

# THE GOSPEL MESSENGER,

OR UNIVERSALIST ADVOCATE.

["AND THE ANGEL SAID UNTO THEM, FEAR NOT, FOR BEHOLD! I BRING YOU GOOD THINGS OF GREAT JOY WHICH SHALL BE UNTO ALL PEOPLE."—Luko 2: 10.]

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## BIBLE DOCTRINE OF HELL.

Statement of facts showing that the sacred writers did not use the words SHEOL, HADES, TARTAROS, and GEHENNA, to signify a place of ENDLESS MISERY.

SHEOL.—This word occurs 64 times in the Bible, and is rendered 32 times hell, 29 times grave, and 3 times pit. That it does not signify a place of endless misery, is evident from the following facts.

1. The connection of those passages where it is rendered hell, show that no reference is had to a future state of existence. Therefore, there is no proof that this hell is in any other world than the one in which we live. The first time it is rendered hell, and of course the first time the word hell occurs in the Bible, is in Deut. xxxii: 22. By examining the hell there spoken of it will be seen—that it was the 'lowest hell,' and that it was to 'consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains.' Here, fire is evidently used as a figure of punishment. The nature of this punishment may be learned from verse 24. 'They shall be burnt with hunger, and dejected with burning heat, and with bitter destruction: I will also send the teeth of beasts upon them, with poison of serpents of the dust.' All this was of course to take place here on the earth. The next time it is rendered hell, is in 2 Sam. xxii: 6, where David says, 'The sorrows of hell compassed me about,' &c. The nature of this hell may be learned from verse 7. 'In my distress I call upon the Lord, and cried to my God.' Again, in Ps. xviii: 5, David says, 'The sorrows of hell compassed me about; the snares of death prevented me.' Verse 6, 'In my distress I called upon the Lord,' &c. In Ezek. xxxii: 27, hell plainly signifies the literal grave. 'And they shall not lie with the mighty that are fallen of the uncircumcised, which go down to hell with their weapons of war; and they have laid their swords under their heads.' If the reader will examine every passage where the word sheol occurs, and is rendered hell, with the connection in which they are found, he will see no reason for supposing this hell to be in another world.

2. Both David and Jonah are represented as being in hell, and David is not only represented as being in hell, but as being in the lowest hell; and yet both of these individuals were alive, and on the earth. Jonah ii: 2, 'Out of the belly of hell cried I; and thou heardest my voice.' Certainly, Jonah could not cry out of the belly of hell, unless he was in hell. By consulting verse 1, it will be seen that this hell was the fish's belly. Ps. cxvi: 3, 'The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me.' To learn the nature of this hell, see the next words. 'I found trouble and sorrow.' Ps. lxxxvi: 12, 13; 'I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart; and I will glorify thy name forevermore. For great is thy mercy towards me; and thou hast deliver-

ed my soul from the lowest hell.' We learn from this, that it is not necessary to go into another world to find the lowest hell. Unless it can be shown, that there is a hell lower than the lowest, it is in vain to talk about any other hell than that which exists in this world. It is sometimes said that 'from hell there is no redemption.' But we here read of a man, who was redeemed from the lowest hell.

3. God is represented as being in hell. Ps. cxxxix: 8, 'If I make my bed in hell, behold thou (God) art there.' Here, hell signifies the invisible state of the dead; or perhaps the literal grave. The obvious meaning of the Psalmist is, that death could not carry him beyond the reach of God's presence.

4. David and Jonah, are not only represented as having been in hell, and as having been delivered from it; but the soul of David spoken of, as having been delivered from hell. Ps. xxx: 3, 'O Lord, thou hast brought my soul from the grave.' (sheol.) By soul here, David evidently means himself—his own person; and by sheol, the literal grave, or invisible state of the dead. See the next words. 'Thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit.'

5. God is represented as bringing men up from sheol. 1 Sam. ii: 6, 'He (God) bringeth down to the grave (sheol,) and bringeth up.' By those who believe in a place of endless misery—called hell, in a future world; it is thought that when once a person gets to hell, his doom is sealed forever; and that there is no prospect of his ever coming up. But if sheol in the text just quoted, means a place of endless misery, this opinion must be given up.

6. God is not only represented as bringing men up from sheol; but the Psalmist expresses satisfaction in the prospect of the redemption of his soul from sheol. Ps. xlix: 15, 'But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave.' (sheol.) Now if the word soul here means the immortal part of man, and the word sheol a place of misery after death, then it needs no proof that the Psalmist expected that the soul would go to this hell, and afterwards be delivered from it.

7. The patriarch Jacob expected himself to go to sheol: See Gen. xxxvii: 25, xlii: 38, and xliv: 31. But does any man believe that this good old man expected to go to a place of either limited or endless misery after death? Certainly not. But if sheol signifies a place of misery after death, Jacob certainly expected to go there.

8. To suppose that sheol signifies a place of endless misery after death, is to suppose that David so far from being a man 'after God's own heart,' was a perfect monster in cruelty. In 1 Kings ii: 6, he enjoins it upon his son Solomon not to let the 'hoar head of Joab go down to the grave (sheol), in peace.' In verse 9,

he enjoins it upon him to 'bring down the hoar head of Shimei to the grave (sheol) with blood.' And in Ps. lv: 15, he says of his enemies, 'Let death seize upon them, and let them go down quick into hell.' (sheol.)

9. The pious and patient Job prays that he might be hid in sheol. See Job xiv: 13. But, is it to be supposed that Job wished to be hid in a place of endless misery?

10. Sheol is represented as a place, from the power of which, it is impossible for any man, good or bad, to deliver himself. Ps. lxxxii: 48, 'What man is he that liveth and shall not see death? Shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave?' [sheol] This question is one which was designed to involve its own answer, and that answer was designed to be a negative one. Hence if we understand the words soul and sheol here, as they have been commonly understood, then this text affirms—that the souls of all men will go to a place of endless misery.

11. The bones of the Jewish people are represented as being scattered at the mouth of sheol. See Ps. cxli: 7. But is it to be believed that the bones of these people were scattered at the mouth of a place of endless misery in another world?

12. Sheol is represented as a place where 'there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom. See Eccl. ix: 10. But if there is no work there, of course it can not be a place where devils are at work tormenting men. If there is no device there, it can not be a place where devils are contriving how they may best torment their subjects. And if there is no knowledge there of course it can not be a place of misery.

13. The good old king Hezekiah, during his sickness expressed himself as if he should die—and go to sheol. See Isa. xxxviii: 10. But no man believes that Hezekiah expected to go to a place of endless misery.

14. Korah, Dathan, an Abiram, and their company, and their wives and their little ones, are represented as having gone down alive into sheol. See Numb. xvi: 27, 33. Here we learn that it is not even necessary to die in order to go to sheol. And as these persons went alive into sheol, i. e. were sent into sheol while living, hence this sheol must have been in this world.

15. If the reader will examine every passage where the word sheol occurs, he will see that it is used in two different senses—the one literal, and the other figurative. It is used in a literal sense to signify the grave, or as some suppose the invisible state of the dead. It is used in a figurative sense to denote trouble and sorrow.

16. Ps. ix: 17, is supposed by some to teach the doctrine of endless hell torments, but the reader will bear in mind that the hell, or sheol there spoken of, is either the

same as that in which David was while living here in this world, or the same as that into which Jacob expected to go, in which Job prayed to be hid, and in which Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and their company were swallowed up alive. If the latter, then signifies that the wicked, and those nations that forget God, should be suddenly cut off and destroyed by the judgments of God—be overwhelmed in calamity, and be brought to an untimely grave.

On the supposition that Sheol signifies a place of endless misery, and that the Scripture writers understood it so, we see of no way to account for the following additional facts.

1. Not one of the Scripture writers have given us any account of the origin, history or location of such a place. Moses has given us an account of the creation of the heavens and the earth, but he says not a word about the creation of a place of endless misery. Nor is any such account contained between the lids of the Bible. Now if there is such a place, God must have created it; and if Moses knew that he had created such a place, why should he overlook so important a fact—in his history of the creation?

2. God never informed mankind that he had created such a place. He forewarned Adam and Eve of the consequences of partaking of the forbidden fruit. He forewarned the Jews of the consequences of departing from the law of the Lord, and he has communicated various kinds of information to the children of men: But he has no where in the Bible informed any man that he had created an endless hell.

3. It is no where said in the Old Testament that sheol is a place of endless misery. We have seen that the word sheol occurs 64 times. It was used by Moses, Jacob, Samuel, Ezra, Job, David and others, but not one of these persons ever intimated that they understood by it a place of endless misery.

4. God never informed the Jewish people, that sheol signified a place of endless misery. In addressing that people, he frequently uses the word sheol, but always speaks of it as something which existed in this world.

5. Endless punishment in sheol, is not annexed as a penalty to any known law of God. God gave to the Jewish people various laws and institutions, and he annexed penalties to those laws, but we shall search in vain to find a law to which is annexed the penalty of endless misery in sheol, or any where else.

6. God never threatened the Jewish people with punishment in sheol after death. He frequently threatened them with punishment, and with tremendous and awful judgments, but in no single instance did his threatening extend beyond death.

7. The Jews were never threatened with punishment in sheol after death, by any of their prophets, priests or kings. If the