

And yet it would seem that, after all, he is not quite sure of his conclusion, for some way he connects these *sail seasons* with these acts of disobedience, as a kind of punishment.

Thank God we have a salvation taught in the New Testament which needs no such questionable fixing up. Will the Saviour's description of joy in the Holy Ghost harmonize with such an experience, a joy which Jesus unhesitatingly said resembled His own. Jesus sorrowed, it is true, but where is the expression which connected it with an *inadvertent* breach of His Father's commands? I do always the will of Him that sent me, does not admit the possibility of any such inadvertence.

### EXPOSITION.

"Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and the that were entering ye hindered."—LUKE xi. 52.

"Woe unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in."—MATT. xxiii. 14.

"If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch."—MATT. xv. 14.

Can one absolutely hinder another from entering *the kingdom of heaven*? This is a question most serious, and requires very close consideration ere an answer is given.

From the clearly revealed fact that at the great final judgment every one must answer for himself, and receive of good or ill according to his own individual conduct, the inference is absolute that no one can lay the blame of his condemnation on another, for then how could the judgment be done in righteousness?

And yet the above passages seem to give to one man full power to lock up the kingdom of heaven against another, and even implies that this locking-out process alone is responsible for the failure of the other to enter.

Now these two strong, most serious truths must harmonize in some way which does not destroy or even impair either. It must be that each one has untrammelled freedom of choice in deciding the tremendous question of eter-

nal destiny, and it must also be true that man may turn the key of knowledge upon others, *i.e.*, shut them out of the kingdom of heaven so that they who thus act are alone responsible for the others' failure to enter.

Moreover this paradox cannot be satisfactorily explained by admitting that one may lessen the chance of another's ultimate salvation. For then we could easily answer the question, "What more could I do to my vineyard that I have not done," to the confusion of the Almighty questioner.

In the first place, then, it must be true that every man is in a state of probation, and cannot be the subject of a huge injustice in being created. This must be alike true of savages, of semi-civilized heathen, and of those living under the varying shades of light in Christian lands. God will judge all according to some standard of right, recognized as right by the parties judged; and, we further remark, that this standard of right must have been recognized by them when living and performing the deeds concerning which judgment is instituted.

This being true, we are shut up to this further truth, *viz.*, that man in his power of influencing his brother man, whilst he cannot destroy his *probation*, may, and does decide as to whether it shall be that of a heathen or a Christian, and this is true of all the different degrees of knowledge or enlightenment between the two extremes—he has power to turn the key of *knowledge* upon his brother man.

For example, what is to hinder Christendom from doubling or quadrupling her efforts in bringing the knowledge of Bible truths to the heathen world this year. That she will not do so simply means that she will indirectly condemn many thousands to live without the slightest possibility of knowing Bible truths. But now, if those heathen, thus neglected, should suffer any pains and penalties therefor at the judgment, how could justice be vindicated in their condemnation? Also, how make a distinction between their case and the heathen of the days of Moses and the prophets, when there was no command to God's