

"God is Love."

BY O. PERRINS

Ah, blest assurance, sacred truth
Of Revelation's page;
The hope and comfort of my youth,
The joy of ripen age.
The works of nature all proclaim,
And reason's teachings prove,
The name of God, that Sovereign Name
Is mercy balm'd in love.

The thousand twinkling flames that shine,
And pour the golden flood,
Speak with a voice of life divine,
And whisper, "God is good."
The golden sun's resplendent blaze,
The rolling orbs above,
And luna's milder, goulder rays
Declare that "God is love."

The lightning flashing through the cloud,
Consumes its poisonous prey:—
The pealing thunder, roaring loud,
His mandate doth obey:
And when the storm and tempest o'er,
The bow of promise proves
The earth shall ne'er be deluged more,
For God's a God of love.

The planets rolling in their spheres,
Producing night and day:
The changing seasons, rolling years
His wisdom do display.
These all reflect a smiling face,
And thus directly prove
That His wisdom, power, and grace,
And he himself "is love."

The flowers that bloom, the birds that sing,
The winds and waves that roar.
A grateful song of tribute bring
To Him whom we adore.
The murmuring rill, the gentle breeze,
The warblers in the grove:—
The zephyr floating 'among the trees
Assure us "God is love!"

The vapors rise, the showers descend
And deck the earth with flowers,—
Thus showing the Almighty Friend
Of life and love is ours.
The grateful odors that arise
Like incense far above,—
The fruits that grow when beauty dies,
Announce that "God is love."

When Spring with daisies decks the lawn,
And birds with joy elate
Around the golden gates of morn
Carol their happy mates,
Nature's ten thousand voices join
The choral song of praise,
Saying, "God is love," yes, love divine,
Unchanged through endless days.

Shall man, who links the tribes below
With angel-minds above,
Be last to see, and feel, and know,
And own that "God is love?"
Blush, human nature, at the thought,
And wisdom's voice approve,—
Obey and reverence as you ought
A God of boundless love.

Where Happiness is Found.

BY J. LUNARD.

I've been where lordly mansions rise,
And grandure holds unquestioned sway,
And deemed them kin to paradise.
But found that they were all display.

I've been, too, at the banquet hall,
And mingled with the laughing gay,
When pleasure sweetly smiled on all,
And say how soon it passed away.

And I have bowed at beauty's shrine,
And worshipped with the young and fair,
And thought that happiness was mine,
But found it not abiding there.

These fading glories lure awhile,
And evanescent bliss impart,
But when they lose their transient smile
They leave an empty, aching heart.

We look for joy as though 'twere found
Where'er dwell the bright and fair,
Or borne along on every sound
Of music floating through the air.

We look for it in outward things,
When we should seek the fount within,
For, from the heart alone it springs,—
A heart where never dwelleth sin!

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.

GEHENNA.—Professor Stuart, of Andover College, says of this word, "The word Gehenna is derived, as all agree, from the Hebrew words *Ge Hinnom*."—To this, and in the opinion that this word signifies the valley of Hinnom, (a place near Jerusalem where a continual fire was kept burning to destroy the filth and dust of that city,) the following writers are all agreed: Adam Clarke, Parkhurst, Wynne, Wakefield, Macknight, Hoylin, Rosenmuller, and others. Indeed, this fact is not disputed by a single respectable Biblical critic. Its meaning in the New Testament, must therefore by its signification in the Old. In order, that the reader may see the Scripture usage of it in the Old Testament, we will give every passage from that Book where it occurs.

From the above passages the following facts are perfectly obvious: 1. The valley of Hinnom, was one of the landmarks or boundaries of the inheritance of the tribe of Judah. 2. If the reader will consult Lev. xviii: 21, and xx: 2, he will learn that the idol god Moloch was set up in this valley, and the Jews sacrificed their sons and their daughters to him. Professor Stuart says, "If we may credit the Rabbins, the head of the idol was like that of an ox; while the rest of its body resembled that of a man. It was hollow within, and being heated by fire, children were laid in its arms and were there literally roasted alive." We can not wonder then at the severe terms in which the worship of Moloch is every where denounced in the Scriptures. 3. This valley was called Tophet, as Stuart says, "from *Toph*, to vomit with loathing," or as Schleusner says, "from *Toph*, a drum; because the administrators of these horrible rites, beat drums, lest the cries and shrieks of the infants who were burned, should be heard by the assembly," or as Adam Clarke says "from *tophet*, the fire store, in which some suppose they burnt their children alive to the idol Moloch." 4. The good king Josiah abolished these nefarious practices, and polluted the place where they had been committed. Schleusner says, "After this, they (the Jews) held the place in such abomination, it is said, that they cast into it all kinds of filth, together with the carcasses of beasts, and the unburied bodies of criminals who had been executed. Continual fires were necessary in order to consume these, lest the putrefaction should infect the air; and there were always worms feeding on the remaining relics." Stuart says, Josiah polluted this place by causing the filth of the city of Jerusalem to be carried there. And he adds, "It would seem that the custom of desecrating this place, thus happily begun, was continued in after ages down to the period when our Saviour was on earth. Perpetual fires were kept up, in order to consume the filth which was deposited there. And as the same filth would breed worms, (for so all putrefying meat of course does,) hence came the expression, *Where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched*." 5. This valley is made an emblem of that terrible temporal calamity, which came on the Jewish nation in the destruction of their city, and temple.

This valley lay south of Jerusalem, or on the south and west Mount of Sion, and was very deep, so that the city was inaccessible in that part. Sometimes it was made the place of execution, and the manner of executing criminals there was this: After the malefactor was condemned by Sanhedrim, [a Jewish council composed of 72 persons, six from each of the twelve tribes of the Jews,] they set him in a dung-hill up to his knees, and put a towel about his neck, and one pulled one way, and another the opposite, till they forced him to open his mouth. They then poured boiling lead into his mouth, which went down into his belly, and so burnt his bowels.—After destroying the life of the unfortunate being in this manner, they then cast his body into the fire, which burned without cessation, in that horrid place of defilement and death. Sometimes the criminal was cast alive into this fire; and his life and body destroyed in this manner.

We have seen that place was made an emblem of the judgment, which came on the Jewish nation, in the destruction of their city and temple. Now let it be borne in mind, that Jesus and his apostles addressed the people in the language of the Old Testament scriptures; and it is not to be supposed, that they would use words and phrases, in any different sense from what they are used in the Old Testament, without giving some plain intimation of it.—To have done so, would have been to purposely deceive the people. The question then is, not in what sense is the word [Gehenna] used by the Rabbinical writers, or in the Jewish Targums, but what is it used to signify, in the Old Testament scriptures? And its meaning there must determine its meaning in the New Testament.

The word Gehenna is used in the New Testament 12 times, and is invariably rendered hell. The following facts, stated in the language of Mr. Balfour, show that it is not used to signify a place of endless misery.

1. The term Gehenna is not found in the Greek translation of the Old Testament—called the Septuagint—or the translation of the Seventy, nor in the Apocraphy, nor in any classic Greek author. It is therefore primarily and exclusively a Jewish or Hebrew term.

2. The translators had no authority for translating this term by the word hell, as it is the name of a place; as much so as Sodom and Gomorrah, and therefore, the original word should have been retained.—And I would here remark, that in some excellent versions the original word is left untranslated. It is so in the French Bible, and in the Improved Version, Wakefield's Version, and Newcomb's Translation.—The Hebrew words for the valley of Hinnom, are *Ge-hinnom*, and the Greek word Gehenna, is a compound of these two words united in one, without a change of meaning. The English words to signify this place, are valley of Hinnom. Now if this term had been left untranslated in those passages where it occurs, or if it had been translated valley of Hinnom as it ought to have been, there would have been no difficulty in understanding their true meaning. Their meaning would have been obvious to every observing mind.

3. The word Gehenna is used but 12 times in the New Testament, and properly speaking it does not occur even as many

times as this. It occurs 11 times in the Gospels written by Matthew, Mark, and Luke, and by comparing the places it is evident that these historians relate the same discourses in which our Lord used the word. So that in point of fact the word was used but eight times; seven times by our Lord, and once by James. I mention this fact, because this is the only word which the learned pretend signifies a place of endless misery. And admitting that this is the proper signification of the term, it is certain, it is not mentioned so often in the whole Bible, as some of our modern divines mention it in a single sermon.

4. This word is used by our Lord, and by the Apostle James, and by no other person in the New Testament. Neither Paul, John, Peter, nor Jude have used this word in all their writings. How can this fact be accounted for, if they understood our Lord to mean by it a place of endless misery?

5. All that is said about Gehenna was spoken to the Jews. It is not once named to the Gentiles in all the New Testament, nor are any of them ever threatened with such a punishment. This fact is indisputable. Now how can this fact be accounted for, except on the supposition, that the punishment of Gehenna, was that which alone concerned the Jews? and as the punishment of Gehenna did not concern the Gentiles, hence, nothing is said to them about it?

6. We have seen that our Lord used this word seven times. Five times out of this number, he used it when addressing his own immediate disciples. Now if he used it to signify a place of endless misery, how is it to be accounted for, that he should say so much about it to his own disciples, and so little to the unbelieving part of the world?

7. Our Lord used this word but twice, when addressing the unbelieving part of Jewish nation. And in one of those instances, at least, the connection shows conclusively, that no reference was had to punishment in another world. Matt. xxiii: 33, 'Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell? [Gehenna.] To learn what this 'damnation of Gehenna' was, see the next words. 'Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes; and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them ye shall scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.—Verily I say unto you, all these things shall come upon this generation.' It is plain from this, that the damnation of Gehenna, was something which they were not going to, but something which was coming to them. Who can doubt that it was the same punishment which was predicted by Jeremiah, in the 7th and 19th chapters of his book?

8. It is admitted on all hands, that this word is never used to signify a place of misery in a future world in all the Old Testament.

9. It is admitted, that it is used in the Old Testament to signify punishment in this world, yea, that it is used to signify that very punishment, which came on the Jew-