of them perhaps having never even received any authenticated message from heaven, passing off the world in a state

unfit for a spiritual, heavenly, and happy kingdom elsewhere; and all destined to everlasting misery. The thoughtful spirit has a question silently suggested to it of far more emphatic import than that of him who exclaimed, "Hast thou made all men in vain?"

Even the dispensation of redemption by the Mediator, the only light that shines through this dark economy, how profoundly mysterious in its slow progress, as yet, in its uncorrupted purity, and saving efficacy. What proportion of the earth's inhabitants are, at this hour, the subjects of its vital agency? It was not the divine volition that the success should be greater,—that a greater number should be saved by it,—or most certainly, most necessarily, the efficacy would have been greater. But in thus withholding from so large a proportion of mankind even the knowledge, and from so vast a majority in the nominally Christian nations the divine application, indispensable to the efficacy of the Christian dispensation, could it be that the divine purpose was to consign so many of his creatures, existing under such fearful circumstances, to the doom of eternal misery? Does the belief consist with any conception we can form of infinite goodness combined with infinite power?

But, after all this, we have to meet the grave question, *What say the Scriptures!* There is a force in their expressions at which we well may tremble. On no allowable interpretation do they signify less than a very protracted duration and formidable severity. But I hope it is not presumptuous to take advantage of the fact, that the terms everlasting, eternal, for ever, original or translated, are often employed in the Bible, as well as other writings, under great and various limitations of import; and are thus withdrawn from the predicament of *necessarily and absolutely* meaning a strictly endless duration. The limitation is often, indeed, plainly marked by the nature of the subject. In other instances the words are used with a figurative indefiniteness, which leaves the limitation to be made by some general rule of reason and proportion. They are designed to magnify, to aggravate, rather than to define. My resource in the present case, then, is simply this—that since the terms do not necessarily and absolutely signify an interminable duration,—and since there is in the present instance to be pleaded, for admitting a limited interpretation, a reason in the moral estimate of things, of stupendous, of infinite urgency, involving our conceptions overwhelmed in darkness and horror if it be rejected, I therefore conclude that a limited interpretation is authorized. Perhaps there is some pertinence in a suggestion which I recollect to have seen in some old and nearly unknown book in favor of universal restitution;—that the great difference of degrees of future punishment, so plainly stated in Scripture, affords an argument against its perpetuity; since, if the demerit be infinite, there can be no place for a scale of degrees, apportioning a minor infliction to some offenders;—every one should be punished up to the utmost that his nature can sustain; and the same reason of equity there may be for a limited measure, there may consistently be for a limited duration. The assignment of an unlimited duration would seem an abandonment of the principle of the discriminating rule observed in the adjustment of degrees.

If it be asked, *how could the doctrine have been more plainly and positively asserted than it is in the Scripture language?* In answer, I ask, how do we construct our words and sentences to express it in an absolute manner, so as to leave no possibility of understanding the language in a different, equivocal or

questionable sense? And may we not think that if so transcendently dreadful a doctrine had been meant to be stamped as in burning characters on our faith, there would have been such forms of proposition, of circumlocution if necessary, as would have rendered all doubt or question a mere palpable absurdity?

Some intelligent and devout inquirers, unable to admit the terrific doctrine, and yet pressed by the strength of the scripture *language*, have had recourse to a *literal* interpretation of the threatened destruction, the eternal death, as signifying *annihilation of existence*, after a more or less protracted penal infliction. Even this would be a prodigious relief: but it is an admission that the terms in question *do* mean something final, in an absolute sense. I have not directed much thought to this point; the grand object of interest being a negation of the perpetuity of misery. I have not been anxious for any satisfaction beyond that; though certainly one would wish to indulge the hope, founded on the divine attribute of infinite benevolence, that there will be a period somewhere in the endless futurity, when all God's sinning creatures will be restored by him to rectitude and happiness.

It often surprises me that the fearful doctrine sits, if I may so express it, so easy on the minds of the religious and benevolent believers of it. Surrounded immediately by the multitude of fellow-mortals, and looking abroad on the present, and back on the past state of the race, and regarding them, as to the immense majority, as subjects of so direful destination, how *can* they have any calm enjoyment of life, how can they be cordially cheerful, how can they escape the incessant haunting of dismal ideas, darkening the economy in which their lot is cast? I remember suggesting to one of them such an image as this:—suppose that so many of the great surrounding population as he could not, even in a judgment of charity, believe to be Christians, that is, to be in a safe state for hereafter,—suppose the case to be that he knew so many were all doomed to suffer, by penal infliction, a death by torture, in the most protracted agony, with what feelings would he look on the populous city, the swarming country, or even a crowded, mixed congregation? But what an infinitesimal trifle that would be in comparison with what he does believe in looking on these multitudes. How, then, can they bear the sight of the living world around them?

As to religious teachers, if the tremendous doctrine be true, surely it ought to be almost continually proclaimed as with the blast of a trumpet, inculcated and reiterated, with ardent passion, in every possible form of terrible illustration; no remission of the alarm to thoughtless spirits. What! believe them in such unconceivably dreadful peril, and not multiply and aggravate the terrors to frighten them out of their stupor; deploring still, that all the horrifying representations in the power of thought and language to make, are immeasurably below the real urgency of the subject; and almost wishing that some phenomenon of sight or sound might break in to make the impression that no words can make. If we saw a fellow-mortal stepping heedlessly or daringly on the utmost verge of some dreadful precipice or gulf, a humane spectator would raise and *continue* a shout, a scream, to prevent him. How, then, can it comport with the duty of preachers to satisfy themselves with brief, occasional references to this awful topic, when the most prolonged thundering alarm is but the note of an infant, a bird, or an insect, in proportion to the horrible urgency of the case?

There has been, in some quarters, what appears to me a miserably fallacious way of talking, which affects to dissuade from dwelling on such terrifying representations. They have said, These terrors tend only to harden the mind; approach the thoughtless beings rather, and almost exclusively, with the milder suaves, the gentle language of love. I cannot, of course, *mean* to say, that this also is not to be one of the expedients and of frequent application. But I do say, that to make this the main resource is not in consistency with the spirit of the bible, in which the larger proportion of what is said of sinners and addressed to them, is *plainly in a tone of menace and alarm*. Strange if it had been otherwise, when a righteous Governor was speaking to a depraved, rebellious race. Also it is matter of fact and experience, that it is very far oftener by impressions on fear that men are actually awakened to flee from the wrath to come. Let any one recall what he has known of such awakenings. Dr. Watts, all mild and amiable as he was, and delighted to dwell on the congenial topics, says deliberately, that of all the persons to whom his ministry had been efficacious, *only one* had received the first effectual impressions from the gentle and attractive aspects of religion; all the rest from the awful and alarming ones—the appeals to fear. And this is all but universally the manner of the divine process of conversion.

A number (not large, but of great piety and intelligence) of ministers within my acquaintance, several now dead, have been disbelievers of the doctrine in question; at the same time not feeling themselves imperatively called upon to make a public disavowal; content with employing in their ministrations strong general terms in denouncing the doom of the impenitent sinners. For one thing, a consideration of the unreasonable imputations and unmeasured suspicions apt to be cast on any publicly declared partial defection from rigid orthodoxy, has made them think they should better consult their usefulness by not giving a prominence to this dissentient point; while yet they make no concealment of it in private communications, and in answer to serious inquiries. When, besides, they have considered how strangely defective and feeble is the efficacy, to alarm and deter careless, irreligious minds, of the terrible doctrine itself notionally admitted by them, they have thought themselves the less required to propound one that so greatly qualifies the blackness of the prospect. They could not be unaware of the grievous truth of what is so strongly insisted on as an argument by the defenders of the tenet—that thoughtless and wicked men would be sure to seize on the mitigated doctrine to encourage themselves in their impotence. But this is only the same perverse and fatal use that they may make of the doctrine of grace and mercy through Jesus Christ. If they *will* so abuse the truth we cannot help it. But methinks even this fact tells against the doctrine in question. If the very nature of man, as created, every individual, by the sovereign Power, be in such desperate disorder, that there is no possibility of conversion and salvation except in the instances where that Power interposes with a special redeeming efficacy, how can we conceive that the main proportion of the race thus morally impotent (that is, really and absolutely impotent) will be eternally punished for the inevitable result of this moral impotence? But this I have said before.

With all good wishes for the success of your studies and ministrations,

I am, dear sir, yours truly.

## ELDER JOHN TATE'S DEFENCE.

[Continued from page 164.]

Before I refer to the Scriptures to ascertain what they teach respecting the dead, I wish to say that I think they distinctly affirm the consciousness of some in the intermediate state. I say of some, not all. It seems to me that some highly favored sons of heaven have been embodied in celestial structures, and by means of that embodiment they live in a state of consciousness. But this is an exception to the general rule. The great majority of the dead are in my judgment without thought and consciousness. \*I know of no passage in the Bible which explicitly states or fairly implies the consciousness of *all* the dead. I am not disposed on this or any other point to draw a sweeping universal conclusion from particular premises. As I view the subject I can see a delightful harmony in the revelations of God respecting the separate state. But the two doctrines, that *ALL* the dead are conscious, and that *NONE* of the dead are conscious, appears to me equally to mistake the meaning of some portions of the Bible. The advocates of both these doctrines find it difficult to make the scriptures support their favorite notions. While I admit that some of the departed are conscious, I maintain that others are *not*. This last is the part which I have to prove. Ps. 6: 5, "For in death there is no remembrance of thee; in *sheol* who shall give thee thanks?" *Sheol* is defined by Gesenius as follows—"Orcus, the under world, a vast subterranean place, full of thick darkness, in which are congregated the shades of the dead." Gesenius does not refer it at all to the grave. He limits the word entirely to the receptacle of departed shades. Now according to the Psalmist, there is in *sheol* no ascriptions of praise and thanksgiving to God. It is a world of thick darkness and of silence, where no light is seen, no sound heard. But how different the representations of our modern theology. We sing,

"And let this feeble body fail,  
And let it faint or die;  
My soul shall quit this mournful vale,  
And soar to worlds on high:  
Shall join the disembodied saints,  
And find its long sought rest;  
That only bliss for which it pants,  
In the Redeemer's breast."

The poetry is beautiful I allow; but the sentiment does not harmonize with the language of David, "For in death there is no remembrance of thee; in *sheol* who shall give thee thanks?" Job, in the depth of his affliction, in the bitterness of his soul, desired to die and be hidden in *sheol*. His description of *sheol* is as follows, 10: 21, 22, "Before I go whence I shall not return, even to the land of darkness and the shadow of death, a land of darkness, as darkness itself; and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness." Dr. Clarke on this passage says: "What do we know of the state of separate spirits? What do we know of the spiritual world? How do souls exist separate from their respective bodies? Of what are they capable, and what is their employment? Who can answer these questions? Perhaps nothing can be said much better of the state, than is here said, a *land of obscurity like darkness.*"

Again he says on the same passage and in reference to the same place and state of darkness, "It is the state of the dead. The place of separate spirits. It is out of time, out of probation, beyond change or mutability. It is on the confines of eternity."

These statements are explicit. Dr. Clarke, you

see, was as really a heretic in relation to the state of departed spirits as I am; if tested by your opinions. Nor is this the only instance in which his heretical ideas are developed, as I shall soon show.

But to return to Job. Such was his wretched condition, that he desired to die and enter into *sheol*. 14: 12-15. Here we see that Job wished to depart from life and find a resting place in the dark depths of *sheol*. He expected that for a time the wrath of God would rest upon a guilty world, during which period no special favor would be shown to the righteous dead. But he indulged a good hope and confidence of a final deliverance from the land of forgetfulness. He prayed that at the end of the indignation, God would remember him. He inquired, "If a man die shall he live again?" And firmly believing that he would be at last quickened into life, he looks forward with pleasure to the period of his resurrection, "All the days of my appointed time will I wait till my change come. Thou shalt call and I will answer thee; thou wilt have a desire to the work of thy hands." God will call his soul from *sheol*, and his body from the grave, and then for himself in his own flesh he shall see his Redeemer. Such were the views of Job respecting the state of the dead, and hence his only hope of future conscious existence was by a resurrection from the dead. I will next refer to the testimony of Solomon, Eccl. 9: 4-6.

It is very common for writers and preachers against Universalism to say to the advocates of that system, "Supposing there be a state of future retribution, how could that fact be more explicitly and appropriately asserted than in the language of the Bible?" And so I might say in reference to the state of the dead—if the dead are unconscious, how could that fact be more positively and appropriately affirmed than in the language of Solomon! There is a contrast in the text, and the common theory makes it a contrast between an immortal soul in this life and a dead body in the grave. According to this interpretation, it is the dead body that does not know anything—a wonderful discovery, truly. But whoever carefully reads the passage will see that the contrast is between men in life and men in death; between men in a state of knowledge, and men in a state of total ignorance; between men in a state of enjoyment, and men incapable of enjoyment. Hewlett says, in reference to the passage, "It is the remark of one who knew not of immortality." I would say, it is the remark of one who knew nothing of the natural immortality of the soul, and its consciousness in the intermediate state. This is positively asserted in the text, "The dead know not anything; \* \* \* their love and their hatred and their envy are perished;" and in the 10th verse he repeats the same sentiment, "For there is no work, nor device, *nor knowledge*, nor wisdom, in *sheol*, whither thou goest." *Sheol*, you will bear in mind, is the place of disembodied souls—"the under world where are congregated the shades of the dead." Among these departed shades, Solomon says, there is no love, nor hatred, nor envy; no work nor device; no knowledge nor wisdom. And where all these are wanting, it must be evident there can be no intellectual activity.

And do not you, brethren, sometimes affirm the same doctrine in your devotions? Often do you sing--

"The living know that they must die,  
But all the dead forgotten lie;  
Their memory and their sense are gone,  
Alike unknowing and unknown."

Such language must refer to something which had been the subject of sensation, memory and intelligence. But these are attributes of the mind. Of the mind you affirm, after it has gone away into sheol, that it is "alike unknown and unknown."

Again, I have heard thousands of Methodists and others sing as follows:

"And am I born to die,  
To lay this body down?  
And must my trembling spirit fly  
Into a world unknown?  
A land of deepest shade,  
Unpierced by human thought;  
The dreary regions of the dead,  
Where all things are forgot."

Will you tell me these last lines refer to the grave? What, then, I ask, is there of unfathomable mystery about a hole dug in the earth, two feet wide, six feet long, and six feet deep? Is such a cavity as that "unpierced by human thought?" And then again are all things forgotten in the grave? If so, what is it that forgets? Is it the body or the soul? If it is the body, then the body remembered prior to its interment, and if you say it is the soul that forgets, then plainly you bury body and soul in the grave. *No.* The grave is not meant. The land of deepest shade, unpierced by human thought, &c., &c., can be none other than sheol, the under world where are congregated the shades of the dead. And of that mysterious state and place of existence, Mr. Wesley said, and Methodists have sung—

"The dreary regions of the dead,  
Where ALL things are forgot."

Hezekiah's views of the state of the dead were in perfect unison with those of Job and David and Solomon. He was one of the most pious and intelligent kings that ever reigned over Judah. (See 2 Kings 18: 1-6.) When recovered from a serious sickness, he recorded the divine goodness manifested in his deliverance. Said he, Is. 38: 17-19, "Behold for peace I had great bitterness; but thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption; for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back. For the grave cannot praise thee, (Heb. *sheol* cannot praise thee;) death cannot celebrate thee; they that go down into the pit cannot hope for thy truth. The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day; the father to the children shall make known thy truth."

It is impossible to suppose that the theology of Hezekiah would differ essentially from that of David and Solomon and Isaiah. He was a devout student, and was well instructed in the things of God. Now, if he believed in the consciousness and happiness of departed saints, why this dark picture of the state of the dead? The pious now, in view of death, sing—

"Fill'd with delight, my raptur'd soul  
Would here no longer stay;  
Though Jordan's waves around me roll,  
Fearless I'd launch away."

And after the man is dead, you go and commit his body the grave. You gaze for the last time on the inanimate dust and you sing,

"With solemn delight I survey,  
The corpse when the spirit is fled:  
In love with the beautiful clay,  
And longing to lie in its stead."

If Hezekiah believed as you do, why this almost infinite difference of anticipation and expression? "That *only* bliss for which you pant" you expect to

receive as soon as you are dead. Hence it is you pray—

"Come, Lord of Hosts, the waves divide,  
And land us all in Heaven."

But the Jewish King could see no such glory in the immediate future. *He* saw before him a pit of corruption—a dark and dreary sheol, where no hope was indulged, no song of praise ascended up to God. On the contrary, *He* said, "The living, the living, he shall praise thee as I do this day; the father to the children shall make known thy truth."

These testimonies are sufficient for my present purpose. I shall endeavor to show hereafter that on this point the New Testament is in harmony with the old. I now return to the objection, i. e., That so far as God literally threatened Adam with the termination of life, he meant natural life, not the immortal life of the soul. The notion that the soul is naturally immortal finds no countenance in the testimonies which I have quoted; on the contrary that notion and these testimonies cannot stand together. And I think I have shown that I am supported in my interpretation by the statements of Dr. Clarke—the premises laid down by Mr. Wesley, and Mr. Isaac Taylor, and by your sacred songs. I am compelled to believe that immortality is a *privilege* as Mr. Watson represents it. When, therefore, God announced the penalty, "Dying thou shalt die," it affected Adam in his entire being. Had it not been for the scheme of redemption, Adam would have utterly perished in body and soul; he would have become a thing of naught, and had no more place as an intelligent being in the universe of God.

I will now pass on to another consideration, though it is intimately connected with the argument just advanced. If the soul be immortal in its own nature—if it experience inconceivable joy or exquisite agony in the separate state, *how* is it these facts are not distinctly affirmed in the Old Testament? Our Discipline says, "The Old Testament is not contrary to the New, for both in the Old and New Testaments everlasting life is offered to mankind through Christ, who is the only Mediator between God and Man. "Wherefore they are not to be heard who feign that the old fathers did look only for transitory promises." Now I ask, where do you find the promises made to the old fathers of consciousness and happiness in the separate state? Are there any such promises in the Pentateuch, in Joshua, in Judges, the two Books of Samuel, in Esther or Ruth? I have not been able to find them; if there, they are wrapt up within the folds of dim obscurity. But the holy light of heaven's truth shone brighter and more beautiful as the ages passed away. Go, then, to David, and ask the ground of his hope and rejoicing. Was it that he would soon die and go away into sheol? *No.* He did not rejoice as you do because he was going into it, but that he would be finally taken out of it. Speaking of the wicked and then of himself, he says, Ps. 49: 14-15. "Like sheep they are laid in the grave; death shall feed on them, and the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning, and their beauty shall consume in the grave from their dwelling. But God shall redeem my soul from the power of the grave, for he shall receive me." Here David looks for his joy and victory, not in the intermediate state, but in the resurrection. So he does in the 17th Ps. "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness, I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness."

Solomon in Ecclesiastes gives no intimation of the natural immortality of the soul, nor did he teach, as

some have believed, the eternal sleep of Man. He traces the living man into the darkness and silence of sheol, but does not leave him there forever. He declares that "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil." Now, the two great events of a resurrection and judgment, are almost uniformly in scripture placed in close proximity to each other. Solomon then teaches the revival of the consciousness and intelligence of man by a resurrection from the dead. Eccl. 12: 7, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it." These words were urged against me. I remark—

1. It would be difficult to prove that the spirit alluded to means the rational soul.

2. Admitting that the rational soul is intended, its consciousness in the separate state is neither affirmed nor implied. God is in sheol, and to go to God in the sense of the passage, is nothing more than to go into sheol, where the dead cannot give thanks to God, but where all things are forgotten. Thus David says, Ps. 139: 8, "If I ascend up into heaven thou art there: if I make my bed in sheol, behold thou art there." Whenever, then, a human soul goes to the under world, it goes to God, for God is there. And that world is

"A land of deepest shade,  
Unplered by human thought,  
The dreary regions of the dead,  
Where all things are forgot."

Such are the general representations of the Old Testament respecting the state of the dead and their future resuscitation. But if these ancient saints believed as you do about an immortal soul, why did they not talk about an immortal soul? If they believed that "death was the gate to endless joy," why did they speak of it as the gate to silence, darkness and unconsciousness? If they believed in the natural immortality of the soul, and in bliss or pain surpassing thought immediately after death, why did they not urge these notions just as you do to deter from sin and stimulate to righteousness? They urged no such inducements. They never speak of an immortal soul. They refer us to the time when the dead should be raised as the time of their reward and glory. Then not before did the Hebrew Prophets expect to be quickened into a conscious existence, which should go on increasing in light and power and beauty to all eternity.

So far, then, as the old revelation extends, I claim to be orthodox, and therefore not deserving excommunication at your hands.

## THE NATURE OF MAN'S SPIRIT.

BY THOMAS READ, NEW YORK.

[Continued from p. 165.]

A few texts will require a more particular exposition. Eccl. 3: 18, "I said in my heart concerning the estate of the sons of men that God might manifest them, and that they may see that they themselves are like the beasts. For that which befalleth the sons of men, befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all ONE [ruach, spirit, or] breath; so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast; for all is vanity. (All are subject to decay.) All go to one place, all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again."

We paraphrase the remainder: "Who knoweth any difference between the ruach, spirit or breath, of

the sons of Adam, that in consequence of his erect position, ascendeth upwards, or the ruach, spirit or breath, of the beasts that in consequence of the downward position of his head, descends the earth?"

Here it is emphatically asserted that the kind of life is precisely the same in man and beast, that the kind of ruach, spirit or breath, is the same in both.

In the manner of their death they are precisely alike; and that they, the whole of them, alike return to the earth. At the same time, there is a vast difference between the aspiring nature of the one, owing to his superior organization, and his more exalted faculties, and the grovelling nature of the other. This language is so explicit, and so utterly irreconcilable with the notion of any separate intelligence that continues to live, while the man himself is dead, and is all consigned to the earth but his breath, that we might almost suppose that it was recorded purposely to refute, and for ever confound, any that should suppose that the essential man lived, while his body was entirely decomposed.

The Vulgate reads a little stronger. "I said in my heart concerning the sons of men, that God would prove them, and show them to be like beasts. Therefore, the death of man and of beasts is one; and the condition of them both is equal; as man dieth, so they also die; all things breathe alike; and man hath NOTHING MORE than beast; all things are subject to vanity, and all things go to one place; of earth they were made, and into earth they return TOGETHER. Who knoweth if the spirit of the children of Adam ascend upward, and if the spirit of the beast descend downward? In Eccl. 12: 5-7, it is said, "Because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets \* \* then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the (ruach) spirit shall return unto God who gave it. Vanity of vanities; all is vanity." Rom. 8: 20, "Man was made subject to vanity;" that is, to decay, to death and destruction. The words of Solomon can mean no more than that God gathers to himself the spirit of man which is the source of active life; or, resumes again "the spirit of the breath of lives," and then necessarily man, the whole man, returns to his elementary dust. If the death of man exalted him immediately to a higher state of life, how could the Preacher pronounce the death of man vanity? The same meaning is expressed in other words in Ps. 104: 25, "Thou takest away their breath, they die, and return to their dust." And again, Job 34: 14, "If [God] set his heart upon man, if he gather unto himself his spirit and his breath, (that is, God's spirit or God's breath,) all flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust." And yet again in Ps. 146: 4, "His breath goeth forth, HE returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish."

How weak must be that cause, and how reckless that person, that shall persist in their attempts to make Solomon in the 12th chapter, contradict Solomon in the 8d and 9th chapter. Does Eccl. 12: 7, sustain the monstrous proposition, that the spirit is an independent living entity, immortal in its own nature, existing without any organization, and that it has more knowledge, when separated from the man, than the compound man himself? Especially when the same writer expressly declares "that the dead know not anything," and in the immediate connection declares man to be vanity? When the spirit is separated from the man, it forms no part of the man, nor does it belong to him in any sense whatever. It is the breath of the Almighty which gave him life for a time, but which God has gathered again into the common stock of all living creatures. If God were

to put his spirit or breath into him again, it would not be the same identical spirit or breath; but spirit of the same kind, from the general stock. For proof refer to Ezek. 37: 5, 6, 9, 14; for God would put his spirit, brought from the four winds, into *him*, and he would live. In Rev. 11: 11, after the two witnesses had finished their testimony, and were slain, and remained unburied three days and a half, the *spirit of life* from God entered into them again, and they lived. This figurative relation is, of course, founded upon the literal. But again, as the word *ruach* occurs in the original Hebrew in almost every place where the word breath is found; it should have been uniformly translated when indicating the spirit of life. We might consistently translate Eccl. 12: 7, "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the (*ruach*) breath shall return to God who gave it." Still again, as Solomon declares that men and beasts have all the same (*ruach*) spirit, and that they all go to the same place, according to the argument of our opponents, the spirits of beasts, and the spirits of *all* men, *bad* as well as good, go to God; and that the spirits of the beasts, as well as the spirits of the wicked, are alive, while they are dead, and happy and rejoicing with the righteous in the presence of God! And this, notwithstanding Solomon himself declares that they were all made of dust, and that they all returned to dust together, that there was no difference in death between the man and the beast. And again, "For the living know that they must die; (they were wiser in Solomon's days than now, for now they say the spirit lives forever;) but the dead know not anything," (and not more than they knew while living. There love, envy and hatred are now perished. And again, "There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest." Eccl. 9: 5, 10. Where the *man himself is*, there is no knowledge, and he goes to the *grave*, and not to heaven till he rises from the grave.

If the expression should appear in this work that the "spirit dies," we mean merely to oppose the idea, when the man dies, that *any part of him* survives. When the spirit is "yielded up," "breathed out," or "expired," without being inspired, the man himself is necessarily dead.

In Acts 7: 59, Stephen said, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." It is thought by some, that this language favors the idea that the spirit is a separate conscious intelligence. We regard this language as implying nothing more than that he commended himself, or his life, to God; for after this, it is said of him, that he fell asleep. As the word rendered *receive*, also means accept, we may understand it as equivalent to the expression, "Lord Jesus, accept me." The words of our Saviour admit of a similar explanation: "Into thy hands I commend my spirit." Zech. 12: 1, has been quoted to sustain the popular view: "The Lord, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him, will make Jerusalem a cup of trembling." But it asserts most clearly that the spirit of man was not *him*, or the man, being within him. We consider that the first three clauses are highly figurative representations, that God created all things, and especially the living man, and man cannot evade his judgment. That God created the heavens, the earth, and man, or the life of man that is within him.

When the disciples saw Jesus walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, "It is a spirit." The Apostles were also terrified at the sudden appearance of Jesus after his resurrection, and supposed

that they had seen a spirit. These places have been quoted as warranting the idea that the spirit is a separate entity from the man, and has been seen in a disengaged form. But in both places the Greek word is *phantasma*, and should have been translated a phantom, or a delusive appearance, an apparition. Some suppose that the idea, that the spirit is a separate intelligence, may be gathered from Rom. 8: 16. Volumes have been written on the "The Witness of the Spirit," based upon a misunderstanding of this passage. God communicates with his creatures in a rational manner, and always in accordance with the laws of their physical organization. The *testimony* of the Spirit is always in words. "Thou didst testify against them by thy spirit, by the hands of thy prophets." Neh. 9: 30. The figure in Rom. is the taking of a slave and making him a son. We will venture a paraphrase: Ye have not received of God the spirit or disposition of a slave, who, under the bondage of fear, cries, Master, Master, how shall we act to avoid thy chastisement? But ye have received the *spirit of adoption*, the spirit, or disposition of a child, and now with filial confidence and affection, ye cry, Abba, Father, thou hast graciously adopted us into thy family, and made us thy heirs, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ, thy Son, who has now become our elder Brother; we therefore now gratefully inquire how we may best manifest our loving obedience to thee: and *this identical or self-same spirit of adoption*, or filial disposition, this confidence in thy fatherly care over us, which has so completely dissipated all fears for the future; *this spirit* witnesseth with our spirits or understandings that we are truly the children of God.

The scriptures distinguish between the spirit of man proper, which we have found to be his breath, or principle of active life, and the mind or disposition, which is sometimes called the spirit. The mind is declared to be carnal. Rom. 8: 7, "The carnal mind is enmity against God." 6th v. "The thinking (*phronema*) of the flesh is death; but the thinking of the spirit is life and peace. Because the thinking of the flesh is enmity against God." Gal. 5: 19, "The works of the flesh are \* \* \* idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like. All these are the works of the mind or spirit; and all such are declared to be carnal, and therefore the offspring of the faculties that inhere in the flesh. The rational and christian use of the same faculties are declared to be the works of the spirit, and these too belong to the same mind. The organs of sight and hearing are organs by which the mind perceives, and are therefore organs of the mind; the organs of thought, affections and reason are equally organs of the mind. At death, all these organs are destroyed, and therefore the bible and reason declare, that man's love, hatred, envy, memory, ah! and his very thoughts, are then perished. Eccl. 9: 5, "So then, the spirit, or mind, is a part of our *animal nature*, and when uninfluenced by a spirit *EXTRINSIC* and divine, is altogether *FLESHLY*, *COBBRPT*, and material; and consequently *cannot be immortal*!"

[To be continued.]

To our "OFFER" of the Examiner for '50, '51 and '52, for \$2, we will now add, if any choose '49 instead of '51, they may have it. Some have '51 already; they may have '49, '50 and '52 for the \$2 so long as we have any of '49 in sheets.



## BIBLE EXAMINER.

PHILADELPHIA, DECEMBER, 1851.

BIBLE EXAMINER.—The present number completes the sixth volume of the Examiner; and we desire to acknowledge the mercy of God and his good hand that has upheld us. That we have given satisfaction to all we do not suppose. We have endeavored to follow what seemed to us to be the path of duty. We have kept constantly in mind our avowed object in publishing the Examiner, viz: mainly to discuss the subject of *Immortality through Christ alone*, and spread abroad information on that subject. To some it has, doubtless, seemed too exclusively occupied with that topic. Others may have felt dissatisfaction when we have on any occasion departed from that one point. We are always sorry to grieve any, but cannot depart from our conviction of duty to please them. The paper will still be devoted to the object for which it was started, and we shall be glad of the co-operation and aid of all such as are disposed to help us in our course. We shall be sorry to take leave of any of our readers; those, however, who choose to withdraw the sustaining hand, we hope may be better fed and nourished from some other source. If we have wronged any of them, we have not intended it, and hope they will forgive us. We bid them an affectionate *farewell*.

As to the pecuniary affairs of the Examiner, we have been somewhat unfortunate this year, so that we have not realized a dollar for all our *personal* labor and toil in publishing it; still, we are not disheartened. Though our terms are payment in advance, in all cases, we have never refused to send the paper when the subscriber has intimated that he wanted credit for a short time. In most cases of this character, however, we have not been paid to this hour; and about *one-ninth* part of those to whom we send the Examiner have paid us *nothing* this year. In addition to this number, one in twenty-five receive the paper *gratis*. Some who promised to pay us this year made the same promise last, and have now received the paper two years without paying anything, or making even an apology for not doing it. If they *desire* us to *forgive* them the *debt*, we shall do so cheerfully, much as we need the money to sustain ourself and family. We do not preach for a *salary*, and have not asked those among whom we have labored for the last ten years, to do anything for us; and those to whom we have ministered in this city will bear us witness that we have never asked them for a cent, nor said to them, *You do not help enough*; yet the amount received the year past, from this source, has been less than \$200. This statement is not made by way of complaint. "The poor ye have always with you," said the Saviour; and "to the poor the gospel is preached."

We have said thus much simply to induce our friends abroad, and in this city, not only to continue *their* subscription to the Examiner, but to make an immediate effort to increase the number of paying subscribers. We shall adhere to our terms of payment in advance, *in all cases*, except where we send *gratis*; which cannot be to many, unless our paying list is much increased. None need have any apprehensions that the Examiner will not be published through 1852; if life and health are preserved, and the *Lord will*, it will not be discontinued, even if we have to work nights to earn money to pay the printer.

*Shall we have an immediate response?*

"THE OFFER" to send the Examiner for the years '50, '51, and '52, for \$2, cannot apply to persons out of the United States, unless they *add* the amount we are compelled to *pre-pay* for postage.

ANOTHER OFFER.—Any person sending us \$10 by January, shall have *fifteen* copies of the Examiner for 1852, if sent to *one address*. This offer will not apply after January, nor to any out of the United States, unless the postage is added.

"THE SPIRIT WORLD" DISAPPEARED.—We used to see it pretty regularly; but of late it has entirely disappeared. What has become of it? Can our old friend Sunderland tell us? Now, do let us look into it occasionally, even if we do comment a little; we do so only in love. We have continued to send the Examiner directed to the Spirit World, and hope it arrives safe. What say friend Sunderland, does it find an open door, or is there a *shut-door*? We pause and listen! Shall we hear a *rap*?

## THE GOSPEL HOPE.

A SERMON. BY THE EDITOR.

*Preached in Philadelphia, Sunday, Nov. 9th, 1851.*

TEXT.—"Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and reverence."—1 PETER III 15.

The exercise of *hope* is common to man. It is well understood to be made up of *desire* and *expectation*. Neither of these *alone* constitute hope. The first without the last would be *despair*; and the last without the first would be *aversion*. The two must be combined to form hope. The principle is well defined in the minds of men in relation to the ordinary affairs of life; and the man who should tell us he hoped to possess ten thousand dollars on the morrow, we would conclude had not only a desire for that sum, but a *reason* for his expectation; and if he had none, or no good reason for it, we should not hesitate to say he is a fanatic or a fool. Why should we expect less in matters of religion? Men say they hope to be

saved, they hope to go to heaven when they die, &c.; that is, they *desire* and *expect* to go to heaven when they die.

Now, we ask such, *a reason* of the hope that is in them? A good reason must be based first, on a *promise* of God. If there is no promise of such a remove at death, then the expectation of it is without foundation, and the exercise of mind is *presumption*, and not the gospel hope. The promise of such a remove at death must not be a matter of mere *inference* or *conjecture*; it must have a "*Thus saith the Lord.*" God does not leave his creatures to mere conjecture, or the traditions of men, in matters which relate to blessings he designs for them; he gives the most plain and positive assurances or promises. Thus the Apostle speaks, Heb. 6: 17, "Wherein God, willing more abundantly to show unto the *heirs of promise* the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath: that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us."

Here we see, for the existence and stability of hope, God does not leave us without a certain and definite promise. Hence if we have a hope of entering heaven at death, we shall be able to fix on a clear promise of God to that effect; else we have no well-grounded expectation of such an event, and our hope is *baseless*. Where is such a promise? With *meekness* produce it, and let us have the *reason* of such a hope. We do not ask you for the *traditions* of men on the subject, but for a Bible promise. Will you give it? You are bound by the gospel to do it, if you can. Can you produce such a promise? If so, where is it? We wait for an answer. But, alas, we wait in vain! No such promise is found in the Bible. The notion stands in the wisdom and traditions of men, not in the truth and power of God. If we are correct, then the hope of going to heaven at death is not a "good hope;" there is no gospel *reason* for it: it is a *fancy*—yea, it is *presumption*.

The gospel hope, then, is quite another matter from the hope of a large part of the professedly Christian church. The gospel hope is that of *Eternal Life* THROUGH AND BY A *Resurrection from the dead*, and not of an entrance into heaven when we die. For this hope we have clear promises in the Bible.

*What are the promises?* We will give you a few examples. Luke 14: 15. The Saviour had commanded concerning feasts not to call the rich, &c., lest a recompense be made thee; but call the poor, &c., and "thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee; for thou shalt be recompensed [when you die? No, but] AT THE RESURRECTION of the just." Here is a clear promise of the *time* when the reward of well doing is to be bestowed; and it is as wide of the common notion as the resurrection day differs from the day of death. That we do not mistake in

this matter, we turn to John 6th. In this chapter, four times our Lord states the time *when*, and the means *by which*, his followers are to receive their reward; and we ask, if it looks like a promise of going to heaven at death? See verses 39, 40, 44, and 54. "This is the Father's *will*, which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should *lose nothing*, but should *raise it up at the last day.*" Here is no intimation of going to heaven at death; but there is a clear intimation that without a resurrection from the dead, Christ's follower would be *lost*. Yet, as it is the Father's *will* that they shall not be lost, he has given to his Son power and authority to raise them from the dead at a stated point of time, viz: "*at the last day.*" In the next verse he is still more definite as to what he raises them up for. "This is the *will* of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have *everlasting life*: and I will raise *him up* at the last day." Does Jesus say, I will *re unite* his soul and body again in the last day? No. "I will raise *him up.*" What does *him* signify? Is it *his body*? *Him* is, *that man*; not that man's *body* merely. He is raised up, and is at the last day, and for the purpose of giving *him* that which the Father hath *willed*, viz: Everlasting Life.

That our Lord's followers thus understood the matter is evident in the discourse of Martha with him, John 11th: "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died," said Martha, verse 21. "Jesus said unto her, [thy brother has gone to heaven? No, but] thy brother shall *rise again.*" "Martha said unto him, I *know* that he shall rise again in the resurrection AT THE LAST DAY." Such was her faith, and such her *hope*; and such is the *hope* of the gospel. Remember, Jesus had declared "Lazarus is *dead.*" But he does not flatter with a fallacious hope that he had gone to heaven, but he does comfort with the true hope—The Resurrection.

Another case in point is the question of Peter, Matt. 19: 27, "Peter said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; *what shall we have therefore?*" Here is a plain question about the reward to be *hoped* for. Does our Lord say, Ye shall go to heaven when ye die? No such thing. How unlike the theology of this age is his answer. Mark it well. "Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, *in the regeneration* WHEN THE SON OF MAN SHALL SIT IN THE THRONE OF HIS GLOBY, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." From Matt. 25: 31, we learn *when* Christ will sit in the throne of his glory. "When the Son of Man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, THEN shall he sit upon the throne of his glory." It is not till his *return* from heaven; his promise to Peter and the other Apostles was not of heaven in an intermediate period, but looked down to the time of his return *from* heaven.

This point is clear; but we shall have occasion to insist upon it more fully as we proceed.

We have glanced at some of the promises, and see that none of them look like an assurance of a reward prior to the resurrection. We will now examine the *type* and see if that is not as clearly against the idea of any man entering into heaven till Christ returns. To understand this part of the subject the *type* and *antitype* are to be taken in connection. We shall hence notice the law of the holy of holies, and the high priest's entrance therein, with Paul's remarks on the subject in Hebrews.

In Leviticus 16th we have the law referred to, which relates to the offering of the high priest, first for himself and then for the people. In the holy of holies was the mercy seat and the *Shekinah glory*, or symbol of the presence of God. It was there the blood of the slain victim was to be carried by the high priest and sprinkled upon the mercy-seat and before the mercy-seat, to make an atonement. Now mark verse 17, "There shall be *no man* in the tabernacle of the congregation when he [the high priest] goeth in to make an atonement in the holy place, UNTIL HE COME OUT," &c. So sacredly was the holy of holies guarded by the law that even the two hundred and fifty Levites, connected with Korah, claiming that "all the congregation were *holy*," when they approached the door of the tabernacle, to intrude into the holy place, there came out a fire from the Lord and consumed them: see Numbers 16th. The people of Israel generally were prohibited, on pain of death, coming nigh the tabernacle: see Numbers 18: 22. But the main point to which we call attention is the fact, no man was permitted to enter the holy of holies while the high priest was therein, nor *until he came out*. Now if we find this is truly a *type*, we may learn that it is no small sin to attempt to enter heaven before Christ the High Priest comes out. We now turn to Heb. 8: 1, "We have a high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary—*agion*—holy—and of the *true* tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man. For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer. For if he were on earth he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law: who serve unto the *example and shadow* of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for See, saith he, "that thou make all things according to the *PATTERN* showed thee in the mount."

Here we learn the fact that the Mosaic tabernacle was but the *type* of the true; and we may also learn that the Aaronic high priesthood was a *type* of that of Jesus; for, saith Paul, ch. 9: 11-12, "Christ being come a high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with

hands; that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by *his own blood* he entered in ONCE into the HOLY PLACE, having obtained eternal redemption." He adds, verses 23, 24, after having spoken of the Aaronic offerings, "It was therefore necessary that the *patterns* of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the *figures of the true*; but INTO HEAVEN ITSELF, now to appear in the presence of God for us."

Thus have we a clear statement of facts, and find the antitype of the entrance of the Aaronic high priest into the holy of holies. Christ has entered the *true* holy of holies, even heaven itself; and no man is to be permitted to enter there till he comes out: *the attempt of itself is sin*; though it may be it has been the sin of ignorance; of that God only is judge. We fear it is the result, in many, of *wilful* ignorance. Christ has gone into the holy of holies; are we to seek to enter there? If we do, it is at our peril. What shall we do? Do as did the people of Israel when their high priest was in the holy place. They waited without, watching and praying till he *came out*. Thus Paul, in closing Heb. 9th, says—"Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many—and unto them that *look* for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation."

This is a clear reference to the work of the high priest under the law. With the blood of the offering for sin he went into the holy place, and sprinkled it upon and before the mercy-seat, while the people prayed, confessed their sins, and waited, looking for the high priest to come out. So Christ has gone into the true holy place, even heaven itself, and there appears in the presence of God with his own blood; and to those who acknowledge him as their high priest, confess their sins, watch and pray, and *look* for him to come out, he will appear in due time, *from heaven*, for their salvation.

How blasphemous and presumptuous to attempt to enter the holy place, *heaven*, while our High Priest is there. May Christian men be made aware of such presumption, and cease to talk and act in such an unscriptural manner. They may flatter themselves that it is very innocent to teach and talk about going to heaven at death; yet we venture the affirmation, that it is not only sinful to do so, but tends to subvert the gospel hope, by substituting another and entirely different hope; and hence is "another gospel" than that which Christ and his Apostles preached. This we are aware is a heavy charge; yet we believe we have fully sustained it, but shall now proceed to confirm and strengthen it.

Let us look at Paul's language relating to the gospel hope. Acts 23: 6, "Of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question." Then surely

he preached the resurrection of the dead as the gospel hope; unless he was called in question for something he did not preach. But let us see, Acts 26: 6-8, he says, "Now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our Fathers: unto which our twelve tribes, instantly serving, day and night, hope to come. For which *hope's sake*, King Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should *raise the dead*?" Here again is seen the burden and hope of Apostolic preaching. It is a future life, by a resurrection from the dead. He adds, verses 22 and 23, "Having obtained help of God, I continue unto this day *witnessing* to both small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: that Christ should suffer, and that he should be *the first* that should *rise from the dead*," &c. Not only is it the Apostolic burden and hope, the resurrection, but he affirms the same things were the theme of the Prophets and Moses: *the hope is one*. Not an intimation thus far of the notion of entering the holy of holies—heaven—at death, or at all: it is the hope of the resurrection. He has shown us *that* was "the hope of Israel," as well as the hope of the gospel; and chap. 28: 20, in his bondage at Rome, he saith, "For the hope of Israel I am bound with this chain."

But we will now see whether Paul does not with equal clearness state the hope of the gospel in his Epistles. 1 Corth. 15: 12-19, "Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen \* \* \* then is your faith vain \* \* \* then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are *perished*," i. e., they are lost out of being—there is *no hope* for them; for, "If in this life only we have *hope* in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." That the Apostle has reference to the hope of a future life by a resurrection is clear from what he saith at verse 32, "If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, [exposing my life] what advantageth it me *if the dead rise not*?" Plainly affirming he had no hope of going to heaven at death, and that he had acted a foolish part in hazarding his life at Ephesus, if there is no resurrection. Such a course would be folly indeed; rather "Let us eat and drink," if there is no resurrection, "for to-morrow we die," and there is no hope beyond that. Such is the Apostle's conclusion if there is to be no resurrection of the dead. But this reasoning is both absurd and false, if he could or would go to heaven at death.

But again, Paul saith, Rom. 8: 23, after speaking of the groaning creation, "And not only it, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting

[to go to heaven at death? No, but] for the adoption, to wit, *THE REDEMPTION OF OUR BODY*:" not its dissolution by death. He adds, "For we are saved by *hope*; but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." And what does the Apostle affirm he and the Christians of his time were "*waiting for*?" Answer, "The redemption of our body," that is, for the coming of Christ *from heaven and the resurrection*. This will be clearly seen by comparing what he saith here with Phil. 3: 20, 21, "Our conversation is in heaven; *from whence* also we *look* for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall *change our vile body*, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body," &c. Here is no ground for mistake or doubt. Paul was not expecting to go to heaven at death, nor at all; but he was looking for Christ to come *from heaven*—not when his vile body should go to corruption, but when the time should arrive for it to be fashioned like to Christ's glorious body, which is not till the resurrection. This is further confirmed by his language, in the same chapter, where he tells us how he labored and suffered, "If by any means I might *attain unto the resurrection of the dead*:" verse 11. How unlike is all this to the common idea of an entrance into heaven at death. The hope of Paul is thus distinctly stated; and it is the *gospel hope*, and demonstrates that modern christians are as ignorant of what that hope is as the pagans themselves. In fact, the theology of these days has substituted an *immortal soul* for or instead of Christ; and hence a hope of going to heaven at death instead of a future life by a resurrection from the dead, at the last day, as Christ has promised. A fatal mistake this, by which Christ is robbed and dishonored; while DEATH is crowned '*Prince of Peace*,' and as the *door* into heaven! Christ, however, declares himself to be *THE DOOR*, and affirms that those who climb up any other way are thieves and robbers. He is "the resurrection and the life;" without him, and without that resurrection which he has promised at the last day, there is no *gospel hope* of a future life or immortality. Let men beware how they attempt to approach the holy place into which Jesus our High Priest has entered. That is no part of the work of a Christian even to attempt an entrance into heaven at death, or any other period. Paul states again, 1 Thess. 1: 9, 10, what the work is that we have to do: "For they themselves show what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols *to serve the living and true God*; and to *wait for his Son from heaven*, whom he raised from the dead," &c. Here the work of a Christian is distinctly stated: and it is no part of his business to be looking, expecting, or *hoping* to go to heaven at death. Let this be remembered.

To the Colossians Paul saith, "When Christ, who

is our life, *shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory:*" not at death; but when Christ returns "*from heaven;*" it is then, and not till then, that he will appear *in glory.*

Once more. Paul, in writing to Titus, states clearly what is the *gospel hope*, and what is the work and duty of Christians in relation to it. Titus 2: 11, 13. Among the things which the grace of God teacheth is, "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts"—to "live soberly \* \* \* in this present world"—*aioni*, age, or time—"looking for that *blessed hope*, and"—*kai*, even—"the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Here we see what the *gospel hope* is. It is the return of Christ in his glory, at which time he will raise the saints who are dead and change the living ones, as Paul clearly states, 1 Thess. 4: 16, "For the Lord *himself* shall *descend from heaven* with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, with the trump of God: and the *dead in Christ shall rise first,*" &c.; also, 1 Corth. 15: 51, "We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment \* \* \* at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed," &c.

Thus Paul's testimony is uniform. It is the hope of eternal life, by a resurrection from the dead, at the return of our Lord Jesus Christ in his glory. If no resurrection, *no hope*: if no return of Christ in glory, *no resurrection*; then, all who have died are perished out of being, and will live no more forever. In all this there is nothing to sustain the fable of going to heaven at death. No—men must wait till our High Priest *comes out* of the holy place where he has entered; even out of heaven itself. If he never comes out, our hope is vain, and we perish.

We will now see if other Apostles are in agreement with Paul on this subject. 1 Peter 1: 3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a *lively hope,*" or, *a hope of life*, an immortal life—"by THE RESURRECTION of Jesus Christ from the dead." Here we see the resurrection and the life subsequent to it; and dependent upon it, is the *gospel hope*. Following that, is "An inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you"—in the hands of him whom God raised up from the dead, and who, as our High Priest, has entered heaven, or the holy place. In his hands is the inheritance reserved, "ready to be revealed in the last time;" in the hope of which Peter saith, "Ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness \* \* \* that the trial of your faith \* \* \* might be found unto praise, and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:" i. e., when he shall come out of the holy place, or from heaven. Peter adds, v. 13, "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace"—

*favor*—"that is to be brought unto you at" [*death?* No, but at] "*the revelation* of Jesus Christ." Thus we see to what the *gospel hope* has reference, and when it is to be realized: not at death, but at the return of Christ from heaven. So again Peter expresses this matter clearly, in Acts 3: 20, where he saith, God "shall send Jesus Christ \* \* \* whom the heavens must receive, [or retain] until the times of restitution of all things which God hath spoken," &c. Thus, turn which way we will, the great truth, that the *gospel hope* is "*the return of Christ from heaven and the resurrection of the dead,*" meets us in full view. Alas, that men should turn off their eyes from it to deify death, and steal a march to heaven by means of the King of Terrors!

Let us turn to one more witness on this subject. 1 John 3: 2, 3, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when" [we die? No, but when] "*he shall appear,* we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." Surely, we shall not be like him at death; for he has his resurrection and glorious *body*. Death, then, is not the point of time John speaks of. No—it is when he shall appear—when he comes out of the holy of holies, "*from heaven:*" that is the *gospel hope*; and John adds, "Every man that hath THIS HOPE in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure;" that is the effect of this hope; its tendency is to promote holiness. Such is the character and influence of the hope of the gospel. Let all remember this truth, and lay it to heart. Men professing the hope of the gospel, who are not made Christlike by it, have reason to call in question the reality of their hope. If we hold the hope, we have been speaking of in *theory*, the greater will be our guilt if we do not let it have its *practical* result on our hearts and lives. Again, we repeat the apostolic affirmation—"Every man that hath *this* hope in him purifieth himself EVEN as he"—Christ—"is pure." No other standard will answer. How much reason have we to bewail our past short-comings. Let us haste to God, through our High Priest, while he is yet in the holy of holies, for that mercy which shall blot out our past sins, and enable us for time to come to walk as Christ also walked: that when he shall appear—come out of the holy place—we may meet him with joy, and receive the crown of life.

STORRS' MISCELLANY.—We have added to this work "*The True Source of Life,*" and shall hereafter sell it at 50 cents; which is as low as it can be afforded. It now contains over 280 pages neatly bound in muslin. The statement of its number of pages in the last Examiner, was an error.

OUR SUBSCRIBERS, who have paid for the Examiner the year now closed, and have failed to receive any number, if they will inform us free of expense, we will forward the missing ones without charge.

FROM H. L. HASTINGS.

*Plymouth, Mass.*

BR. STORRS:—We have got the stirring stick into this old stagnant pool. We have large congregations. Sundays a crowd, and Sunday nights a perfect *jam* long before meeting time. Then a great many can't get in the house. Ministers preach on the State of the Dead—Church-members cry Infidelity! Heresy! &c., &c. God speed the right! Amen! Some have been baptised and some converted, &c.

I almost envied you your visit to Honeoye. "O! I long to be *there*." That is *about* the best spot I ever saw on this old world.

—o—  
"ASBESTOS"—UNQUENCHABLE.

MATT. III. 12.—"But he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

This is spoken of Christ by John the Baptist. By referring to the Saviour's discourse, recorded in Mark ix., we learn that it is in hell, or *Gehenna*, that wicked men were to be cast, "where their worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched." This is one of the most fearful denunciations recorded in the book of God. The unbelievers shall be consumed, burnt up in *Gehenna*, by unquenchable fire. It has been argued, or rather inferred, from this passage, that the *torment* of the wicked must necessarily be eternal in its duration. To this it may be replied that instances may be produced, as Ezek. 20: 47, where the expression indicates not that the things to be destroyed shall be forever preserved, but that nothing would deliver from the fierceness of the flame, and consequently everything submitted to its action would be consumed.

That this is the idea conveyed by the phrase "unquenchable fire," I will now proceed to demonstrate. The Greek words found in Matt. 3: 12, rendered "unquenchable fire," are *puri asbesto*.

Eusebus, who is supposed to have been born at Cesaræa, A. D. 267, and of which city he became Bishop in 315, in his history of the Christian Church, which has gained for him the title of the Father of Ecclesiastical History, gives an account of the martyrdom of such of the saints as had suffered death for the gospel's sake. In his history, book vi., ch. 41, he gives an account of those who were martyred at Alexandria. He speaks of them 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 Eunus, and the aged Julian himself, having confessed the Lord, was carried on camels throughout 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 innum-

able suffering from the scourges and scrapers, were also destroyed in an *immense fire*," (*puri asbesto*.)

Here, then, we have the same phrase that is used in the bible, used by a learned and eloquent Christian Bishop only about three hundred years after Christ; and no reader can be at loss to understand its import in the connection. No one can fail to see that the expression "unquenchable fire" affords no support to the common theory of eternal torment—but instead of that it is used to denote a fire that utterly consumes whatever is submitted to its action. If the expression *puri asbesto* proves that the wicked will be tormented eternally, then Eusebus taught that the martyrs had been tormented eternally. If Eusebus taught that the martyrs were burned to ashes, then John the Baptist and Jesus Christ declared that the wicked men should be thus burned in Ge-en-na. H. L. H.

—o—  
"THE MAN OF SIN."

BR. STORRS:—I have been perusing your excellent paper with much profit, and knowing that to err is common with all men, therefore I trust you will not be offended with me if I should differ with you on some points. I have reference to an article written by yourself, in vol. 6, page 57, of the Examiner, headed "Mysterious Rappings"—"The Man of Sin," or 2 Thess. 2: 1 to 12 considered. This subject is one of vast importance—therefore a right understanding of it is very essential. I am persuaded that the man of sin here spoken of is not the devil, but is the Papacy. You object to its being the Papacy because you think it does not answer the description given by Paul where he said, "He (the man of sin) would exalt himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped. I would ask, did he not go beyond, or exalt his power or himself above what God or the Virgin Mary, or any other being ever did, when he declared he had power to forgive sins in advance, (that is, before committed,) and that, too, for gold and silver? When God has declared that without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins; and this remission comes only through faith in his (Christ's) name. I think he has by far outstripped all that is called God, or that is worshipped; and therefore fills perfectly the description given by Paul; and Daniel's description, I think, agrees with Paul's, as given in the 7th chapter, where he speaks of the little horn that should speak great words against the Most High, (or contrary to the teaching of the Most High,) and I suppose no one doubts that the little horn represents the Papacy. Mark—Paul said this man of sin was to *consume*, and finally be destroyed. Daniel said they could take away his dominion, to *consume* and finally destroy it, showing the consuming process in both cases.

Another objection, you say, is, that the revelation of the man of sin is to be a sure sign that the day of

the Lord was impending, or had come. I think it is one of the signs given, but not the *last* one, or the one that was immediately to go before Christ's coming. Your mistake here arises from your not observing the difference between the man of sin and the working of Satan, which are two distinct powers, or manifestations. You say the coming of the man of sin is after the working of Satan. This is a great mistake, I think. Look again at the 8th and 9th verses in connection; and remember that it would be folly to talk of the coming of Satan, for he has not left his kingdom, or gone from this ungodly world since he told the Lord he was going to and fro in the earth, (mark that,) and walking up and down in it. Job 1: 7. I have nowhere seen any account of his going away, or any evidence from the actions of mankind that he was gone; therefore I do not look for his coming, for that would imply that he had left or gone away. But Christ is gone, and is coming again, (praise the Lord,) and his coming is to be after the working of Satan; and Paul said he (Christ) should destroy the man of sin by the brightness of his coming, whose coming (referring back to what he had just said of Christ's coming,) is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved. And for this cause, God shall send them strong delusions, that they should believe a lie, that they might be damned who had pleasure in unrighteousness. We need not a philosopher to point us to this working of Satan; for all that have been acquainted with the Rapping Spirits, have seen this power or working of Satan, whether they believe it or not. May the Lord help his dear children to arouse themselves and see to it; that the devil does not deceive them by his devices; but let us watch and be sober, knowing that our adversary the devil goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour, whom resist steadfast unto the end. Thus we see we are brought to the last of a series of events that is to transpire before Christ comes. May God keep us by his power safe from all harm in my desire and prayer. Now I have given you my views on this all-important subject. Pardon me if I have erred in judgment, for it is the truth I seek above all else. **URIAL FINN.**

*Geneva, N. Y., Nov., 1851.*

#### GOD'S HOUSE OF WORSHIP.

The worship of God in his house has constituted a part of what he has required of mankind in all ages. This is one of the ends for which the Sabbath was instituted. We are not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is. But the state of mind which we are to possess in the house of religious worship is more especially the point now before us.

It is said of Whitfield, that on one occasion, when he was about to preach, he went into his closet for

prayer. The congregation assembled, and waited till they became impatient, and sent a messenger after him. He went in a very still manner to the study door, and heard Whitfield's voice in prayer in nearly the following language:

O Lord, grant me more of thy Holy Spirit. I cannot preach, blessed God, without more of thy Spirit. The messenger interrupted him in his devotions, but was told by Mr. Whitfield that he could not go without more of God in his soul. He returned to the congregation, saying that Mr. Whitfield would be there soon. Presently Whitfield entered the door with his face shining as did Moses' when he came down from the Mount. And oh, with what power he preached! The whole house was shaken by God's almighty power. And this I apprehend was the great secret of his success in the ministry—God was with him.

Now, if every minister and all the people were to resort to the house of God from earnest, humble, closet devotions, what displays of God's grace would be witnessed in his temple every time they might meet.

But is it not true with reference to some, both saints and sinners, that they do not habitually attend religious worship in God's house. Sometimes a little cold or heat, or drowsiness, or rain, will keep people away from the house of God. If these things were to keep them from their ordinary business on a week day, then there would be some manner of excuse for them, but as they do not, no excuse of this kind can be offered: Some likewise are in the habit of entering God's house after the service has commenced, a custom by no means justifiable, and what is the consequence? Why, such lose, perhaps, the most important part of the public worship of God, viz: the reading the Scriptures, which are able to make us wise unto eternal life.

But this is not all. They disturb the minister and the congregation: for it is seldom that a man enters God's house of worship after the services have commenced, without his being particularly noticed by most of the people present, and some must turn their bodies half around, or at least their heads, to gratify their curiosity.

But I have reference not merely to the Sabbath and meetings for preaching, but to prayer and other meetings during the week. Many think it too much of a task to attend religious meetings, except on the Sabbath, and not even then unless there is to be good preaching.

The prayer meeting properly sustained is the life of Christian society. And yet how many say, when a meeting of this kind is appointed, it is nothing but a prayer meeting—that is all. But that is enough. And those who have not a relish for the prayer and conference meetings, are greatly deficient in vital piety, and discourage their minister and brethren who habitually attend these meetings. The Jews evidently spent about half their time in external religious devotions. And, though they were exceedingly deficient in spirituality, yet no nation ever prospered more, in a pecuniary sense, than did the Jews. The monthly covenant meeting, the preparatory lecture, the class meeting, and meetings for fasting and prayer, occasionally, are all highly important and clearly enjoined upon us by our covenant vows, for many of us have pledged ourselves to attend both the occasional and stated meetings of the different churches and societies to which we belong. Even the impenitent should not excuse themselves from attending those meetings under ordinary circumstances. Because religion should be attended to above all else, for it is infinitely more important for all.

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