



## DESTINY OF THE WICKED A.S. Copley

"And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" - Revelation 20:15.

Some saints are imbibing the Christ-defying error of the so-called "restoration of all things" - Acts 3:21 R.V. We have had a number of inquiries on this subject, wondering if we accept it. By no means. Scripture as well as reason are squarely against it. How sad it is that people build theories upon one or a few citations, because they do not understand them or by wresting them out of their logical setting. This is often done against the whole tenor of Scripture. A friend writes to us, asking an explanation of several verses which are adduced to prove that all men will be saved. Indeed, only by reading into the text what is not there can this false teaching be found in the verses cited.

First. Ephesians 1:10 - "That in the dispensation of the fulness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in Heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him." Colossians 1:16 shows clearly that the "all things" means "thrones," "dominions," "principalities," and "powers." In "the fulness of times," at the beginning of the Millennium, there will be "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness" - II Peter 3:13. All things will then be summed up under one Head, Christ. Note, also, that the apostle here writes of the "all things IN Christ." Will the "outer darkness" and the "everlasting fire" and the "everlasting punishment" of Matthew 25:30, 41, 46 be "IN Christ"? By no means. Most surely they will not be apart of "the new heavens and the new earth" - Isaiah 66:22. If men blaspheme God and reject Jesus Christ now, what hope can there be of them yielding to Him then? No hope. If men deny the Deity of Jesus Christ, make common His conception and birth, hoot at a blood salvation, and refuse the new birth now; what will their attitude be toward Him when they are with the devil in "the lake of fire," where there will be no saints to pray and no Holy Spirit to soften and save? Oh, how much easier to believe plainly stated facts, than devil-honoring theories.

Second. Romans 5:19 Revised Version - "For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One shall the many be made righteous." Romans 5:15-19 forms a grand fundamental contrast. The provision of the Cross is set over against the result of the fall in Adam. Verse seventeen alone speaks of experience, saying, "Much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign." That implies that some will not receive. Note verse eighteen, in which "all men" is mentioned twice. "All men" are condemned in the first Adam, and "all men" may be justified in the last Adam providing they believe on Jesus Christ. What then about the infidel? What about the scoffer who dies blaspheming the holy Name of Jesus? What about the monkey descendants? From the time of Abel to the dying thief on the cross, salvation was absolutely by faith in the death and resurrection of Another - even Jesus Christ. They looked forward to the One promised. All the New Testament workers and writers taught the same Christ-honoring doctrine.

"By grace are ye saved" - not universal grace against a man's will, but "through faith."  
"With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made



unto salvation" - Romans 10:10.

Third. Romans 2:6-10. This is equally untenable. Here the apostle expresses a principle in Divine government, as verse six shows - "Who (God) will render to every man according to his deeds." This statement alone gives the theory an irrecoverable blow; for some men' s deeds are nothing but evil. In these verses, eternal life is promised to one class of doers, and tribulation and anguish to another class. Where, in all God' s Word, is there a reversal of this principle? God' s righteous character and His just government demand the reward of the one and the punishment of the other. He gave Israel the chance to earn eternal life "by patient continuance in well doing" and by seeking "for glory and honor and immortality." But who of them did it? Not one, though they were surrounded with an environment of grace. But for the intervention of a mediator, Jehovah would have slain them all - Exodus 32:32, 10. The same is true of the Gentiles. "For as many as have sinned without law" ("all have sinned" - Romans 3:23) "shall also perish without law" - Romans 2:12.

Romans 3:23 declares that "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Not one has ever done well, nor attained the honor and glory of God. Therefore, God has through grace provided salvation for all those who would believe, because Jesus Christ tasted "death for every man" - Hebrews 2:9. All have been redeemed. All who believe shall be saved. "He that believeth not shall be damned" - Mark 16:16. Have these would-be modern exegetes no regard for Jesus' words to the Pharisees? "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" - Matthew 23:33. They know full well that the word translated "hell" is not "hades" but "geennes," the same as in James 3:6 - "The tongue ... is set on fire of hell" (geennes). No one has ever continued "in well doing" in the natural - Romans 2:7-10. Peter exclaimed, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" - Acts 4:12. Now if men wilfully and persistently deny, decry, reject, defame, and blaspheme the worthy Name of Jesus, and die in that state of mind; how can anyone teach that they shall be saved some time? Consider the following unchangeable words in Hebrews 10:26-29 - "For if we sin wilfully (reject the Sacrifice, Christ) after that we have received the knowledge of the Truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, and unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" That is none other than the unpardonable sin, or the sin against the Holy Spirit who is indeed "the Spirit of grace."

The apostle asks, "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" - Hebrews 2:3. Then, in the above Scripture, he declares positively that there is no escape for those who not only neglect but who defiantly despise the only saving Sacrifice - even the death of God' s holy Son.

Plainly, their only hope is judgment: fearful, fiery, devouring indignation - sore punishment, Divine vengeance. For "it is A FEARFUL THING to fall into the hands of the living God" - Hebrews 10:31. How terrible for Christian teachers to blind men with a



false hope, that some day they will be forgiven of their hatred and unbelief.

### IRRECOVERABLE SEPARATION

"Then shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire" - Revelation 20:15.

The endless separation of the wicked from God is as clear as anything in the Bible. What is the "fire everlasting" and the "punishment everlasting" of Matthew twenty-five, but "the lake of fire" of Revelation twenty? What place but that was "prepared for the devil and his angels"? Therein he shall be cast, "and they shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever"; or, literally, "unto the ages of the ages" - Revelation 20:10 Revised Version. Now note that the fire was not prepared for men, but for Satan; yet all who reject Christ and follow Satan must be cast therein, for there is no other place for them. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" - Mark 16:16. To say that the lake of fire is the valley of Hinnom, and that the punishment of sinners is a physical destruction only, is too silly to deserve a rebuttal. Will the devil, who is a spirit without a physical body, be burned to ashes in the valley of Hinnom? Will it require ages into ages to consume the physical bodies of the anti-Christ and the false prophet? Any ten-year-old child can answer these questions.

If there were no other verse of Scripture about the destiny of the wicked, Revelation 21:8 ought to shut every critic's mouth. Here, eight classes of sinners are named, compassing all the wicked - "the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars." Their destiny is unanswerably clear and certain - they "shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." Unscrupulous fellows attempt to prove their point by endeavoring to show that the words "everlasting" and "eternal" do not mean eternal. They insist that the Greek lexicon defines it as "a space, or period of time, an age"; and finally as "an infinitely long period, even eternity." "Aionias," the adjective, means "lasting, eternal."

Now let us apply man's logic to the saints and Heaven and God: First. The phrase "for ever" (eis aion, Greek; literally, into the age) occurs twenty-four times in the New Testament. In every case it means "without an end." For example: "He (Jesus) shall reign over the house of Jacob FOR EVER" - Luke 1:33. "If any man eat of this bread, he shall live FOR EVER" - John 6:51.

"He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you FOR EVER" - John 14:16. "Thou art a Priest FOR EVER after the order of Melchisedec" - Hebrews 5:6. If "for ever" with reference to the punishment of the wicked does not mean "for ever," what warrant have we that it will mean "for ever" with reference to Christ's reign and our future life and the Presence of the Holy Spirit and the promised priesthood? Doubts might spring up at any time now, that the promised good things may end some time. Even after we are in Heaven two thousand years, a radical change might come. What a horrible shaky foundation man's views of Scripture give us. By trying to give unbelievers a hope, they undermine the bright hope of real believers; for, if "for ever" does not mean "for



ever," there is nothing certain.

Second. The phrase "for ever and ever" (eis tous aionas ton aionon, Greek; literally, into the ages of the ages) occurs twenty-one times in the New Testament. Two of these refer to the punishment of the wicked - "Her smoke rose up FOR EVER AND EVER" - Rev. 19:3; 20:10. One refers to the heavenly saints - "They shall reign FOR EVER AND EVER" - Rev. 22:5. The other eighteen refer to Deity - His honor, or reign, or duration. Examples: "To Him be glory and dominion FOR EVER AND EVER" - Rev. 11:15. "And when those beasts give glory and honour and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth FOR EVER AND EVER, the four and twenty elders fall down before Him that sat on the throne, and worship Him that liveth FOR EVER AND EVER, and cast their crowns before the throne" - Rev. 4:9, 10. Now, if FOR EVER AND EVER in relation to the harlot and all the wicked does not mean what it says, have we any ground to hope that it means FOR EVER AND EVER in relation to Jehovah and His people? How do we know but that His dominion may have an end?

If Divine justice is as flexible and unreliable as some men claim, how do we know but that He may yet take pity on the devil after several thousand years in the lake of fire and set him up in business again in the heavens; and even vacate His own throne in favor of poor suffering Satan? What proof have we that God Himself will not cease to exist? Such is the inevitable logic of a false pity for the wicked. It stamps the justice of God as flabby, the righteousness of God as wavering, the faithfulness of God as unreliable, and His promises uncertain. It is the devil's doctrine to keep believers from living for God and His glory. That Tom Payne and Voltaire and Robert Ingersoll, hot infidels to their last breath, should have a place with dear Peter and Paul who believed with all the heart on Jesus Christ and hazarded their lives for the Truth, is insanity.

Third. The Greek word "aionios" occurs about sixty-five times in the New Testament. It is translated "everlasting" twenty-five times, and "eternal" forty times. All of these but six refer to the everlastingness of God, or the life we receive from Him through faith in Jesus. We quote two verses: "That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have ETERNAL life" - John 3:15. "The commandment of the EVERLASTING God" - Romans 16:26. The exceptions are Mark 3:29 - "ETERNAL damnation"; Jude 7 - "ETERNAL fire"; Matthew 18:8 and 25:41 - "EVERLASTING fire"; Matthew 25:46 - "EVERLASTING punishment"; and II Thess. 1:9 - "EVERLASTING destruction." All these references mean a continuation without an ending. If that be true, and true it is, then how dare any man teach that in the other six places the same word means a limited period or a period which has an end? If God is everlasting, or eternal, and through faith in Him we obtain a life that is eternal; how can it be that the punishment and fire of the wicked are not eternal? If there is a chance for the impenitent to obtain salvation after death; is there not also a chance that God may cease to exist or, at least, that we might lose our eternal life after we have been in glory for five thousand years? If INTO THE AGES OF THE AGES does not mean FOR EVER AND EVER in the six important citations, what guarantee have we that it means FOR EVER AND EVER in the other five dozen references?

We have made no reference to the Old Testament, where the word "FOR EVER" (olam, Hebrew) and the word "EVERLASTING" occur over three hundred times. There, as in



the New Testament, they mean what they say. We cannot refrain from citing three verses: God' s word to Abraham - "For all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed FOR EVER" - Genesis 13:15. David said, "He hath made with me an EVERLASTING covenant, ordered in all things, and sure" - II Samuel 23:5. Be it remembered that the same identical Hebrew word "olam" is rendered EVERLASTING in Psalm 90:2 - "From EVERLASTING TO EVERLASTING, Thou art God."

Finally, we close this digest, with the Apostle Paul' s clinching and invincible declaration. "It is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation (oppression) to them that trouble (oppress) you; and to you who are troubled (oppressed) rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with His mighty angels (overcoming saints), in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that KNOW NOT God, and that OBEY NOT the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." Now before the critic exclaims, "That is a physical chastisement," note the following plain verse - "Who shall be punished (suffer) with EVERLASTING destruction from the Presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power" - II Thess. 1:6-9. Mark the language. The reward of the wicked is "destruction" and that "from the Presence of the Lord," and that destruction into outer darkness is "EVERLASTING" or "ETERNAL." There is no getting into God' s Presence again, after that destruction.

Do you want yet stronger statements from Paul? Hear him in II Thess. 2:8-12. "Then shall that Wicked (the lawless one) be revealed ... 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 delusion, that they should believe a lie (the lie; namely, that the anti-Christ is the Christ): that they ALL (not the beast and false prophet only) might be damned who believed not the Truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." Oh, believe and be saved.

It is wonderful how the Holy Spirit anticipates error. False prophets claim that the wicked dead will have a chance to be saved after death. What chance is intimated here? - pray tell. "The book of life" is opened in full view. Search is made in that infallible record by the just Judge for the names of the wicked; but not one is found there. If they were written in "the book of life," they would not be wicked; and they would not remain in the graves to be raised at the end of the Millennium. They will not be judged out of "the book of life," but out of the things recorded in "the books." "The dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works ... and they were judged EVERY MAN according to their works" - Rev. 20:15. The past perfect tense of the participle "written" (gegrammenos, Greek) proves positively that all names in the book of life will be recorded long before that final judgment day. Indeed, note when they were written - "Whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world" - Rev. 17:8. "The book of life" will then be opened, to prove finally and forever the justice of God in consigning the wicked dead to their deserved eternal abode.

No marvel at our Lord' s last words of destiny - "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still" - Rev. 22:11. Men make their destiny by their own attitude to Jesus Christ. Those who believe on Him obtain eternal life and they shall never perish; and they who believe not shall suffer eternal death. God' s unflinching



fiat makes this final solemn announcement. Reader, what have you done with Jesus who is called the Christ?