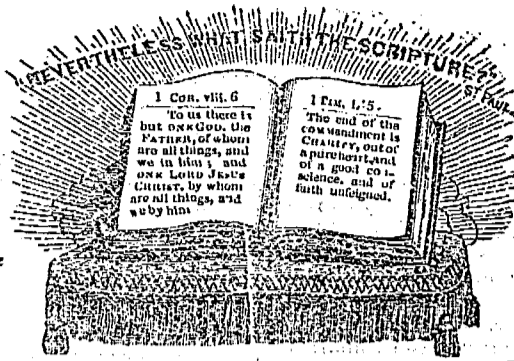


# THE BIBLE



# CHRISTIAN.

Truth, Holiness,

Liberty, Love.

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## JUDGMENT OF THE DEAD.

The great purpose of the Spirit is to intimate that a fitting award was to be meted out to the immense multitudes of those who were written as non-living during the lapse of the thousand years. Though dead in the sight of God as to any acting of true spiritual life, yet they had been sufficiently active to inflict untold sufferings upon the living witnesses of the truth, and to bring them, from age to age, to the bloody block. It was proper, therefore, that they should be judged—men of all grades and orders—the 'great' and the 'small,' i.e., the eminent and the mean. For this purpose 'the books are opened,' evidently a symbolical expression, denoting simply the fact, that their 'works' are all registered in the records of the divine remembrance as well as their own, as the unquestionable ground of the sentence which is to be pronounced. As the 'books' then are a mere figure, a part of the costume of the scene, we infer the same as to the 'throne,' and its occupancy by a visible judge. The whole is emblematic, and not real. God does not sit upon a throne, nor does he, like earthly monarchs, keep written archives of the affairs of his kingdom. The imagery portrayed is in accordance with our common notions of judicial proceedings, and is thus best calculated to produce the practical effect designed. To the great mass of men of all ages such a representation will appeal with more power than any other, while at the same time, as the moral reason is developed and educated, the scenery will gradually resolve itself into an inward process, the necessary result of *character*, and fixing one's spiritual and eternal state by an established law. If men were universally elevated in this life above the sphere of the sensuous, this more abstract view of the subject would be all that would be requisite to exercise the most ample control over their practical conduct: for to the reflecting mind there can be no higher sanction to a moral law than that in its own nature, and by its inevitable consequences, it works out weal or woe to its subject, according as he obeys or violates it. But the mass of men are *not reflecting*; they are habitually incompetent to appreciate the force of purely moral considerations, and therefore the wisdom and benignity of Jehovah have accommodated their revelations of human destiny to the intellectual infirmities of the race. They are communicated through a medium that shall address itself to their imaginations. They are set forth under the guise of symbols and images calculated to work on their hopes and fears, and to move the reason through the machinery of the passions. Thus in regard to the sublime pictured scenery we are now contemplating. The *truth*, divested of all drapery, undoubtedly is, that each individual of this countless multitude was actually *judged*, as every man necessarily is, the moment he became a denizen of the world unseen. His *character* decided his *destiny*. But in accordance with the general analogy of revelation, the judgment is here represented as concentrated to a point, to a single act, and its candidates are exhibited as arraigned, as having their indictment read out to them, and then subjected to a formal sentence followed by an actual execution. This is the lot of the condemned; and such is the import of the symbols, that whatever may

be the true nature of their doom, no possible solution can avoid the inference that it is *tremendously fearful*, and no man can fail to impose upon himself, to his infinite detriment, who adopts any construction of the figured scenery which goes in any way to relax the awful tone of *sanction* that runs through the whole. Still, we are not to be deterred by any contingency of this sort from the humble and reverent attempt to resolve *shadows* into *substance*.—*Professor Bush.*

## SALVATION.

Ask multitudes, what is the chief evil from which Christ came to save them, and they will tell you "From hell, from penal fires, from future punishment." Accordingly, they think that salvation is something which another may achieve for them, very much as a neighbour may quench a conflagration that menaces their dwellings and lives. That word *hell*, which is used so seldom in the sacred pages, which, in a faithful translation, would not once occur in the writings of Paul, and Peter, and John, which we meet only in four or five discourses of Jesus, and which all persons, acquainted with Jewish geography, know to be a metaphor, a figure of speech, and not a literal expression, this word, by a perverse and exaggerated use, has done unspeakable injury to Christianity. It has possessed and diseased men's imaginations with outward tortures, shrieks and flames; giving them the idea of an outward ruin as what they have chiefly to dread; turning their thoughts to Jesus, as an outward deliverer; and thus blinded them to his true glory, which consists in his setting free and exalting the soul. Men are flying from an outward hell, when in truth they carry within them the hell which they should most dread. The salvation which man chiefly needs, and which brings with it all other deliverance, is salvation from the evil of his own mind. There is something far worse than outward punishment. It is sin; it is the state of a soul, which has revolted from God, and cast off its allegiance to conscience and the divine word; which renounces its Father, and hardens itself against Infinite Love; which, endued with divine powers, enthralled itself to animal lusts; which makes gain its god, which has capacities of boundless and ever-growing love, and shuts itself up in the dungeon of private interests; which, gifted with a self-directing power, consents to be a slave, and is passively formed by custom, opinion, and changing events; which, living under God's eye, dreads man's frown or scorn, and prefers human praise to its own calm consciousness of virtue; which tamely yields to temptation, shrieks with a coward's baseness from the perils of duty, and sacrifices its glory and peace in parting with self-control. No ruin can be compared to this. This the impenitent man carries with him beyond the grave, and there meets its natural issue, and inevitable retribution, in remorse, self torture, and woes unknown on earth. This we cannot too strongly fear. To save, in the highest sense of that word, is to lift the fallen spirit from this depth, to heal the diseased mind, to restore it to energy and freedom of thought, conscience, and love. This was chiefly the salvation for which Christ shed his blood. For this the Holy Spirit is given; and to this all the truths of Christianity conspire.

## THE UPRIGHT MERCHANT.

The aspirations of youth, the ambition of manhood, could receive no loftier moral direction than may be found in the sphere of business. The school of trade, with all its dangers, may be made one of the noblest schools of virtue in the world; and it is of importance to say it; because those who regard it as a sphere only of selfish interests and sordid calculations, are certain to win no lofty moral prizes in that school. There can be nothing more fatal to elevation of character in any sphere, whether it be of business or society, than to speak habitually of that sphere as given over to low aims and pursuits. If business is constantly spoken of as contracting the mind and corrupting the heart; if the pursuit of property is universally satirized as selfish and grasping; too many who engage in it will think of nothing but of adopting the character and the course so pointed out. Many causes have contributed, without doubt, to establish that disparaging estimate of business—the spirit of feudal aristocracies, the pride of learning, the tone of literature, and the faults of business itself.

I say, therefore, that there is no being in the world for whom I feel a higher moral respect and admiration, than for the upright man of business; no, not for the philanthropist, the missionary, or the martyr. I feel that I could more easily be a martyr, than a man of that lofty moral uprightness. And let me say yet more distinctly, that it is not for the generous man, that I feel this kind of respect—that seems to me a lower quality—a mere impulse, compared with the lofty virtue I speak of. It is not for the man who distributes extensive charities, who bestows magnificent donations. That may be all very well—I speak not to disparage it—I wish there were more of it; and yet it may all consist with a want of the true, lofty, unbending uprightness. That is not the man then, of whom I speak, but it is he who stands, amidst all the swaying interests and perilous exigencies of trade, firm, calm, disinterested and upright. It is the man, who can see another man's interests, just as clearly as his own. It is the man whose mind, his own advantage does not blind nor cloud for an instant; who could sit a judge, upon a question between himself and his neighbor, just as safely, as the purest magistrate upon the bench of justice. Al! how much richer than ermine, how far nobler than the train of magisterial authority, how more awful than the guarded bench of majesty, is that simple, magnanimous and majestic truth. Yes, it is the man who is true—true to himself, to his neighbor and to his God—true to the right—true to his conscience—and who feels, that the slightest suggestion of that conscience, is more to him than the chance of acquiring an hundred estates.

Do I not speak to some such now? Stands there not here, some man of such glorious virtue, of such fidelity to truth and to God? Good friend! I call upon you to hold fast to that integrity, as the dearest treasure of existence. Though storms of commercial distress sweep over you, and the wreck of all worldly hopes threaten you, hold on to that plank that shall bear your soul unhurt to its haven. Remember that which thy Saviour hath spoken—"what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Remember

that there is a worse bankruptcy than that which is recorded in an earthly court—the bankruptcy that is recorded in heaven—bankruptcy in thy soul—all poor and broken down, and desolate there—all shame and sorrow and mourning, instead of that glorious integrity, which should have shone like an angel's presence, in the darkest prison that ever spread its shadow over human calamity. Heaven and earth may pass away, but the word of Christ—the word of thy truth, let it pass from thee never?—*Rev. Dr. Dewey.*

## KNOWLEDGE OF CHRIST.

Who knows Christ best? I answer, It is he who, in reading his history, sees and feels most distinctly and deeply the perfection by which he was distinguished. Who knows Jesus best? It is he, who, not resting in general and almost unmeaning praises, becomes acquainted with what was peculiar, characteristic, and individual in his mind, and who has thus framed to himself, not a dim image called Jesus, but a living being, with distinct and glorious features, and with all the reality of a well-known friend. Who best knows Jesus? I answer, It is he who deliberately feels and knows, that his character is of a higher order than all other characters which have appeared on earth, and who thirsts to commune with and resemble it. I hope I am plain. When I hear, as I do, men disputing about Jesus, and imagining that they know him by settling some theory as to his generation in time or eternity, or as to his rank in the scale of being, I feel that their knowledge of him is about as great as I should have of some saint or hero, by studying his genealogy. These controversies have built up a technical theology, but give no insight into the mind and heart of Jesus; and without this the true knowledge of him cannot be enjoyed. And here I would observe, not in the spirit of reproach, but from a desire to do good, that I know not a more effectual method of hiding Jesus from us, of keeping us strangers to him, than the incultation of the doctrine which makes him the same being with his Father, makes him God himself. This doctrine throws over him a mistiness. For myself, when I attempt to bring it home, I have not a real being before me, not a soul which I can understand and sympathize with, but a vague, shifting image, which gives nothing of the stability of knowledge. A being, consisting of two natures, two souls, one Divine and another human, one finite and another infinite, is made up of qualities which destroy one another, and leave nothing for distinct apprehension. This compound of different minds, and of contradictory attributes, I cannot if I would, regard as one conscious person, one intelligent agent. It strikes me almost irresistibly as a fiction. On the other hand, Jesus, contemplated as he is set before us in the gospel, as one mind, one heart, answering to my own in all its essential powers and affections, but purified, enlarged, exalted, so as to constitute him the unsullied image of God and a perfect model, is a being who bears the marks of reality, whom I can understand, whom I can receive into my heart, as the best of friends, with whom I can become intimate, and whose society I can and do anticipate among the chief blessings of my future being.

Truth gains nothing by exaggeration.—*Channing.*