

instructions, and notice some of the terms of the sentence pronounced upon the wicked Jews, with the remark, in passing, that the key to the explanation of many of the parables of the New Testament, especially the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, in Luke xvi. 19, 31, and of the second death in Rev. xx. 11, 15, is furnished the inquirer by the explanation of the parable to which you have just given attention. They all refer to the same events, and the explanation of one will suggest to your minds the meaning of all.

They were to "depart into everlasting fire" in one text, and "go away into everlasting punishment" in the other. No one will question the perfect harmony of these different expressions. "Everlasting fire" and "everlasting punishment" mean one and the same thing. Now, is there anything in the term "fire" or "punishment" that necessarily connects those wicked criminals with any other existence than the present? Surely not. We have no knowledge of "*fire*" or "punishment" only as pertaining to this world.

To those, then, who apply our subject to future and immortal scenes, the whole rests upon the word "everlasting." But they should know that this word is not reliable, for its signification is determined by the nature of the thing to which it is applied, the same as the word great. There is the same difference in meaning of the term "everlasting," when applied to God and the priesthood of Aaron, as there is in the meaning of the word "great," when applied to a mountain and to a grain of sand.

The nature of punishment determines the meaning of the word "everlasting," when applied to punishment. The design of punishment is *correction*. Heb. xii. 5-12. When that is produced it ceases, having accomplished its object, and the "everlasting punishment" comes to an end, as absolutely as the "everlasting covenant" with the Jews and the "everlasting priesthood of Aaron" did when they had accomplished their mission. There is to be "an afterwards" of "righteousness and peace" to this "everlasting punishment." So the Scriptures abundantly testify.

But, do I hear the familiar objection: "Eternal life" is put in contrast with "everlasting punishment,"—so, if the punishment be limited to this world, the "life" must be limited to this world also; or, in popular phraseology, "if you destroy *hell*, you destroy *heaven* also, for everlasting and eternal have the same meaning."