

This gulf which separates lost men from God, cannot be conceived of in a material way, as if it were a separation by an interval of space. No! God is everywhere, even from hell he is not absent, as the living God, the eternal Judge! "If I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there." No small part of the miseries of the damned arises from the consciousness of being afar off from God, who yet is near, awfully near, as a consuming fire. Sin is separation from God. Sin is that gulf. Wherever sin is found, it forms a gulf of separation from God. Men living in sin, *live* with a gulf of separation between them and God; and dying in sin, the great gulf becomes the gulf *fixed*. Sinner that great gulf is with you, *within* you. You are separated from God by the gulf of your unholy nature—by your love of sin—and by the enmity to God which sprang from that nature.

Thus is it with you, as unrenowned; and because it is so, is there gone forth a sentence of banishment by the righteous God. How great a gulf—how profound an abyss! Canst thou measure the depths of evil—the height of God's holiness—the extent of that law which is exceeding broad?—And see! how the distance increases, how continuously the gulf widens, and deepens, and fixes! Every sin adds to the interval. Born as a sinner on the farther side of the gulf, every sin has been a further separation from your God. Cast off from God; how rapid and ready the moral and spiritual progress evil-ward, down-ward, hell-ward. Are you not conscious of it? Like a star shot from its sphere, with what velocity you travel, and how resistlessly! So with all men in their separation from God—onward, downward; who shall arrest!—who shall recall!—who shall bind again to God? None but he who can bind Pleiades and guide Arcturus. None but he whose name is Immanuel—"who was manifested to destroy the works of the devil."

Do you ask *where* is this gulf? Jesus answers, where sin is. Sin's nature is not changed by time or place; what it shall be in eternity, that it is now in time. Death does not divide sinful men from God—it only reveals the separation already existing. Death opens up no new gulf between God and the soul; it only brings unsaved men to the full consciousness, and to the fearful

realities of that gulf already formed. Unsaved brother, avert your thoughts from the conception of any gulf in the future between your soul and God. The gulf exists *now*; now it extends around you, as unsaved man, unholy in your nature, evil in your works, and guilty before God. Now it shuts you out from God. *This* is the gulf which you ought to dread—the true gulf of moral and spiritual character. You would not say that you are like God—that you are nigh to God—that you are, with the life of your soul, your soul, your *true* life hid with Christ in God! What then! dare to realize truth! Your gulf is before you, around you, on every side, as without God and without hope in the world; and unless you cross it and that speedily, it will yawn a dread abyss between you and God in eternity.

But see, reader, the gulf is bridged!—There is a ladder let down from heaven, that reaches to earth. The holy One, "made of a woman, made under the law," hath appeared on *this* side of the gulf.—He became for a season "as made sin," separated from God, and by his *obedience* and *blood* he hath bridged the gulf, and now the arch spans the void between earth and heaven. Springing on the one side from the Godhead of the Eternal, and on the other from the cradle at Bethlehem, the living arch appears—the wonder of angels—the glory of God—the new and living way consecrated for us back to glory and to God. Hear Him who *built* it and who *is* it, as he cries, "It is finished!" What is finished? The new way—the way for God's banished—the way across the gulf between sinners and God. Yet look again, the arch reaches *only* to earth. In eternity it yawns a bridgless abyss—a gulf fixed. For the *place* is passed by, where the sinner might have crossed, and the season gone, allotted for his return,

In eternity *all* is fixed. God remains the same; he hath forgotten to be gracious; his mercy then is clean gone forever. And the sinner remains the same; his character is unchangeable; the gulf is *fixed*. The damned for a moment may cease from wailing as they listen in vain for hope and help. No sound is heard through the gloom of the place of torment, but the voice of the "Watcher and an Holy One," crying, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and