

SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY

HARMARTIOLOGY

DR. E. C. BRAGG

HAMARTIOLOGY

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HAMARTIOLOGY

The doctrine of Hamartiology is the doctrine of sin. It is interested in the questions of the nature, extent, pollution, and guilt of sin, taking up the subject from the Scriptural portrayal of sin as "a reproach to any people." It is to obtain a clear light upon sin as a hateful thing to God and a shameful thing to man. It is an addition to God's original creation, outside the working of God, originating in the free wills of man opposed to God.

I. The State and Nature of Sin

A. The Origin of Sin

1. The First Sin

No one can read the Genesis account of the creation of the world and man without early seeing that sin was here already when man appeared on the scene. Though not in man himself, it was here to tempt Eve and involve Adam in terrible ruins. A brief study of Ezekiel 28:12-19 and Isaiah 14: 12-17, though not belonging to the scope of this study but to Angelology, still gives us an inspired picture of the entrance of sin into the angelical realm long before the creation of man. The mystery of how angelical holy creatures, like Lucifer and his angels, could sin is nowhere solved in the Bible, the what, the how, and the when are all given briefly, but not the why, nor the inner nature of their transgression. The real explanation is withheld probably because of our present ignorance.

Briefly from the Scriptures we may deduce the story of the origin of sin as it first entered the angelical realm. In God's original creation in Genesis 1:1, when all the earth was the paradise of God, Satan was made lord of this part of God's creation, as one of the highest, if not the very highest, of all God's created beings. The creation, at least this part of it, was his kingdom for which he was accountable to God, and still is. Under him was a vast array of angels and maybe other creatures. His was a glorious kingdom, until ambition and pride exalted his heart, causing him to say, "I will ascend into heaven; I will exalt my throne above the stars of God (other rulers), etc.; I will be like the most High," This was the day that iniquity was found in him" and he was "cast out as profane," thus sin was born in the heart of Lucifer, the son of the morning, exalted ruler of the original paradise of God. Revelation seems to intimate that he drew a third part of the stars of heaven with him when he fell, and plunged the original creation into the chaos of Genesis 1:2.

2. Sin in Man

This was the state of things in the new creation of God in Genesis 1. Sin did not originate in man, but was here already in the person of Satan and his kingdom to be presented in the same guise to man as soon as God placed him

on probation. The mystery of how a holy man like Adam could sin is still before us shrouded in much the same mystery as the how of Lucifer's fall.

The fact of the presence of sin is everywhere apparent and meets us on every page of the Bible. There are two facts: first, that man was created good, holy, and righteous, without any bend in his make-up toward evil; the second fact, there came a change in him. He is not now as he came from the hand of the great Creator. The fact of the fall is very apparent, but theologians find it hard to affix the blame. The greater portion of Catholic theologians follow the Pelagian thought. They would make the first man and all babies moral blanks, without either evil or righteous tendencies. This they do to deny the doctrine of original sin or depravity. Adam, they say, was in a state of moral equilibrium, without either good or bad tendencies, created a moral blank; and he only obtained tendencies either toward righteousness or evil as he acted, so he was created a moral blank, without positive holy tendencies or evil, with only a push needed to determine which one; and, in Adam's case, the devil pushed harder than God. How could the dictum of God, "very good," however, be pronounced upon a moral blank like that? How could a man with the moral propensities to enjoy and obey God, be a moral blank or choose at all? Adam was created a mature man with complete knowledge, as proven from the Genesis account. How can you have a mature man, who must make mature mind, yet with a blank conscience and moral nature? To withhold from Adam the elements needed to make a right choice and yet to demand of him the right choice is like demanding a baby to choose between putting its hand on the hot stove or not to, when it has nothing in its experience with which to determine the right from the wrong action. The odium of injustice is thrown over upon God, as it is in the class of theologians who made no apologies for blaming God for man's sin. They follow a Calvinistic theology to its ultimate conclusion and trace man's fall to a pre-existent decree of God. They can never understand how God could foreknow if He hadn't decreed it. If He decreed it, then necessity is upon man to fall; there could be no other choice. They grant that God gave unto Adam all the requirements of holiness of nature and right knowledge, but by predetermined decree refused him the freedom to choose anything else but to sin. This is the supralapsarianism of all the early Calvinists, Calvin included.

I cannot, for the life of me, see where there is anything that can be called sin if it is decreed of God. If it originates in God, it cannot be sin. Neither can there be any blame attached to Adam if necessity was upon him and he had no other choice. How can there be responsibility where there is no choice? In what sense can Adam's sin be a result of his own choice, therefore, blameworthy as all sin is, if God made him sin? How can he even choose if God made him make the wrong choice? Likewise, if God had instilled within man some fixed propensity for evil, how could man be blamed if he acted only according to the God--given laws of his nature? We do not spank a baby for crying if it sits on a pin, or is hungry or sleepy; there is no blameworthiness because it is merely being true to its own nature. How can theologians become so attached to their man-made systems of theology of

predestination and unconditional election as to claim that God would or could create man with some quality of nature in him with an affinity for sin, which made it imperative or impossible not to sin, and then punish him for doing it? God cannot be the author of sin.

Edwards, bound up to his Calvinistic theories, tries to get around throwing the responsibility upon God by the illustration that the sun doesn't make cold or darkness when they follow infallibly the withdrawing of its beams. God, therefore, is not responsible when He decreed to withdraw His grace. He made man, however, to live in His grace, needing His grace to keep His commandments, why or how, then, could He withdraw it without being responsible? My baby would fall off the bed if I withheld my hand. Am I responsible for his fall if I withdraw my hand? Sin is the acting of a free being in a way he was not made to act; if he were made by God to act that way, it wouldn't be sin at all,

The true origin of sin is to be found in the true freedom of man's will. Such was the freedom of will which God gave to Adam that he could and did act against his own pure holy nature. You cannot locate the origin of sin anywhere else. Man, out of a pure nature, with only holy propensities, and them by nature, acted wrongly, and the effect of that act was sin, you cannot trace the fall of the sin of Adam back any further than the wrong choice of his free will. To go further back and trace it to a created wrong impulse or even to a decree of God is to make God the creator and author of evil.

B. Some Theories of Sin

1. Many of the ancients believed that sin was sensuousness, that sin originated only in the body, and that all temptation and evil desire came from the body and it only could sin. Plato so taught. The suggested cure was to degrade and shamefully treat the body, as the Eastern religions have done. The worst sins, however, are not accounted for by this theory. What of the sins of temper, pride, cruelty, hatred, avarice, self-righteousness, and unbelief? These are wholly of the soul, apart from the body.

2. Some teach that sin is a negation. Christian Science teaches that sin is merely the absence of good, and error of the mind; but the Bible is abundant in its declarations that sin is positive transgression and hateful to the Lord. He doesn't hate a negative; Christ didn't die for a negative; hell isn't prepared for a negative.

3. Many modernists claim sin to be mere imperfect human developments in the long line of evolution. Any fall of man is not downward, but upward. As we must learn to creep before we walk, so man learns to sin before he learns righteousness. According to this theory, the most civilized must be the most righteous. Is that the case? Satan, who is full of wisdom, must be the most holy. Sin, according to this theory, is the mere vestiges of a past monkey ancestry, a few appendages left over from the bestial ego, just plain finiteness. We are supposed to outgrow them. Old age doesn't do away with sin; neither, of course, is this theory, like any other of the modernists, true to the Bible.

4. Many make sin to be just selfishness. They say since the greatest sin is failure to love God supremely, but to love self more; then sin is selfishness. The sins of temperament are not selfishness, such as hatred, malice, and unbelief toward God.
5. Some would make sin an infirmity, a disease for which we are neither responsible nor culpable, an unfortunate thing, of course, but really not responsible; maybe it is just "amiable weakness" for which we are to be pitied but not blamed or censured.
6. Modern psychology and psychiatry taught as a science tech there is no such thing as blatant sin. All sin is only a hidden complex. Some psychopathologists blame parents, home environment, church, and public schools. Do your thing, they say, uninhibited. This is humanism, that man is God, and it leads to heathenism. The only sin is to not have a good time, or be who you want to be, or get what others have, the Pleasure Complex. That this is not God's attitude toward sin is very plain to be seen when we consider the awful price He paid to obtain for us forgiveness of sin and justification for sin.

All of these theories grow out of a very low estimate of man's guilt before God. Some arise from a rejection of the inspiration of the Bible, and some from the rejection of God's estimate of themselves and His atonement through the Lord Jesus Christ. In the Scriptures the picture of sin is not one of weakness, infirmity, negation, or lack of development, but one of downright rebellion and transgression against God, a lack of conformity to the Holiness and will of God, This lack of conformity can be in actual acts of sin, a constant state of sin or an attitude of sin.

C. The Nature of Sin

The important question for discrimination is the question, "What Is sin?" What makes one act sinful and another right, or is one attitude right and another wrong? It might seem like an easy question to answer; yet the answer leads us into the very essence of our dependence and relation to God.

There is a two-fold essence of sin which must be considered if a just understanding of the nature of sin is to be reached. We must consider the acts of sin and the attitude of sin, sins of commission and the thing which causes the commission, the attitude of sin.

1. Sin Considered Objectively, or the Acts of Sin

Our first thoughts of sin naturally revolve around this relation to the moral law. Paul states, "Where there is no law there is not sin." The moral law is the measure or standard. It prescribes both what he is to do and what he is to be. It is the yardstick of his life. Any deviation or shortening is sin. John writes, I John 3:4, "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law, for sin is the transgression of the law," and 5:17, "all unrighteousness is sin," sin, by this is a lack of conformity to the Moral

law. It makes no difference how this law is revealed to us, by conscience (for Paul in Romans shows the bindingness of the moral law written upon the heart) or whether by revelation. The mode of its coming to us detracts nothing from its authority, so then sin is whatever is not in accordance with the spirit and temper of the moral law, whatever defect, omission, or overt transgression. This does not distinguish between sin and crime. We commit our crimes against our fellowmen, but sin is only against God, Psalm 51:14, "Against Thee, and Thee only, have I sinned and done this evil in Thy sight." Sin is disobedience to God. The moral law is the expression of the will of God, but there is more than that to sin. The moral law is not only grounded in the will of God, but receives its holiness of character from the holiness of God. Any sin, therefore, is in opposition or contradiction to the holiness of God, so the Scriptures say, "Man has sinned and come short of the glory of God." Sin is not only positive, but negative. It is something and a lack of something. It is positive evil and a lack of righteousness. Man would still be a sinner if it were possible for him never to have committed a sin in his life, for he would still lack positive holiness of character and nature. Sinlessness is not holiness, a vacuum is nothing. A lack of no positive evil is not the possession of holiness.

2. There is still the consideration of sin subjectively. This leads us to a little behind the act and attitude of sin into the controlling motives of sin. It leads us to the roots of sin. Sin is a denial of dependence upon God. God has a right to command the moral law to man, because man is completely dependent upon God, We live only in the will of God. It is only because He wills it that we have any existence at all. Our life, our powers, and our very constituent elements depend momentarily upon the continued will of God, thus as our Creator and Sustainer, we "live, move and have our being in Him." Apart from Him we should cease to exist. This gives God absolute property rights over us. As we only live and have any being at all in the will of God, so the law of our life ought to be the will of God. God has a right to command and regulate us.

Sin is a lack of love toward God. The dependence and obedience we owe God should take the specific form of devotion. The old theological definition of sin is pretty good, "Sin is deficiency of love to God and man." It takes the positive command in the Scriptures, "Thou shalt love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind and with all your strength." Sin is estrangement from God. Or the Scriptures picture it as enmity toward God. This independence and lack of devotion causes estrangement or enmity. Romans 8:7, "The carnal mind is enmity against God."

Sin is self-affirmation. This is the love "of the creature more than the creator," Romans 1:25, worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator who is blessed forever. In self-affirmation, self is the central point from which all things, even God Himself is contemplated, "Lovers of their own selves rather than lovers of God." Here is the heart of the temptation Satan presented to Eve, "ye shall be as gods," self-sufficient, self-supreme, gods within yourself. Thus, the language of sin is "I am, and I am my own, and have therefore full right to live for myself and to do as I please." In its renunciation of dependence upon God; it is Unbelief in its exaltation to place itself equal with God; it is pride in its transference of the homage due unto God to another; it is idolatry. The taproot of sin is self. Even in a Christian there is the constant warring against the flesh. The flesh is just self. Turn the word

around and spell it backwards and you read self, if you drop the "h" like the English do.

D. The Four-Fold Classification of Sin

The four-fold classification of sin, by the Scriptures, forms the entire basis of God's condemnation of mankind.

1. Sin which is Imputed (Romans 5:12-18). Imputation means to reckon over to, or to attribute unto something or somebody. In the original it occurs 11 times in the fourth chapter of Romans. There are three major imputations set forth in the Scriptures.

- a. The imputation of Adam's sin to the race, forming the doctrine of original sin.
- b. The Imputation of the sin of man to Christ, basis for the doctrine of salvation.
- c. The imputation of the Righteousness of God on those who believe upon Christ, forming the basis for the doctrine of Justification. This imputation may be judicial or actual.
- d. Judicial imputation is the reckoning to one of that, which was not antecedently his own, as II Corinthians 5:19, "Where, God for Christ's sake, does not impute sins unto us."

The imputation of the sin of Adam upon the whole human race is actual imputation, not just judicial, for Romans 5:12 clearly shows that in the federal head representation, we all sinned in Adam, The next two verses shows this imputed sin is not personal sins. Hebrews 7:7-10 shows the method. There is also the judicial in verses 17-18, judgment passed upon all men by this sin of Adam.

2. The Sin Nature, Romans 5:19

Adam's one sin caused him to fall and become an entirely different being, depraved and degenerate from that which he was before. In this fallen state he could only beget fallen creatures like unto himself. How clearly is this brought out in the two statements in Genesis 1:27, "So God created man in His own image;" then both in Chapters 5:1-3 (especially verse 3), "And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years and begat a son in his own image and called his name Seth." Therefore, every child of Adam is born with the Adamic nature in its sinful state. It is very important to get the distinction between imputed sin and imparted sin. The imputation of sin is the legal result of the covenant relationship in which man was put by God in the person of Adam. The imputation of sin is the divine declaration of the fact, while the sinful nature or imparted sinfulness is the actual inheritance we receive by being born in a fallen state.

3. The Judicial State of Sin

This is the sentence of sin pronounced upon all men, both Jew and Gentile by the divine decree of God, Romans 3:9; Galatians 3:22; Romans 11:32. God pronounces the whole world to be under sin. This means to be divinely reckoned to be without merit, which might contribute toward salvation. Thus, salvation is by Grace alone, so God excludes by decree any human merit. This is for this age alone, since in the dispensation of law there was difference between Jew and Gentile. Ephesians 2:12-13, Romans 9:4-5.

4. Personal Sins (Romans 3:23) "For all have sinned..."

This was called by the theologians, "Actual sins," which wasn't such a good term as imparted sin by receiving a sinful nature is actual sin, too. This personal sin includes everything in the daily life which is contrary to or fails to conform to the character of God.

E. The nature of Sin from the Scriptural Words Used

It is very instructive to study the literal meaning of the Hebrew and Greek words for sin and the kindred words. These meanings disclose the true nature of sin in its various and manifold manifestations. These words are the Holy Spirit's definition of sin. When considered separately then combined, they give a full presentation of God's estimate of sin. We shall consider just the major words.

1. Sin (Hebrew - chata, to sin)

In the Greek New Testament the word, Hamartano, means the same thing as the Hebrew word, the meaning is to err or miss the mark. In all its forms it occurs over 174 times in the Bible and Paul uses it over 71 times in its meaning of missing the mark; it signifies a coming short or failure to reach the divine standard. The meaning of the word can be seen where it is used of the left-handed Benjaminites who did not "miss" the mark when they used the sling, Judges 20:16. Here the word "miss" is chata, to err, or miss the mark. Note some illustrations:

- a. New Testament: Luke 15:18-21, the prodigal son missed the mark of his father's will. Matthew 27:4, Judas missed the mark of discipleship and betrayed Christ. II Peter 2:4, the angels missed the mark when they left their first estate.
- b. Old Testament: Numbers 22:34, Balaam knew he was headed on the wrong road, and when stopped by the angel of the Lord, he said, "I have sinned. ...I will get me back again." What an expressive word for sin! To sin is to miss everything God has for one, to miss God's righteousness, His love, His purpose for you, His fellowship, His salvation, and, finally, His home forever.

2. Iniquity

There are a number of words in the original translated in the A.V. - Iniquity. Some of them: a reavel, signifying rebellion; a ven-vanity; havvah - mischief; ave - evil, perversity and perverseness; amal - misery; resha - wrong and, in the Greek, adikema or wrong doing; peneris - evil and a number of times for unrighteousness and lawlessness. The prevailing thought is perversity, stubborn sinfulness linked with wrong doing, bent out of line, or perversion of the right. Our English word "wrong" suits this meaning. David confessed, "I have sinned" or "done wickedly" in numbering the people, "done wrong" in numbering of Israel. II Samuel 24:17. This opens a multitude of different windows on sin, but the main thought is a bending, twisting, and warning of the right to the wrong use with perversity of nature.

3. Transgression

There are nine distinct words in the original Hebrew and Greek which translated transgression in the Authorized Version. Some of them are, "bagad" - deceive; "maal" - trespass; "labar" - to pass over or go beyond the commandment as Saul confessed, I Samuel 15:24; "I have transgressed the commandment of the Lord." The story here is how he intruded into the priestly office and sacrificed. In the New Testament the Pharisees said, "The disciples transgress the traditions of the fathers." Christ answered, "Why do ye transgress the commandment of God by your traditions?"

4. Trespass

A translation of "maal" - signifying treachery, unfaithfulness, and break of trust, and signifies the intrusion of self-will into the sphere of divine authority. Hebrews 6:7, "But they like Adam have transgressed the covenant; there they have dealt treacherously against me. Job refers to the same thing, 31:33, "If I covered my transgression as Adam by hiding mine iniquity in my bosom." Adam tried to hide his sin. This is sinning treacherously, sinning and trying to conceal it, like the Pharisees who, for pretence or for a cloak made long prayers. Like Bancroft says of the hypocritical sin, "To prate well in prayer and be ill in practice is to be a sepulcher of death."

5. Rebellion

The word is translated from "morad" and kindred words meaning to rebel, also from "mori" meaning not only rebellion but bitterness, and "Sarah" turning aside, hence, it is a revolt or rebellion against God's authority, spiritual rebellion, and anarchy. Sin is a rebellion against God, an affront against God, but since man is ill bred such can be expected of him, Isaiah 1:2, "I have brought up children and they have rebelled against me," or Deuteronomy 31:27, "For I know thy rebellion and thy stiff-necked."

6. Unrighteousness and Unjust

From the Greek word adikos, meaning devoid of righteousness, and justice, that which is not right, dishonesty, unfairness, Romans 6:13, "Yield not your members as instruments of unrighteousness," or II Peter 2:13-15, which speaks of both the rewards of unrighteousness and the wages of unrighteousness, and names some things not right or unrighteous, such as deceit, adultery, beguiling, hearts exercised with covetousness and cursed children, having forsaken the right way; I John 1:9 speaks of Christ's blood cleansing the saint of "all unrighteousness."

F. Some Scriptural Definitions of Sin

1. "Sin is the transgression of the law," I John 3:4.
2. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin," Romans 14:23.
3. "To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not to him it is sin," James 4:17.
4. "All unrighteousness is sin," I John 5:17.
5. "A high look, and a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked is sin," Proverbs 21:4
6. "The thought of foolishness is sin," Proverbs 24:9, or better in the R.V, "The thought of the foolish is sin." The thought in the original is premeditation. See Genesis 6:5, "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great upon the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."
7. "And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin and of unrighteousness and of judgment of sin, because they believe not on me," John 16:8-9, R.V. - unbelief of Christ is sin.

II. Original Sin

As Adam stood as the representative of the human race in His probation and fall, so that He not only involved himself in ruin when he sinned but death and sin passed upon all men by his sin, Romans 5:12-19, so also did the condemnation and depravity which was passed upon him and passed on likewise to his posterity. They like him are guilty and corrupt. His children are born in his image, (Genesis 5:3); by the very laws of natural propagation they partake of his nature, and that nature is corrupt and fallen. This state of the individual at birth and by inheritance has been variously called by the theologians, inherent corruption, native depravity, and original sin. Why?

- A. Our personal existence begins in sin. Adam's original beginning state was holy, but since his fall, each child begins his existence with sin, in corruption. Our origin is in sin, thus it is original sin.
- B. He called it original sin to show its close connection with the first or original sin in Adam, thus all subsequent sins are conditioned by the first sin in Adam, that original sin bears a relation to all subsequent sin, and the native state of sin in which we are born is related by inheritance to Adam's sin.
- C. The third reason he used the term original sin is because that inborn corruption is the original source of all our actual sins. The sins of our life originate in the sin principle in our life, this native depravity.

The primary meaning is the relationship of Adam's sin as the original head of the long series of human sin, and since his sin, is the native depravity of each individual in the long series of his life, causing and determining them. In this discussion the prime thought for consideration is original sin as the inherent corruption in which every child of Adam finds himself beginning his earthly exist and conditioning it all through his life.

A. The first thought to be considered is what is the state in which man is born?

1. Sin is the mould of man's moral being

There is a sinful principle at work prior to any voluntary agency, before the working of any consciousness. The Pelagians taught that man is born without any determining thing in his nature, without character, and only as the acts and habits are formed is there any bend in his nature toward holiness or sin. Such is not the teaching of the Scriptures. It is plain in its teachings that at birth I inherit a sinful nature, which determines every subsequent action, even before those actions are of the conscious will, Psalm 51:6, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." and Psalm 56:3, "The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies." John 3:6 states, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, that which is born of the spirit is spirit." Ephesians 2:3 says, "We were by nature the children of wrath."

There is a disposition, a sinful principle, so all pervading as to be termed "nature at work within man from birth which determines his every action, perverts the will and darkens the mind and blinds the heart whenever man is to make determination between sin and holiness. This sinful nature is not something which has invaded him in the course of his life, but something inherited at birth, interwoven into the very texture of his soul from the very beginning of his existence, and cleaves to every faculty. Sin is the law of his life. It is his nature in the same sense in which ferocity is the nature of a tiger, or cunning is the nature of a serpent or fox. Sin is the expression of the inmost moral being of man. He is so bound up with sin, with the fibers of his soul so intertwined with it, the springs of his life so poisoned with it, until he could as soon cease to be human as to cease to be a sinner. He lives, moves, thinks, and feels in sin. Sin is not an accident, but co-lives and, in fact, co-originated with his very existence. He was born in sin, and sins, since it is the mould of his life.

2. The Natural Depravity is Both Negative and Positive.

In its negative aspect it implies the total destitution of all those habits and dispositions which constituted the glory of the first man Adam in his original state as created and enabled him to reflect the image of God. Every principle of holiness was lost. There is no intermediate step between life and death, and the absence of this holiness of God in man is termed in the Scriptures as "Spiritual Death." The holy life of God in man is extinguished, Ephesians 2:1; "And you hath He quickened (given life) who were dead in trespasses and in sins." In this passage death is the terminology for the complete destitution of those holy spiritual qualities likened unto life. We shall have occasion to return to this thought for its defense, from those who maintain that man no matter how far he has fallen still has some godlike qualities left which could be termed "good."

In its positive aspect, natural depravity includes a positive corruption. It is an active disposition to what is evil and opposed to the perfections and holiness of God. Man is so constituted as to be an active creature, he cannot be neutral, and therefore the lacking of holiness makes him manifest the opposite of holiness or evil. If he acts at all, he must do so either along a holy line or an evil line. Some might tend to open corruption and low sensual degrading sins, while another might

sin in refined licentiousness, or temperament, but even his very "thought is sin." "The thought of the foolish is sin," Proverbs 24:9, R.V, to think is to sin, either his thoughts are holy or evil, not indifferent. Education, accident, circumstances may alter the flow of the current of sin, but the current is away from God, never toward Him by nature but toward sin. The germ of evil is always there, though the manifestations of it may vary. Being moral creatures our actions have moral significance, and if they are deprived of God and holiness, then they must act in the opposite, toward sin.

3. Total Depravity

This inherent corruption or natural depravity is all pervading and universal; hence the term "total depravity" has come into current usage with theologians to designate this sinful nature as extending to the whole man. All his powers and faculties are under the influence of his sinful nature. It is not confined to one department of his being, as only influencing his will, or biasing his understanding, or faculties. Contrariwise, it is a disease affecting every faculty and organ, like the language of God's indictment to Israel, "The whole man is sick, and the whole heart is faint. From the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it; but wounds, and bruises and putrefying sores: they have not been closed, neither bound up, neither mollified with ointment," Isaiah 1:5-6.

As it is found in the understanding or intellect of man, it is termed the Scriptures the blindness of man, spiritual ignorance, and folly, so that man cannot think right about God, His Christ, His salvation, and His sentences of death upon man, and estimate of sin, no man can think God's thoughts as Adam did when counseled of God in the Garden. As sin is found in the will, it is termed in Scripture rebellion, perverseness, and the Spirit of disobedience, so that man cannot naturally will right, and refuse God's salvation and His Christ.

As found in the affections, it is termed in the Scriptures hardness of heart, a lack of love toward God, and insensibility to all spiritual and divine attractions. It perverts the imaginations and turns it into instruments of lusts and the satisfaction of every low appetite. Man is so crippled in every department of his being and diseased by sin, so that he is totally disqualified to carry on any spiritual worship to God. That is why any man-made worship with unconverted worshippers is an abomination unto God, for he comes with filthy hands and heart to offer a spiritual, holy offering. How can he be accepted? The Scriptures say, "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination unto the Lord," Proverbs 15:8. Every religious faculty possessed by man partakes of the same disease of sin and instead of offering unto God true worship and a real sacrifice he but offers sin.

Note further, The Fall did not divest man of reason, conscience, and taste. This would have made a different species of him. As reason remained, he still had the power of distinguishing truth from falsehood, and conscience still remaining he knows right from wrong, and with taste he may still enjoy the beautiful. The fall destroyed the unity of these functions and made the exercise of them no longer a holy dependence upon God. The mere possession of them has no moral value. Man isn't holy because he knows right from wrong. It is the mode of using these faculties, which give them moral quality as good or bad.

With the loss of the holiness as a part of the image of God in man, man lost the ability of using those powers in holiness and for good. They became diseased so that now the reason stumbles in the realm of truth, the conscience errs in the realm of right and taste, and affections are prostituted in the realm of beauty and true objects of worship. In the fall man lost every holy endowment and had every natural endowment, which makes him a man injured.

The term, total depravity, then means:

- a. The entire absence of spiritual life, and holiness.
- b. The extent of depravity as pervading the whole man, every element of man is alike affected by sin.
- c. A positive habitude of soul in which every form of evil is grounded, a tendency to the totality of sin, an evil push in the soul to greater acts of sin. It does not imply that all men and women are as sinful, as bad, or as wicked as they can possibly be, or that there is no difference in degree of wickedness among men. All men are not said to be totally depraved in the sense that they can get no worse. All are equally dead but all are not in the same degree of purification. There are all degrees, from men who are dead in sins, but men of honesty and integrity, to the knave and brutal murderer who steals and lies and kills out of the pure joy of it. The Bible makes a distinction, as we shall see, when we consider degrees of guilt. Total depravity does not mean that every man is destitute of every good trait of character or ethics from a civilized standpoint. He never becomes such a fiend but that there is something within upon which the Gospel can take hold and God can save him. We do not mean that man is as bad as he is capable of becoming when we speak of his total depravity, but that the total man, alike partakes of sin, and is affected by sin, and in the realm of the spiritual, he loves wrong and acts wrong and is wrong. Hence the need of three doctrinal truths:

- 1.) Regeneration, born all over again in a different realm "of the spirit"
- 2.) Conversion, a turning around, heading him in the right direction
- 3.) Repentance on complete reversal of mind.

d. This native depravity is hereditary, like begets like, so original sin is bound up with the very laws of propagation. No human being born into the world in the natural way can escape it. The very production of his human nature is the production of his sinful nature, hence all are sinners, because, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh," John 3:6. To be in the line of Adam's posterity is to partake of Adam's corruption.

B. Some Proofs of the Doctrine of Original Sin or Native Depravity

The picture of inborn sin or inherited corruption is the darkest picture possible to paint of humanity. It is no wonder it has been rejected by those who would like to think that man is a near-god, and in no need of any help from God in his salvation. There can be no understanding, however, of God's plan of salvation without understanding man's state as a

sinner with a totally depraved nature, for God's plan of salvation is set forth as the remedy for this very sinner-hood of man. Is it any wonder then that when man rejects the plain teaching of the Scriptures that he is a depraved, fallen being, a sinner by birth, that he can then have no right estimate of God's redemption?

The truth of the doctrine of original sin must be very easy to ascertain. The implications are so great and stand is so broad and the assertions so far-reaching until the fact of it should be easily proved or disproved. We have seen that the Scriptures certainly teach the fact, and reason should not have much trouble proving it. The doctrine professes to give a picture of the human soul, not of angels who are outside of our realm of experience and only reached by speculation. It is about men, and, if it isn't so, then there are both our own experiences and those of others to contradict it; but, if it is so, then the proof of it should lie everywhere. Here it is interesting to note that the most zealous and devoted of saints have been the ones most conscious of inbred sin, like Paul of old, "I am persuaded that in me, that is in my flesh, there dwelleth no good thing."

1. The first natural proof of original sin is the universality of sin. How completely the Scriptures and experience coincide. Solomon says in I Kings 8:46, "There is no man that sinneth not;" Ecclesiastes 7:20, "There is not a just man upon the earth that doeth good and sinneth not;" Romans 3:9-23, "There is none righteous, no not one,.. for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." In the gospel message of salvation there is the all inclusive feature which asserts the need of every man to be saved or perish.

No matter where we meet a human being, in civilization or the darkest of heathenism there is one thing we know of a certainty. He is a sinner, he has sinned, and it is this reason for the commission to "preach the gospel to every creature," they all need it. This universality of sin is only explicable on the grounds of a universal sufficient cause, and inherited sin is the only explanation.

How this contradicts the theory held by some that everyone is born good and only falls by voluntary habits of evil. Why then is there the universal verdict true both from the Scriptures and observation, "There is none good?"

2. Not only is sin universal, but the tendency to sin is stronger than the tendency to virtue. Men have to cultivate virtue, but vice requires no cultivation. This is why every law must have a sanction or penalty or there might just as well be no law. This is why parents need to guard their children and train them into the right way. You don't have to teach a child to lie, or steal, or deceive, or do anything wrong. Our whole structure of government and business is built upon the supposition that man is not to be trusted, but must have something to bind him to his word and to the right, or he will do wrong. He is liable to do wrong at any time.

3. The third point is that even the best of men feel a downward tug. The holiest of men have felt the need of constant vigil against a spirit of evil in their own natures. "Every man that thinketh he standeth needs to take heed lest he fall." There is still something within upon which sin can lay hold. He is still linked somehow with the fall.

4. The early age in which sin makes its first appearance in a child is another proof of original sin. There is self-will, disobedience, rebellion, and temper all of which comes as natural to a child as reflection and thought. Their very naturalness of appearance

has caused them to be overlooked as having a deeper reason for their being there than just some natural part of human furniture.

All of these things are only explainable upon the doctrine of original sin. There is no other explanation. It is a certainty that every man looks upon his neighbor as having something that bears watching. Whatever a man may think of his own virtue, he is not willing to trust too much to his neighbor's virtue without some promissory note, mortgage, or bond. If he does have a trusting soul, he will soon run out of money or faith in humanity.

III. The Pollution and Guilt of Sin

In the realm of the soul's taste, sin is spoken of as being ugly, thus Scripture represents holiness as "the beauty of holiness" and "holiness becometh thy house" or is comely, which means that it is befitting, goodly proportioned, is suited. Holiness or the perfect spiritual health of our natures, in harmony with God is beautiful. There is a sense perception of our inner man, which feels the approbation and revels in the restored relationship with God. It is pictured in the Song of Solomon under the simile of the Bride seeing only the loveliness in Him, no deformity, nothing wanting to be beautiful. To the converted, Christ becomes the One who is altogether lovely, and "unto these which believe He is precious." Holiness then of nature which was the original condition of man, and the restoration in the Gospel is beautiful. To see this is to at once be conscious of the ugliness of sin. Sin becomes exceedingly sinful. Sin is pictured as ugly, monstrous, deforming, and its subjects are rendered odious and disgusting; they are foul, filthy, and unclean. This is summed up in one epigram by Jesus, "A cage of every foul and unclean bird." This is the method God used to reveal to Israel the malignity of sin, by showing them the difference between the clean and the unclean. The prime figure for sin in the Scriptures is leprosy, the most loathsome disease on earth, where the flesh putrefies and sends forth a sickening loathsome odor. Sin is pictured as a dead body, which, at the first shock offends, but as purification progresses it becomes intolerably offensive. Isaiah pictures it as wounds, bruises, and putrefying sores.

Here are the contrasting pictures - the good and right and holy as beautiful and the sinful as being deformed, obnoxious, polluted and ugly, thus the highest beauty is the moral beauty of holiness, and the lowest ugliness is sin. It is the only way of seeing why and how much God hates sin. How ugly it must appear to Him!

This uncleanness and filth of sin moreover leaves its impression upon its subjects. Subjectively considered, sin is filthy, but, objectively and really, it makes its subjects unclean and obnoxious. Wherever it touches, it leaves its slime and likeness. The soul reflects its image. The man is then abominable and odious. This power of sin to mutilate the soul, throw it out of gear with itself and out of harmony with God, to rob it of all moral beauty and to make it hateful and disgusting is called the pollution of sin by theologians. This is the stain of sin. Even passing sins, transient acts of sin, leave their stain upon the soul and leave a bias to reproduce after their kind. In his sin a man becomes one ulcerated, gangrenous mass from the sole of his feet to the top of his head and no holy being can look at him without disgust. He is filthy from head to foot and repels the holy. Even his "righteousness is as filthy rags." The very best works he can perform are repugnant to the holy angels, and "his sacrifice is an abomination unto God."

A. The Shame of Sin

The expression of the pollution of sin as the ugly, the vile, and the contemptible is shame, the feeling that we are justly exposed to contempt. It is the reason for the hatred of the corrupt for the pure, the defiled for the clean, and the fallen for the saved. Human pride is offended by being made to feel and own its guilt and pollution and is wounded by the innermost feeling of shame.

This explains the reason why we are so sensitive to the opinions of others. Psychologists have tried in vain to explain this human tendency, but have failed for they have not seen the pollution of sin. God has made man so that he is responsive to the opinion of others. We want their respect, we dread their condemnation and we fear, most of all, their scorn and contempt. We do not mind their hatred nearly as much as their contempt. Here it is our great concern for "our name." We want our reputation unsullied. Public opinion sways when nothing else will and is summed up in "What will people say?" This opinion will never degrade until it finds within the man himself an answering echo of scorn and unworthiness and meanness. When their opinion matches the inner sense of shame, then comes confusion and self-reproach, but, you may see it in reverse when a man dares to brave the storms of all public scorn, reproach, and calmly, when he knows he is right; for there is no answering echo within to bring the shame. Again see the peculiarity of this shame. We never feel it as long as sin is concealed, but when every mask is removed and it is exposed, then comes the confusion and shame. Here is the reason for the desire in the great day for men and women to cry for the rocks and mountains to hide them from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne. This is one of the torments of hell. The increasing pollution of sin, as the power of evil increases will be a perpetual source of torment as long as the eternal soul shall last. The Scriptures say that the wicked "shall awake to shame and everlasting contempt," Daniel 12:2. This can be visualized in a minute manner when you realize the dirty, polluted, vile, unclean souls are exposed before the Bar of God in contrast to the Holy God and His pure holy angels. It is pictured in a small measure by the feeling of a dirtiness and unkemptness when, after housecleaning, a visitor comes unexpectedly all-clean and dressed all frilly and meticulously. All day you were satisfied with yourself, but now, all of a sudden, you feel like you have fallen down the chimney. How differently men will feel in that day; men who now prate of their good works, their alms, their morality, and their good points, on that day how differently, when there is no cloak for their sin, and they stand vile and filthy. In contrast, they then shall consider hell itself a relief from the bright holiness and purity of Heaven; for in Hell they shall be with their kind; thus it is said of Judas, "he went to his own place."

B. Remorse and Guilt

Shame easily glides into remorse. There is the knowledge that the good and the true, the holy, is worthy and is the best good. In times of pride, the sinner revels in his sins, boasts of them, but in moments of heart searching, especially when shame comes and exposure, there comes remorse, as he thinks of what he might have been and what others are. Remorse is the soul's regret, "I might have been." Remorse, however, is more than regrets; it is a sense of ill desert and self-condemnation and guilt. The stain of sin cannot be washed away with tears of penance, but the need is the interposition of the judge and the work of executioner.

This is the property of sin which puts the sinner in such a relationship to law and justice that he himself recognized makes him worthy of death. He may cavil, kid himself, lie against his conscience and hide away the promptings of his conscience now, but when exposed to the contempt and shame of the Judgment Bar of God, his guilt will be fully realized. The two elements of remorse are:

1. That sin ought to be punished of ill desert. This is the sinner saying that sin ought to be punished, that it is punishable.
2. That sin will be punished, a certain fearful looking forward to judgment. There is no sinner who lives long enough but has, sooner or later, faced some moments when he is sobered suddenly by a piercing conviction of his conscience speaking to him of judgment at the end of the present road. Man is conscious that sentence has already been pronounced against his sin.

C. Three Propositions Drawn From the Proceeding

1. One sin entails hopeless bondage to sin. This comes from the very nature of sin. The natural effect of sin is to widen the breach betwixt the sinner and God. This is illustrated in Adam and Eve. After the one sin of disobedience, they heard the voice of God, and being ashamed and afraid, ashamed and guilty they hid themselves from God. Thus each sin widens the breach, augments the sin, and hardens the heart. Beginning to fall he must fall further and further forever unless a power outside of himself is great enough stops him. To sin once is to sin forever unless saved.
2. One Sin Involves Endless Punishment. This follows from the first consideration. If to sin involves a hopeless condition, then there is no turning back and the punishment for it is eternal. This pictures hell as a progression downward forever, even deeper in hell and blacker the night of eternal doom. Guilt is intolerable now, when conscience is allowed to speak to the soul, but then it will be perfectly restored, and carrying a perfect picture constantly of all their life's existence.
3. The cure is sanctification for the pollution and justification for the guilt. Sanctification infuses habits of grace, justification removes necessity for punishment.

D. Degrees of Guilt

That there are degrees of guilt, carrying degrees of punishment in eternity is the plain teachings of the Scriptures and the dictates of common sense. The stoics were the first to teach that there was no degree in guilt. They taught that the foolish jest was as malignant as the deliberate slander, that an angry word as premeditated murder; that is to outrage every sense of moral justice we possess, It is one thing to say that all sins are equally sins, but it is another to say that all offences are equal sins. All poisons are equally poisons, but not all equally poisonous, not the same degree of virulence.

The Roman Catholic error of a table of degrees is wrong. They divide all sin into a minute table with two great divisions, and the whole confessional is built upon it. This division is into venial and mortal sins. The venial sins are these which are really not sins, but slight irregularities, but do not disturb spiritual life. Under these are classed idle words, frivolous jests and excessive laughter; luxury, pride, and resentment, sins where the will

does not enter into them fully; and insignificant sins where the deed is so light as to not be enough to merit death, such as petty larceny, delicate scandal, a little too much strong drink, and failure to go to church. On the other hand mortal sins are those, which merit eternal death. How foolish that arrangement is. If the sin does not deserve punishment then it is not sin, and, if it is sin, then its wages are death.

This is not the Protestant and Biblical definition of the degrees of guilt. All sin, no matter the degree or aggravation, is by its very nature apart from grace, deadly, and big or little carries the same death penalty. All sins, however, are not equally heinous. The wages of the least sin is death, but death has its degrees. Hell will have its various rewards for the wages of unrighteousness even as Heaven will have its rewards of righteousness. Though it is not a healthy sign to weigh sins and measure them as though we could keep some of them while giving up others or commit some while shunning others, still there are degrees of guilt and punishment. The regenerated heart feels the enormous guilt of the least of sins. The smallest, unforgiven sin, not covered by the sacrifice of Christ, has for its wages eternal death, "The wages of sin is death," Romans 6:23. That doesn't give any distinction as to sins. It is the universal penny wages no matter when, how or how much the work for sin. See this by illustration: If the law says 25 miles per hour, then to do 30 or 90 is alike to be guilty of breaking the law, but, in the degree of guilt or aggravation of the crime, you see the difference of punishment before the judge, James 2:10, "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." One rent in the garment and it is torn; a torn garment, if it is to shreds, it is a torn garment, but the degree of destruction is different. Just one discord ruins the whole harmony of a chord of music. Likewise, the least sinner needs a Saviour and is lost and hell-bound just as much as the greatest of sinners by his very nature and the nature of sin, but to say that both shall receive the same degree of punishment and that each has the same degree of guilt is to outrage common sense. If we were to give any table of sins, which is hard to do and purely arbitrary, we would table them somewhat like this:

1. The sin of presumption, which would vary with the degrees of deliberation and malice which accompanies it until it culminates in the most appalling sin of all: the sin against the Holy Spirit, Psalm 19:13, "Keep back Thy servant from presumptuous sin, and then I shall be innocent of the great transgression, signifying that that is the great transgression; Numbers 15:30, "But the soul that doth ought presumptuously (with a high hand) the same reproacheth the Lord; and that soul shall be cut off from among his people." In II Peter 2:10 it is given as one more of the apostates in the last days.
2. Sins of ignorance which varies according to the degree in which the ignorance is due to perverted development of the moral nature and its willfulness. There is an ignorance which does not hear the same guilt as another. If a woman were married to a man who went off to war and is reported killed, and she remarries only to have her husband return, certainly her sin is not that of bigamy. Again there is the guilty sin of ignorance of the one who squanders his time while he should be studying, and so fails an examination because of ignorance, is he guilty of ignorance? It is not that the sin of ignorance is not sin, in Old Testament there had to be an offering for the sins of ignorance, Numbers 15. In Acts 17:30 God winked, or overlooked some ignorance. Hebrews 5:2 states, "Who can have compassion upon the ignorant." In I Timothy 13,

Paul said he obtained mercy for he did it ignorantly when he persecuted the saints. How different his persecution from the other members of the Sanhedrin! There is, however, a willful ignorance, II Peter 3:5, a mitigation according to ignorance; Luke 23:34, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Is there any difference between them and Judas?

3. The sin of infirmity, sins which because of their sudden force overcome before there is time for reflection, an inability to overcome, which may vary in degree according to the strength of the temptation and the depth and earnestness of the struggle to overcome. They are all malignant, and the touch of any of them is death, the least is poison. Some brief Scriptural reasons for believing in degrees of guilt and punishment for any degree of punishment must imply degrees of guilt. The cities in which Jesus did many of His wonderful works are said to have accumulated more guilt than Sodom and Gomorrah because of their impenitence in the face of greater light. "It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of Judgment than for you, for if the mighty works which are done in you had been done in them they would have long since repented in sackcloth and ashes." This is one of the best arguments for believing that the heathen's punishment will be less severe than the one who has often heard and rejected, Matthew 11:20-24.

Likewise, the plain Scriptures in Luke 12:47-48 state, "And that servant which knew his Lord's will and prepared not himself neither did according to His will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did things worthy of stripes shall be beaten with few stripes." Here is the sin of ignorance less than the sin of presumption and the degree of punishment according to the degrees of guilt. John 19:11, "Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above; therefore, he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin." Here is the greater sin of Judas in contrast to the sin of Pilate, yet both are heinous.

Likewise our Saviour declared there to be sin above all sins, for which there was no forgiveness. Paul in Hebrews 10:28-29 states, "he that despised Moses' law, died without mercy under two or three witnesses of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall be thought worthy who hath trodden underfoot the Son of God and hath counted the blood of the Covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of Grace," Here is degree of guilt, according to light sinned against.

Last of all, we read that there shall be difference in Judgment of the wicked at the Great White Judgment Throne, Revelation 20:12, "And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the Books according to their works;" how is that possible if there are no degrees of guilt and punishment? It is plainly evident that according to their lives here shall be their guilt in that day and judgment accordingly. If there are no degrees in hell, that verse is meaningless. Keep in mind that as the last in Heaven will be infinitely happy and blessed, so the highest in Hell, tormented the least shall still be in hell, and tormented day and night forever; and the chasm between the least in Heaven and the highest in Hell will be as infinite in contrast as God and Satan.

IV. The Unpardonable Sin (Or, the Sin which Cannot be Forgiven)

In discussing the degrees of guilt and degrees of sins, recalling that Jesus said that Judas had the greater sin, it is well to keep in mind that there is one sin which is unmistakably the worst sin. It is so marked in the Scriptures as having a pre-eminence of guilt above all other sins. It is the only sin which is marked as having no forgiveness. Jesus distinctly says that it has no forgiveness in this age or the age to come. It is mentioned five times in the New Testament, twice by the Lord Jesus, once by John, and twice by Paul, if so be that he wrote the book of Hebrews. It is mentioned in these Scriptures: In three of the Gospels on two separate occasions Matthew 12:31; Mark 3:29; and Luke 12:10, then in Hebrews 6:4-6 and 10:26-30, and I John 5:16. All three of these speakers must be speaking of the same sin for the words of Christ say that there is but one sin, which is unforgivable, and John speaks of "a sin unto death." There is, therefore, only one sin which can be termed unpardonable." It is from a consideration of these Scriptures and the character of those who commit the sin that we can only hope to arrive at a just estimate of what the unpardonable sin is.

There is much foolishness and unscriptural teaching and preaching on the subject of the "unpardonable sin." Very few sermons, which are ever preached on it, are true to the Bible teaching on the subject. Some try to use Esau as an example of it. That is not so. They quote Hebrews 12:17, "Having sold his birthright and afterward sought it with tears, there was no place for repentance though he sought it carefully with tears." Note: He didn't seek God and not finding place for repentance, but sought the birthright and could find no change on the part of God in giving to Jacob the promised blessing and was blessed of God in his latter place and God refused to allow Israel to molest him.

A. What the Unpardonable Sin is Not

1. It is not final impenitence or a final rejection of Jesus Christ until it is too late. The greatest amount of evangelists preaching on the unpardonable sin say that it is rejecting Christ until it is too late and death seals the door. It is true, that in a sense, that is a sin unto death, but it is not the unpardonable sin, To keep sinning the sin of impenitence until death seals the door is to sin away the day of grace and die impenitent. "There is a line by us unseen; it crosses every path; it is God's boundary between His patience and His wrath." That sin is not the unpardonable sin, but the hardness of the human heart which makes any wooing of the Holy Spirit useless and He leaves off trying. Note why final impenitence is not the unpardonable sin: Impenitence is a negative sin to many, while the unpardonable sin is positive. If impenitence were the unpardonable sin, then many reading this would be lost for you were impenitent for some time before you finally accepted Christ. The first rejection is the same in character or nature as the final rejection, and, therefore, is not by its nature unpardonable. Christ gives the sin as by its very nature unpardonable and unforgivable. The first rejection and the last rejection of Christ differs not in nature or extent of sin so that the last is more wicked or unpardonable than the first, but only differs in point of time. The fact that almost everyone saved has committed before salvation the sin of impenitence cannot be a sin so heinous by nature that, upon its first committal, the sin was final impenitence. Again, those in Jesus day did not commit the sin on their deathbeds but during life and lived many years later or put to death followers of the One they crucified.

Again the unpardonable sin was committed in the Old Testament, for that was where those were that committed it in Jesus' day. Christ was not yet offered in Sacrifice and the impenitence of the Old Testament could not be the same in character as in the dispensation of grace. It is the biggest part of the work of the Holy Spirit, apart from actual rebirth, or regeneration, to induce men to lay aside the sin of impenitence. How could it be an unpardonable sin against the Holy Spirit? We may see that final impenitence differs only in point of time and relation to the remedy from the first impenitence, and is not in itself unpardonable.

2. The unpardonable sin is not to be regarded as any peculiar insult to the person of the Holy Spirit, merely using in blasphemy the Name of the Holy Spirit. Any blasphemy against the Holy Spirit would not differ from blasphemy against either of the other members each carrying the fullness of the Godhead bodily. They are the same in substance, equal in power and glory, hence it must not mean merely a reproach against the Holy Spirit personally, but only in some relationship (against the Holy Spirit) He bears to His ministry in Christ leading Him to mission and filling Him for the work of redemption.

How many the devil has tripped up, even saints, with the fearful frightening accusation that they have committed the unpardonable sin! How often Satan injects thoughts of blasphemy, horrible revolting thoughts against the Holy Spirit of Christ, then torments them with the fear, "you have gone too far this time, you have committed the unpardonable sin," then they lose victory, grovel in fear and self-reproach, fearing the worst. It is a fearful trick of the devil, many times augmented by some erroneous sermon by some scaring evangelist to make them fear they have committed the unpardonable sin when they haven't.

Let us note very carefully that any agitation of the heart or fear that the sin committed is one of the surest signs it hasn't been committed. The Pharisees, of whom Jesus said they had committed it, were the last to think they had. They had no idea that they had committed a sin, which damned them while they yet lived, and was so abominable in the sight of God, that they had no hope of forgiveness. Why, they thought they did God a service by crucifying Christ and killing His disciples.

3. The unpardonable sin is not merely ascribing lightly the miracles and works of the Holy Spirit to the Devil. Such is the conception of many tongue groups. There is no doubt in my mind that there have been multitudes saved who have been guilty of lightly ascribing the works of the Holy Spirit in the saints as of the Devil, or of evil intent. Here again, I can see no difference in ascribing the works of Christ or of the Father, and the works of the Holy Spirit to the Devil. Christ more often ascribes the miracles He performed to the Father than He did to the Holy Spirit. The unpardonable sin as seen from the Book of Hebrews certainly makes it more than a light blasphemy of calling God's works the Devil's. Christ must have had more in mind than that when He spoke of saying a word against the Holy Spirit as not having forgiveness above the word spoken against the Son. Again, there is the intimation of the work of the Holy Spirit in redemption rather than a personal affront.

4. Neither is the unpardonable sin a grieving the Holy Spirit. That is an act, which is committed by saints living lives of worldliness and corruption. It is only mentioned once in the Bible in Ephesians 4:30 to saints - "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

5. Neither is the unpardonable sin any grievous sensual sins, such as murder, adultery, theft, all these have been saved in the Scriptural accounts. I have met many who thought they had committed the unpardonable sin, but I don't think I have met a single one who thought he had committed it who had, but I have met many who I think committed it but who didn't know it. John says there is a sin unto death for which it is useless to pray. It cannot mean backsliding, for in the context John has just asked us to pray for an erring brother. A backslider still has all the yearning and compulsion to the old life he once enjoyed with Christ. There is no callous indifference and hypocrisy, which marks the one who has sinned unto death. Jesus gave a whole chapter in Luke 15 to show how much God loves the backslider in the parable of the prodigal son. No, God says that He is married to the backslider, speaking primarily to the backsliding Israel as a whole.

B. What the Unpardonable Sin is

1. The personage of the Holy Spirit, as figuring in this relationship as being sinned against, must be in His official character, as the one who filled Jesus for the work of Salvation and the One who reveals Christ to the hearts of man and leads them to repentance and salvation. This sin must in some relationship bear upon the work of the Holy Spirit in His office of redemption and the sacrifice of Jesus. Remember that Jesus "offered Himself through the Eternal Spirit," Hebrews 9:14, and without the work of the Holy Spirit there is no conviction of sin, no revelation to the heart of the glories of Christ as redeemer and no regeneration or the impartation of the new nature, and no cry of sonship, "Abba, Father." In this official character, He is sinned against with an unforgivable sin unto death, for which to pray is useless. It is the love like character of the Holy Spirit as bearing the message of peace for the sinner. With this in view there can be no misunderstanding of the text in Hebrews. But first a couple of illustrations from the Old Testament: Cain seems to have been the first who was given up by God, not because he murdered, but because he refused God's sacrifice and substituted his own. We do not know the degree of enlightenment Cain had but it must have been great with the parents he had, and the witness of the flaming sword and Angel of the Lord at the east gate of Eden. He utterly rejected God's whole plan, however, and gave his own. God calls him, a child of the wicked one." and gives for no hope when He marked him. Saul was another. He apostatized from great enlightenment. In I Samuel 10:6 he became a prophet, "And the Spirit of the Lord will come upon thee and thou shalt prophesy with them and shalt be turned into another man;" vs. 9 - "God gave him another heart;" vs.10, And the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon him and he prophesied among them." See the light God gave him, the divine fellowship, spiritual communion, another heart, but soon his carelessness and disregard for God's sacrifice and substituted his own in the thirteenth chapter; I Samuel 15:11 there "he turned back from following," vs. 23 - "Rejected the word of the Lord;" vs. 35 - "The Lord repented that He made him king over Israel;" 28:16 - "The Lord has departed from thee and has become thy enemy." That is not just the picture of a backslider, but of an apostate.

2. Turning to the New Testament you find another class committing the unpardonable sin, devoutly, fanatically religious people. In fact, in the Bible, it is only religious people who commit it, never a plain sinner; therefore, it is the sin of apostasy. Those

religious leaders had rejected the ministry of John the Baptist and his counsels against themselves, "But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the councils of God against themselves being not baptized by John," Luke 7:30. (Note: They rejected the council of God against themselves. What council? It was John's message of repentance. They judged that they needed no repentance.) To them Jesus said, "Ye are of your father the devil." He put them in Cain's family. When they denied their sinnerhead and need of repentance, they put themselves outside of Christ's plan for redemption, and Christ had nothing for them but scathing denunciation. To them at last when they said, "He hath a demon, and does His works by the prince of demons" Christ, in fact, said, "You have gone too far; you have blasphemed the Holy Spirit." "All manner of sins shall be forgiven, but he that blasphemeth against the Holy Spirit hath never forgiveness." Thus, on their part, it was no mere impenitence, but an irrevocable rejection of His entire redemptive work, a putting of themselves outside of any plan of redemption God might have for them, complete Apostasy.

3. Here is one type who can commit the unpardonable sin - devoutly religious folks who are unsaved and don't know it, won't admit it, refuse to allow it, and presumptuously, willfully treat God's one Atoning Sacrifice as unclean and hellish. But there is another type who commits this sin. It is brethren. The context of I John 5:16-17, "If any man sees a brother sin." Who is brother here, a fellow saint? If his sin is not this apostasy, pray for him, but there is one you need not to pray for, it is lethal.

4. With this consideration let us turn to Hebrews 6:4-6. He speaks of a people who have tasted of the heavenly gift "then made partakers of the Holy Spirit, tasted of the good Word of God, and of the powers of the world to come, of them he said, "if they fall away it will be impossible to renew them again unto repentance." Why? Because they have committed the unpardonable sin here is what it is - "Seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh and put Him to an open shame." The companion Scripture needs to be read here. Hebrews 10:26, "For if we sin willfully (here is your sin of presumption with set wills premeditatively) after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking for judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. For 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 (note) Who hath trodden underfoot the Son of God and hath counted the Blood of the Covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing and hath done despite unto the Spirit of Grace." You can see why there is no forgiveness of this sin, see its treatment and hatred against Christ, and despite unto the Spirit of Grace.

5. Here is the sin against the Holy Spirit which has no forgiveness. Why is it unpardonable? Because it utterly rejects, repudiates and nullifies the only redemption God has given and now "there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin," having irrevocably rejected by malignantly sinning willfully against God's only salvation, they have put themselves beyond the pale of redemption after the same kind of sin which plunged demons and fallen angels into unpardonable doom. The sin against the Holy Spirit like this and the sin of demons seem to be the same kind of sin. That is why those who have committed it never can remain neutral of the subject of Calvary and Christ's character; they must destroy the faith and persecute the saints. The elements in the unpardonable sin are light rejected, light detested, light hated, with a satanic hatred, which would

crucify Jesus all over again if given the chance. Have you ever thought that given the same circumstances, should Jesus come today as of old, our modernist would crucify Him again? It is so the hatred of the Jews was that Christ tore the cloak from their sin, exposed their hypocrisy and their true hatred boiled over. It would be the same today. Note their hatred of the blood of Christ, but very few real brethren ever fall away this hopelessly into apostasy. See Paul's solicitude for the Hebrew saints, then his confidence that such would not be the case with them in the remainder of the chapter. Read It. Let them who believe that it is utterly impossible to ever fall, not walk presumptuously but meekly and their doctrine will be true, but without letting go of the bright promise they have in their souls of security, always take warning of these few verses which give the warning of apostasy as a possibility. It should make us walk humbly with our God and shun sin. Even Adam in perfect innocency fell, so "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." The security of the saints is a blessed truth of the Word of God and gives great consolation in times like these, but those few warnings should make us walk close to the Lord Jesus Christ lest there should be in us "an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God," Hebrews 3:12, Hebrews 4.

V. The Wages of Sin

Under this heading we shall consider the results of sin. The Scriptures say, "The wages of sin is death," Romans 6: 23. The Greek word for wage denoted the daily earning of the Roman soldier. It is the just remuneration for services, compensation for a hireling. It is set in contrast in the same verse with "The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." Lord here carries the meaning of Master in contrast to the mastery of sin earning the wages of death. The mastery of Christ gives freely by grace the gift of eternal life. The great controversy of those who would do away with hell, or any future eternal punishment of the lost, has been a trying to make death here annihilation. As we shall see, the "second death," as it is called in Revelation 20, is not annihilation, but is the opposite of eternal life, which would be eternal death. Life in this portion is not, eternal existence merely, then eternal death would be eternal non-existence; but eternal life is a quality, not just a quantity. It is God's life in union with Him; so eternal death must be a quality, in severance with God.

Under this heading we shall consider in detail the basis of punishment - how it is taught in the Scriptures, its nature and extent, the fact that there is no probation after death, no second chance, and the endlessness of hell's punishment.

There have been two primary errors consistently creeping up in the church and out of it in many different forms, but always bearing the two individual stamps. One has been the universal restorationists that would get everyone saved somehow sometime. Even the Devil himself in the theology of many shall find a seat in heaven. This follows the universalism which quote the apolotastasis of Peter - "The restitution of all things," Acts 3:21. This is only the "regeneration" Christ spoke of in Matthew 19:28, the consummation of Christ's redemptive work when "He shall have put all enemies under His feet;" but they are still enemies. These verses speaking of "the restitution of all things" must be held in the light of Christ's statement - "Cast Into hell where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched," Mark 9:42-44, and all the verses we shall consider where hell is spoken of as eternal. There has always been in the church those Universal Restorationists and a new group has arisen with the "concordant version" of the Scriptures.

On the other hand we have the annihilationalists who are in a sense Universalists, for they teach in one form or another the second chance of everyone; another probation after death, under better circumstances (except the purgatory crowd where the circumstances wouldn't be so good); and then, if the soul isn't saved, they are forever annihilated. That is universalism - no dualism in eternity; still only universal salvation, for annihilation is oblivion, or better cessation of all existence. Of such are the Russelites and Seventh Day Adventists and some other independent groups. We shall see how widely both those groups miss the plain meaning of the Scriptures, which teach the eternal punishment of the wicked or lost in a literal hell. These false theories stem from two faults in particular: a light estimate of sin with God's hatred of it, and a formulating of a doctrine built upon their own wishes, feelings, and thoughts, rather than upon, the plain statement of the Scriptures. You find the touchstone for the error of both universalism and annihilationism as the false doctrine each holds concerning the redeeming work of Christ. Universalism holds light ideas of sin, the holiness of God, and the need of regeneration, by faith God's substitutionary atonement through Jesus Christ. The Second Chanceites also hold light views of sin and deny the need of regeneration for salvation and hold erroneous ideas about Christ. The wish is the father of their theology about hell. They want no hell or eternal punishment, so twist all Scripture to try to put its fires out. How foolish it is to build a doctrine of eternal things upon our own sentimentality, rather than upon the plain teachings of the Scriptures! It is not hard to test those systems by the Word of God, Isaiah 8:20, "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." What I think God ought to do or ought not to do has nothing to do with it. I cannot think God's thoughts, "For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so are His thoughts above my thoughts." For any man to take upon himself the authority and arrogance to teach by tongue or pen the possibility or mythical hope of a soul going out of this world without Christ and salvation to have another chance somewhere sometime is to risk the wrath of Almighty God and weight of lost souls upon his own, or the false hope of oblivion rather than a just personal meeting of that holy God when law is broken and when love in Christ is rejected and spurned. How many have welcomed the idea of annihilation as an escape from a "certain fearful looking forward to judgment!"

A. The Fact of Sin's Punishment, grounded in reason and Scripture, Romans 6:23 - "The wages of sin is death."

First, it is to be noted that the punishment of the wicked is grounded in two great attributes or principles in the Divine nature: love and justice, love and law. God is love and God is righteous or holy. Any doctrine of punishment must take into consideration both of these infinite attributes of God, not from the human standpoint of leniency or harshness, but as they abide in God in infinite rectitude and love without partiality. It is hard to divorce our human frailties from the idea surrounding God's love and justice. Either our hearts run away with our heads or our heads run away with our hearts.

First, note God's love in relation to punishment, for this is the argument used by so many against the punishment of the wicked. The same arguments that can be raised against an eternal hell as punishment can be used against the presence in this life of sorrow, suffering, inequality, beastiality, the presence of sin, and yet these are here because God is what He is, and must be reconciled with His love. This brings us to the first illustration of punishment grounded in the love of God as well as the justice of God.

1. Every provision God has made, whether in the moral or physical world, has a heaven side and a hell side. The law of physics works in both fields, namely "action and reaction are always equal." There can be no movement or force of nature without this double expression. Obedience to the provisions of love brings happiness and health, but disobedience to the same provisions, or perversion of them, brings its own natural retribution of pain and suffering. There is no law of God which doesn't have this two-fold nature, the heaven side and the hell side, as the law of gravity, which makes life possible on earth, holds things to the earth and the earth in its pathway around the sun at the right distance to sustain life. Let that baby get too near the window and fall out of the fourth story window; the same law of gravity hurls it to death on the sidewalk below, that is the hell side of the law of gravity for all transgressions. We see it also in the law of electricity, motion, the law of fermentation and bacterial decay, which makes all living things go back to nutriment to sustain future life; yet man, disobeying its laws, lets filth and decay bring pestilence and death, and uses these same laws to transform the gift of bread into intoxicating liquors which destroy body and soul.

How many of the gifts of God's love in nature are tortured or twisted out of their proper usage to man's detriment and death, rather than the purpose for which God gave them! Our eating and sleeping habits and appetites, all God-given for health and happiness and enjoyment as well as to sustain life, are perverted to the opposite usages and bring the opposite results so that all of the provisions of God's love have the two opposite poles, blessing and cursing, but both are provisions of His love. The difference is the usage to which we put them.

2. Analogous to this set of illustrations is to be found in the moral world and man's relation to the moral law of God. By that law of holiness man may be made in the likeness of God, partakers of His glory, but by disobedience sinks into the image of a demon; and the farther away he gets from Him the more devilish he becomes, until he must be driven from the very presence of God. That the tender mercies and entreaties of infinite love ignored and trampled upon should at last turn their deathless energies against the guilty soul to sting and burn it is as much to be expected as that the forces of nature, the same expression of the loving solicitude of God, should take up arms to destroy the poor victim they were designed to help.

3. The third idea is that love must always pre-suppose the opposite of hate. There can be no love without hate; to pre-suppose the one is to pre-suppose the other. The one is the reverse action of the other. We must love or hate with equal intensity objects opposite in character. To say that God cannot send any of His creatures to hell is inconsistent with the revelation of His love, is to not understand what love is; for God to love righteous Noah was to hate the wicked antediluvians; to love Lot was to rain fire and brimstone on Sodom and Gomorrah, You may see the love of God for His Son Jesus Christ, while His wrath was being poured out upon Him as the sinner's substitute. (But remember the term hate when applied to God is the opposite of love). God's love and God's hate are without passion or impulse. It is a calm, fixed, eternal aversion with all that is contrary to His own holy nature. Love is admiration, approval, and the delight of complacency in those who partake of His own likeness; but hate is loathing, condemnation, and displeasure with no malevolence, passion, or

bitterness in those who are in opposition to His own nature, Psalm 7:11 "God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day." See Mark 3:5; or Romans 2:6-9. By the very nature of God's love, He must be eternally attracted to those in His own likeness and must be eternally repelled by those in opposition to His own holy nature.

The fact of the future punishment of the wicked is grounded in the plain statements of the Scriptures. We cannot take all of them, but, if only a few are considered and they state the case plainly, then there is an end of argument. Human speculation upon a subject like this is vain and any watering down of its warnings dangerous. We will not go into the many reasons why the Old Testament is obscure in its warnings of punishment after death, but they are the same as those of the resurrection. "Immortality was only brought to light through the Gospel," but there are warnings, such as "The wicked shall be turned into hell and all nations that forget God," Psalm 9:17. There are other expressions such as "devouring fire and everlasting burnings," Psalm 33:14. Read Isaiah 66:15, 24. It is left for the New Testament with its further revelation of the love of God in Christ redeeming the world, to reveal further the wrath of God against the rejecters. This is natural.

a.) Note Christ's statements. He spoke more of hell than of heaven. He who came to reveal the Father and the many mansions, also revealed the fire which is not quenched and the worm that dieth not and the casting into outer darkness with weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. He spoke 30 parables; 11 of these or one third have as their principle the subjects of reward and punishment and future retribution of the wicked. Note the parable of the tares, Matthew 13: 37-42, "They shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall he wailing and gnashing of teeth," so ends the parable of the draw-net, Matthew 13:49-50. Notice the parables of the marriage supper, Matthew 22:13. The man without the wedding garment - bind him hand and feet and cast him into outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. Note the unfaithful steward in Matthew 25:30, and those leaving the judgment of the nations in Matthew 25:46 - "The wicked into everlasting punishment and righteous into life eternal."

There is the clear teaching by Christ of the consciousness of life immediately after death and the beginning of punishment for the wicked and peace for the righteous in the story of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16:19-21. There is the exclusion from heaven of those whose righteousness doesn't exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees in Matthew 5:20; and "Except ye be converted and become as little children ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven," Matthew 18:3; and "Except ye be born again ye cannot enter," John 3:5.

b.) Note Paul's statements. First, of the folks who won't enter like Revelation 22:15, those who are "without." See I Corinthians 6:9-10; Ephesians 5:5; Galatians 5:19-21; like Revelation 21:27. See his plain statement in II Thessalonians 1:6-8 and II Thessalonians 2:12 and Hebrews 10:27-29.

c.) More could be quoted but the scene of the last judgment will suffice for one more, Revelation 20:14-15. Like the words of Abraham to Dives in Sheol, "They have Moses and the prophets (and now the whole New Testament apostles and prophets); and if they won't hear them, neither would they believe if one arose from the dead." The quibbling over the terms used and the effort to water them down to a weak preconceived idea of annihilation and soul sleeping belongs to a later consideration on the eternality of punishment.

B. The Nature of Sin's Punishment, What is meant by hell, torment, weeping, and gnashing of teeth, hell fire, outer darkness, etc.

There is, of necessity, a great deal of obscurity surrounding the punishment in hell, as there is of the glories of heaven. Heaven has been so materialized, sensualized, and made so human as to dim its glories; so hell has been so elevated until it has been made a vestibule to heaven or a sweet oblivion forever. The Scriptural pictures which are given, however, are very graphic, and, if as some say, they are figurative, then since a figure is only a small representation of the reality, if fire, tormented in these flames, etc., are only figures and small representations, then what must the reality be! There must be an analogy between the figure and the reality; if these pictures are but the shadow, what must the reality be? What then is the nature of sin's punishment?

1. It is banishment from the presence of God. This is first and the worse. This is expressed in such statements as "not entering the kingdom of heaven," "excluded from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power" (II Thessalonians 1:9), and "cast into outer darkness," "to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever," (Jude 13), "I never knew you, depart from me ye accursed," and like statements. Revelation says, "Without are all those kinds of folks." It means to be denied the presence of the King, the protection of its laws, the shelter of its government, the enjoyment of its wonderful redeemed society, and denial to its enjoyments. It is to wander aimlessly through the eternal darkness of hell - dark in mind, soul, and resurrected body. It is to be without God, without His glory, the glory of His personal presence, without the light of His smile, the expression of His love, the bounty of His hand. What that would be like no man can now say, for no man while alive on earth is so abandoned. To be forever consciously repelled from God by a contrary nature, denied every expression of the light and love of God is beyond all human comprehension; to be cast out of the society of the redeemed to room in the community of the lawless - with demons, fallen angels, Satan, and the godless of all ages in hell itself.

Its expression, "Cast into outer darkness" is to show the hopelessness of the darkness of eternal night. None of God's messengers of mercy will ever penetrate, no ray of light of a new opportunity, the dawning of a new hope, proclaiming a new gospel of glad tidings, love never comes, grace is never offered; it is boundless chaos and night, to be denied all expression of God's presence and to hear His, "Depart from me, ye accursed" will be the deepest torments of hell for the lost soul.

2. Another element in the punishment of sin in hell will be remorse, See the whiplash of regret in a blighted love life, when some foolish infidelity or some ill-

spoken word is the last straw that breaks the bonds of love and drives away the one most precious; and one is left with only memories of happier days, of blighted hopes, of things that might have been -- and all that is left is, "If only I had done this or that, or hadn't done this or that." Even in this life remorse has been a whiplash to torment the fallen with a sense of deep loss, blighted joys, and leave nothing but anguish and despair. In this life, however there is not the ability to see perfectly the perdition into which man's own sin has plunged him. In eternity, with a eternalized resurrected body fitted for destruction, the full nature of man's sin and rejection of Christ will be clearly seen. Memory will perfectly recall every sermon, prayer, warning, loving entreaty, mercy, and goodness of God which should have led him to repentance, every striving of the Spirit, and all the opportunities when he could have been saved, with every silly, empty excuse he made in this life. How clearly the soul will see true values at last but with the awful sound of doom, "Too late!" What hopeless remorse and self-hatred this will entail!

3. Another element in sin's punishment in hell will be not only the self-loathing brought on by remorse, but a bitter hatred of God and all that is holy, such as Satan seems to have - an all-consuming bitterness and high rage against God that will make a hell in itself. We see a small picture of this here on earth when we see what intense hatred can do in any life. It poisons every wellspring of the life and consumes every joy. This is pictured of the wicked in hell by the expression, "gnashing of teeth." That is a Hebrew way of expressing intense hatred - as the Jews against Stephen at his stoning, and the time they attempted to take the life of Christ at Nazareth, running on Him, gnashing their teeth. It is a helpless raging of a foul, unclean, lost soul against the righteous judgment of Almighty God. The positive inflictions God shall pour out upon the lost, the hell fire, the brimstone, the ever-lasting destruction, etc, that this is true and that not all punishment is self-inflicted is plain from these and many other expressions, such as, "the smoke of their torment, the weeping and wailing."

The argument, as to the literalness of hell fire for and against, is foolish, for the most part. Objections have been raised that fire like that would consume the wicked, but they forget that they have an eternalized resurrected body, "a vessel fitted for wrath," even as we have one fitted to stand the glories of heaven. On the other hand, those who contend only for the literalness of the fire, do not see that the greatest torments of hell will not be physical but spiritual. The Scriptures are plain as in the case of Dives, "I am tormented in these flames." Who can know the glories that await us in our new bodies in the New Jerusalem; who can imagine the eternal loss and suffering in the Lake of Fire, "where the fire is not quenched and the worm dieth not."

C. The Certainty of Sin's Punishment

Again the whole doctrine of another chance after death is grounded in man's sentimental wishes rather than the plain statements of the Scriptures which certainly hold out no future hope of another chance. Man interprets what God ought to do in relation to the lost by the creatures' happiness rather than the Glory of God. Proverbs 11:7 states, "When a wicked man dieth, his expectation shall perish," his hope, all hope. There is in the minds of a vast multitude a lingering hope that somewhere, somehow, sometime after death

God will give them a new, better chance to be saved. No matter how miserable a failure they have made out of this life, God will give them a new life to try all over again. No matter if the territorial court of this life pronounces the verdict guilty and the sentence of death upon them, a higher court, the supreme court of the universe will reverse the decision of the lower court and grant him complete absolution from all guilt in this life; and no matter if he has lived like the devil himself, trampled underfoot the Son of God by his oft rejection of Him, defied the laws of a holy God, He will hear the "Enter into the kingdom prepared of the Father, thou blessed of the Father." No matter if he has messed up the material God gave him in this life to build for eternity, in another world God will give him a new set of tools and brand new material and tell him to try again. It never seems to enter into his mind that without the new birth, there is much doubt that if God gave him ten billion new chances, he would muff each and every one of them. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, ye must be born again' or 'ye cannot see the kingdom of God."

Despite the wishful thinking, man has seen the necessity, if possible, of finding some Scriptures to help his theory. You see that tendency in the most blatant unorthodox cult such as Christian Science, etc., where they will go to any length to twist the Scriptures to fit their theory. They outrage every form of hermeneutics. Rather than building their ideas upon the Scriptures, they formulate their theory, then go to the Scriptures, ignore all plain portions, and, by diligent seeking, finally find some isolated text to prove their theory.

Origin of the third century after Christ was the first to be an advocate of a second chance. He also was the inventor of the spiritualizing method of Bible translation, this is to leave the plain meaning and find a hidden mysterious symbolic meaning in all of them. If the second chance were so, we should find it plainly; for, according to this theory, a vastly, larger portion of the human race are to be raised into holiness and happiness in the second, rather than the first, probation. With this in mind we should expect a plain statement of the doctrine at least, but there are none. Obscure portions are advanced in support.

Cannon Farrar of England based his whole idea on Matthew 2:31-32, the unpardonable sin and a misunderstanding of the word, "Neither in this world, neither in the world to come." World here is age, age of law or Grace, but Farrar says, "Our Lord stated with immense plainness and with no reservation the possible ultimate remission of every sin and blasphemy but one; and what that one is, no human being has been able to decide." They base their whole doctrine upon an implication. They assume that the declaration that the sin against the Holy Spirit has no forgiveness in the world to come implies that all other sins may be forgiven there. What a slender cord on which to hang a grand doctrine! The Greek word for world here is not "kosmos," world, but "eon," age, age of Law and in the age to come, or Grace. Others, of course, use that obscure portion in I Peter 3:18-20, but a close study of it shows that Christ preached to the antediluvians in the spirit, while the ark was preparing, and, therefore, in Noah for 120 years.

The second-chance boys state the need of a second chance primarily for those who had no first chance, but the antediluvians had 120 years of chance under Noah. Why didn't Christ go to so many of the heathen of the Old Testament who never had any chance? If He did, it still doesn't give any hope of second chance; for He got no converts out of that crowd; for Peter says so in II Peter 2:14-9. From this there is no ray of hope for a single one of them but they are reserved under punishment.

What a fog bank to rest so vast a doctrine with such far-reaching implications and procrastination of decision. If wrong, where can there be any rectification made? If a false

hope through life and then to find it isn't so, what eternal loss! If it were a biblical doctrine it wouldn't rest on any quicksand like this!

1. Opposed to this is the dictate of reason deduced from the Scriptures.

a. Any second chance would render the first inconsequential, but the Scriptures plainly put the emphasis on this one. The only reason for the urgency of decision now in this life is the finality of its verdict. "Even the saints are judged according to the things done in the body," and the wicked "according to their works," Revelation 20:12. This would have to be while in the body. Take away the idea of the finality of this probation, however, and, by its very nature, it ceases to be any probation at all, but a time to "eat, drink, and be merry" without fear or worry since a better chance waits in the future. What force would this one have?

b. Going even further, it would be better to wait for the second, since it would be more ideal, in better surroundings, with better messengers, maybe angels.

c. Sin itself would not be feared if a future chance for pardon is assured, long after the pleasures and profit of sin have been enjoyed. Get the most out of this world and then get the most out of the one to come when it gets here since another chance will then be given without any remembrance, regard, or guilt from this one to affect it.

d. The argument is advanced that since memory will carry over in us if not in God, men will have learned by experience and profit by it. What a lie. It doesn't even work in this life. The fact is, man doesn't learn by experience when it comes to sin or sin's consequence. Why is it a doctor, who knows as no one else the awful result of drug addiction, will become a dope fiend? I have known several personally. The argument is advanced, "Man, viewing this life from the life beyond, seeing the disaster they made of it, will reform." All of life proves the falseness of this. Men rise from one fall into the same thing to his ruin, like a dog returned to the same vomit, which made him sick, and the hog to his wallow.

Illustration: Man, with a drink habit, warned by his physician, cured but still returns until to his addiction until his death. Prisons never reform but graduate hardened smart criminals to try this time not to reform from crime, but to try harder not to get caught. Most crimes are committed by oft repeaters. Illustration: Even pain and suffering do not reform; See Revelation 16:9-11, 21.

e. Even greater reason against it: It is inconsistent with every revelation of the Scriptures, which demand retribution for all disobedience of the Law of God. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die," But the righteous die also, if only physical death is meant. "One event happeneth to all and there is no difference." "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things in the law to do them," etc., and the very basis of judgment, "God requireth that which is past," "The wages of sin is death," "Judged according to his works." If a new and better chance waits after

death, where is the judgment at all? Where is any of sin's dread punishment? Consequences? Reaping? It is only a will-o-the-wisp, a bad dream without reality.

f. Why suffer the jeopardy of missionary work?

2. Plain Scriptures against the theory of a second chance (besides the analogy of Scripture).

Foremost is the story Jesus told in Luke 16, a story hated by all who wishfully desire a second chance after death, so they have spiritualized it away. The Russelites make Lazarus the Gentiles (Why? He was a Jew, too) and the rich man as the Jewish nation, but according to the Scriptures Israel is to be restored also. It is to be taken literally since it speaks of the common beliefs of Sheol held by Israel, and Christ would not be guilty of borrowing a belief that was a lie in order to teach a spiritual truth. Note what Dives wanted was not liberation (he never asked for that) but only alleviation. "Send Lazarus to cool my tongue." He can't - There is a great gulf fixed. Then "They which would pass from hence to you cannot," but that is only half of it - - "Neither can they pass to us that would come from thence." God fixed the gulf and made the statement - no matriculation. Further, the eternal state of punishment starts immediately after death.

Note some Scriptures: Romans 2:6-11, Hebrews 9:27, John 8:21-24, "Ye shall die in your sins." It is plain that the church for 2,000 years has interpreted the church doctrine of punishment as determined by one's life on earth, and the finality of death as sealing one's eternal destiny. Coming to the Scriptures without preconceived notions, one cannot get from its urgent messages anything else but deciding now: "Today if ye will hear His voice," "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found"; etc. Lastly, Revelation 22:11, "He that is unjust let him be unjust still; and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still," eternal confirmation in holiness or filthiness - God's Final Word.

D. The Duration of Sin's Punishment (Eternal)

There are three classes of folks who try to teach that sin's punishment is not forever:

a. The Universal Restorationalist. Punishment can't be eternal since God is finally going to save all.

b. The Annihilationist. Punishment can't be eternal since God is going to finally annihilate (cause to cease completely) all those who fail the second chance, Advent Christian, Seventh-Day Adventist, and Russelites. Pastor Russell held it axiomatically that death always meant annihilate, hence he had to twist physical death to soul sleeping. But does it? "Let the dead bury their dead;" Let the annihilated while she lives; so destroy Jesus, "Destroy this body (Temple) and in three days I will raise it again," Perish John 3:16; but Peter - II Peter 3:6. Destroy, perish, etc., to destroy or ruin for original use.

c. Well-meaning, sentimental folks with more sentiment than theology, or love of the truth, like Cannon Farrar and many modernists. These all try to make the words

used in the Bible, for eternal and everlasting, especially eon and aionios, to mean not duration, but quality alone. I wish we had the time to take the silly arguments they use to bolster their ideas.

Origen of the third century was one of the first to start the idea that there are an infinite succession of aeons or ages, and that sinful souls may, at the last, in passing through these, become purified. He held it as a matter of pure speculation for He believed the Bible taught the endless punishment of the wicked, but in his speculations maintained that this was only from prudential reasons on the part of the Creator, for fear that if the whole truth were revealed, wicked men would wax too bold in their presumptions. They make the word eon and aionios to be "Age-Long" rather than the true meaning "eternal," so most recognize the plain teaching of the Bible on eternal punishment, but sentimentally hope God will give another chance, etc.

First note that the Bible writers often do as we are forced to do - add "ages - to - ages" time to time to forcefully denote timeless - eternity. We will pass over the much of Hebrew, only to mention that they reduplicate Olam, which means forever, as Nehemiah 9:5 - Lit. "From everlasting to everlasting;" Daniel 2:20; 7:18, "The saints...shall possess the kingdom forever, even forever and ever;" Then they added "adh" perpetuity," so Exodus 15:18, "The Lord shall reign forever and ever," Lit. - "To unbounded duration and perpetuity," then they pluralize Olam as Isaiah 26:4,- "Trust ye in the Lord Jehovah forever for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength," Lit., "The rock of eternities."

Note the Hebrew of Isaiah 45:17, "But Israel shall be saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation (A salvation of unbounded durations). Ye shall not be ashamed nor confounded world without end (To the unbounded of perpetuity)."

The most common word in the Greek is "eis tous aionas," Lit., "Unto the ages of the ages," Galatians 1:5, Ephesians 3:21. It occurs 21 times in the New Testament, 14 times in Revelations alone. Five of these describe God as living unto the ages of the ages, Revelation 1:18; Revelation 14:9-10; 10:6; 20:10; and of the righteous reigning forever and ever (Unto the ages of the ages) Revelation 22:5.

Now certainly in all of these it means forever and ever or unto the ages of the ages, or plain forever, eternally, time without end. In this same book it is used of the sufferings and torments of the devil, the beast, and false prophet and of the wicked, Revelation 14:11; 19:3, and 20:10. The usage of the adjective derived from the foregoing noun, aionon, namely aionios is most of the time correctly translated in A.V., "eternal."

Let us note the 67 times it occurs where it is not disputed at all. Fifty-one times it is used of "life and happiness of the saved," such as 44 times eternal life. It is used of everlasting habitations, eternal salvation, eternal inheritance, the everlasting kingdom, and God's eternal glory. There are two in respect to God's eternal glory, four of the gospel, the covenant, the Spirit, and the things not seen (where it is contrasted with the things seen, which are temporal). Seven times it is used of future punishment. G. Frederick Wright well asks, "They who deny that any of the words used of future punishment in Holy Scriptures express eternity, would do well to consider whether there is any way in which Almighty God could have expressed it which they would have accepted as meaning it."

We could use many arguments but feel that they are superfluous. Here we could speak of the absolute oneness of voice in the early church for the first three hundred years

until Origen with his spiritualizing of the Scriptures. We could speak of the common tenor of doctrine in the Scriptures; the helpless lost estate of the unbeliever; the resurrection unto damnation spoken of by Jesus, certainly not a resurrection unto annihilation, or restoration either, or it could not be unto damnation; the awful picture Jesus Himself painted of "weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth," The worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched in Gehenna or Lake of fire, Mark 9:44-46, where Christ quotes from Isaiah 66:24.

There is one other verse to consider where the same Greek expression is used of the eternal blessedness of the saved and the eternal punishment of the lost. I don't see how words could be clearer. The law governing antithesis requires that equal latitude be given both prepositions where they are set ever against each other and much more so where the very identical expression or word is used of both. If hell-fire is age lasting only then so is heaven. Note, Matthew 25:46, "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal."