

Scriptures and Doctrine :: The Theme of Judgement, Eternity, Hell and Heaven...**The Theme of Judgement, Eternity, Hell and Heaven... - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2005/5/31 19:14**

I was asked by an brother to compile some resources of the 5 best poems (hymns) and 3 best articles. At first I began picking some of the usual best ones on revival and prayer but then God spoke again to my heart the necessity of getting back to the topics of Judgement, Eternity, Hell and Heaven. How neglected these truths are!

I will post the poems and articles in posts below this one.. I pray you are blessed by reading these materials and taking their truths to heart:

1. Â'Twas The Night Before Jesus Came

by Anonymous

Â'Twas the night before Jesus came and all through the house
Not a creature was praying, not one in the house.
Their Bibles were lain on the shelf without care
In hopes that Jesus would not come there.

The children were dressing to crawl into bed,
Not once ever kneeling or bowing a head.
And Mom in her rocker with baby on her lap
Was watching the Late Show while I took a nap.

When out of the East there arose such a clatter,
I sprang to my feet to see what was the matter.
Away to the window I flew like a flash
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash!

When what to my wondering eyes should appear
But angels proclaiming that Jesus was here.
With a light like the sun sending forth a bright ray
I knew in a moment this must be THE DAY!

The light of His face made me cover my head
It was Jesus returning just like He said
And though I possessed worldly wisdom and wealth,
I cried when I saw Him in spite of myself.

In the Book of Life which He held in his hand,
Was written the name of every saved ed man.
He spoke not a word as he searched for my name;
When He said, Â"ltÂ's not hereÂ" my head hung in shame.

The people whose names had been written with love,
He gathered to take to His Father above.
With those who were ready He rose without a sound
While all the rest of us were left standing around.

I fell to my knees, but it was too late;
I had waited too long and thus sealed my fate.
I stood and I cried as they rose out of sight;
Oh, if only I had been ready tonight.

In the words of this poem the meaning is clear;
The coming of Jesus is drawing near.

There's only one life and when comes the last call,
We'll find that the Bible was true after all!

Re: The Theme of Judgement, Eternity, Hell and Heaven... - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2005/5/31 19:15

2. The Day of Judgement

by John Newton

Day of judgement, day of wonders!
Hark! the trumpet's awful sound,
Louder than a thousand thunders,
Shakes the vast creation round!
How the summons will the sinner's heart confound.

See the Judge, our nature wearing,
Cloth'd in majesty divine!
You who long for his appearing
Then shall say, "This God is mine!"
Gracious Saviour, own me in that day for thine!

At his call, the dead awaken,
Rise to life from earth and sea:
All the pow'rs of nature shaken
By his looks prepare to flee:
Careless sinner, what will then become of thee?

Horrors past imagination
Will surprise your trembling heart,
When you hear your condemnation,
"Hence, accursed wretch, depart!
"Thou with Satan and his angels have thy part!"

Satan, who now tries to please you,
Lest you timely warning take,
When that word is past, will seize you,
Plunge you in the burning lake:
Think, poor sinner, thy eternal all's at stake.

But to those who have confessed,
Lov'd and serv'd the Lord below,
He will say, "Come near, ye blessed,
"See the kingdom I bestow;
You for ever shall my love and glory know."

Under sorrows and reproaches,
May this thought your courage raise
Swiftly God's great day approaches,
Sighs shall then be chang'd to praise:
We shall triumph when the world is in a blaze.

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2005/5/31 19:16

3. A Vision Of The Lost

by William Booth

On one of my recent journeys, as I gazed from the coach window, I was led into a train of thought concerning the condition of the multitudes around me. They were living carelessly in the most open and shameless rebellion against God, with out a thought for their eternal welfare. As I looked out of the window, I seemed to see them all . . . millions of people all around me given up to their drink and their pleasure, their dancing and their music, their business and their anxieties, their politics and their troubles. Ignorant - willfully ignorant in many cases - and in other instances knowing all about the truth and not caring at all. But all of them, the whole mass of them, sweeping on and up in their blasphemies and devilries to the Throne of God. While my mind was thus engaged, I had a vision.

I saw a dark and stormy ocean. Over it the black clouds hung heavily; through them every now and then vivid lightening flashed and loud thunder rolled, while the winds moaned, and the waves rose and foamed, towered and broke, only to rise and foam, tower and break again.

In that ocean I thought I saw myriads of poor human beings plunging and floating, shouting and shrieking, cursing and struggling and drowning; and as they cursed and screamed they rose and shrieked again, and then some sank to rise no more.

And I saw out of this dark angry ocean, a mighty rock that rose up with its summit towering high above the black clouds that overhung the stormy sea. And all around the base of this great rock I saw a vast platform. Onto this platform, I saw with delight a number of the poor struggling, drowning wretches continually climbing out of the angry ocean. And I saw that a few of those who were already safe on the platform were helping the poor creatures still in the angry waters to reach the place of safety.

On looking more closely I found a number of those who had been rescued, industriously working and scheming by ladders, ropes, boats and other means more effective, to deliver the poor strugglers out of the sea. Here and there were some who actually jumped into the water, regardless of the consequences in their passion to "rescue the perishing." And I hardly know which gladdened me the most - the sight of the poor drowning people climbing onto the rocks reaching a place of safety, or the devotion and self-sacrifice of those whose whole being was wrapped up in the effort for their deliverance.

As I looked on, I saw that the occupants of that platform were quite a mixed company. That is, they were divided into different "sets" or classes, and they occupied themselves with different pleasures and employments. But only a very few of them seemed to make it their business to get the people out of the sea.

But what puzzled me most was the fact that though all of them had been rescued at one time or another from the ocean, nearly everyone seemed to have forgotten all about it. Anyway, it seemed the memory of its darkness and danger no longer troubled them at all. And what seemed equally strange and perplexing to me was that these people did not even seem to have any care - that is any agonizing care - about the poor perishing ones who were struggling and drowning right before their very eyes . . . many of whom were their own husbands and wives, brothers and sisters and even their own children.

Now this astonishing unconcern could not have been the result of ignorance or lack of knowledge, because they lived right there in full sight of it all and even talked about it sometimes. Many even went regularly to hear lectures and sermons in which the awful state of these poor drowning creatures was described.

I have always said that the occupants of this platform were engaged in different pursuits and pastimes. Some of them were absorbed day and night in trading and business in order to make gain, storing up their savings in boxes, safes and the like.

Many spent their time in amusing themselves with growing flowers on the side of the rock, others in painting pieces of cloth or in playing music, or in dressing themselves up in different styles and walking about to be admired. Some occupied themselves chiefly in eating and drinking, others were taken up with arguing about the poor drowning creatures that had already been rescued.

But the thing to me that seemed the most amazing was that those on the platform to whom He called, who heard His voice and felt that they ought to obey it - at least they said they did - those who confessed to love Him much were in full sympathy with Him in the task He had undertaken - who worshipped Him or who professed to do so - were so taken up with their trades and professions, their money saving and pleasures, their families and circles, their religions and arguments about it, and their preparation for going to the mainland, that they did not listen to the cry that came to them from this Wonderful Being who had Himself gone down into the sea. Anyway, if they heard it they did not heed it. They did not care. And so the multitude went on right before them struggling and shrieking and drowning in the darkness.

And then I saw something that seemed to me even more strange than anything that had gone on before in this strange vision. I saw that some of these people on the platform whom this Wonderful Being had called to, wanting them to come and help Him in His difficult task of saving these perishing creatures, were always praying and crying out to Him to come to them!

Some wanted Him to come and stay with them, and spend His time and strength in making them happier. Others wanted Him to come and take away various doubts and misgivings they had concerning the truth of some letters He had written them. Some wanted Him to come and make them feel more secure on the rock - so secure that they would be quite sure that they should never slip off again into the ocean. Numbers of others wanted Him to make them feel quite certain that they would really get off the rock and onto the mainland someday: because as a matter of fact, it was well known that some had walked so carelessly as to lose their footing, and had fallen back again into the stormy waters.

So these people used to meet and get up as high on the rock as they could, and looking towards the mainland (where they thought the Great Being was) they would cry out, "Come to us! Come and help us!" And all the while He was down (by His Spirit) among the poor struggling, drowning creatures in the angry deep, with His arms around them trying to drag them out, and looking up - oh! so longingly but all in vain - to those on the rock, crying to them with His voice all hoarse from calling, "Come to Me! Come, and help Me!"

And then I understood it all. It was plain enough. The sea was the ocean of life - the sea of real, actual human existence. That lightening was the gleaming of piercing truth coming from Jehovah's Throne. That thunder was the distant echoing of the wrath of God. Those multitudes of people shrieking, struggling and agonizing in the stormy sea, was the thousands and thousands of poor harlots and harlot-makers, of drunkards and drunkard makers, of thieves, liars, blasphemers and ungodly people of every kindred, tongue and nation.

Oh what a black sea it was! And oh, what multitudes of rich and poor, ignorant and educated were there. They were all so unlike in their outward circumstances and conditions, yet all alike in one thing - all sinners before God - all held by, and holding onto, some iniquity, fascinated by some idol, the slaves of some devilish lust, and ruled by the foul fiend from the bottomless pit!

"All alike in one thing?" No, all alike in two things - not only the same in their wickedness but, unless rescued, the same in their sinking, sinking . . . down, down, down . . . to the same terrible doom. That great sheltering rock represented Calvary, the place where Jesus had died for them. And the people on it were those who had been rescued. The way they used their energies, gifts and time represented the occupations and amusements of those who professed to be saved from sin and hell - followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. The handful of fierce, determined ones, who were risking their own lives in saving the perishing were true soldiers of the cross of Jesus. That Mighty Being who was calling to them from the midst of the angry waters was the Son of God, "the same yesterday, today and forever" who is still struggling and interceding to save the dying multitudes about us from this terrible doom of damnation, and whose voice can be heard above the music, machinery, and noise of life, calling on the rescued to come and help Him save the world.

My friends in Christ, you are rescued from the waters, you are on the rock, He is in the dark sea calling on you to come to Him and help Him. Will you go? Look for yourselves. The surging sea of life, crowded with perishing multitudes rolls up to the very spot on which you stand. Leaving the vision, I now come to speak of the fact - a fact that is as real as the Bible, as real as the Christ who hung upon the cross, as real as the judgment day will be, and as real as the heaven and hell that will follow it.

Look! Don't be deceived by appearances - men and things are not what they seem. All who are not on the rock are in the sea! Look at them from the standpoint of the great White Throne, and what a sight you have! Jesus Christ, the Son of God is, through His Spirit, in the midst of this dying multitude, struggling to save them. And He is calling on you to jump into the sea - to go right away to His side and help Him in the holy strife. Will you jump? That is, will you go to His feet and place yourself absolutely at His disposal?

A young Christian once came to me, and told me that for some time she had been giving the Lord her profession and prayers and money, but now she wanted to give Him her life. She wanted to go right into the fight. In other words, she wanted to go to His assistance in the sea. As when a man from the shore, seeing another struggling in the water, takes off those outer garments that would hinder his efforts and leaps to the rescue, so will you who still linger on the bank, thinking and singing and praying about the poor perishing souls, lay aside your shame, your pride, your cares about other people's opinions, your love of ease and all the selfish loves that have kept you back for so long, and rush to the rescue of this multitude of dying men and women.

Does the surging sea look dark and dangerous? Unquestionably it is so. There is no doubt that the leap for you, as for everyone who takes it, means difficulty and scorn and suffering. For you it may mean more than this. It may mean death. He who beckons you from the sea however, knows what it will mean - and knowing, He still calls to you and bids to you to come.

You must do it! You cannot hold back. You have enjoyed yourself in Christianity long enough. You have had pleasant feelings, pleasant songs, pleasant meetings, pleasant prospects. There has been much of human happiness, much clapping of hands and shouting of praises - very much of heaven on earth.

Now then, go to God and tell Him you are prepared as much as necessary to turn your back upon it all, and that you are willing to spend the rest of your days struggling in the midst of these perishing multitudes, whatever it may cost you.

You must do it. With the light that is now broken in upon your mind and the call that is now sounding in your ears, and the beckoning hands that are now before your eyes, you have no alternative. To go down among the perishing crowds is your duty. Your happiness from now on will consist in sharing their misery, your ease in sharing their pain, your crown in helping them to bear their cross, and your heaven in going into the very jaws of hell to rescue them.

Now what will you do?

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2005/5/31 19:16

4. On Eternity

by John Wesley

"From everlasting to everlasting thou art God." Psalm 90:2

1. I would fain speak of that awful subject, -- eternity. But how can we grasp it in our thought? It is so vast, that the narrow mind of man is utterly unable to comprehend it. But does it not bear some affinity to another incomprehensible thing, -- immensity? May not space, though an unsubstantial thing, be compared with another unsubstantial thing, -- duration? But what is immensity? It is boundless space. And what is eternity? It is boundless duration.

2. Eternity has generally been considered as divisible into two parts; which have been termed eternity *_a parte ante_*, and eternity *_a parte post_*, -- that is, in plain English, that eternity which is past, and that eternity which is to come. And does there not seem to be an intimation of this distinction in the text? "Thou art God from everlasting:" -- Here is an expression of that eternity which is past: "To everlasting:" -- Here is an expression of that eternity which is to come. Perhaps, in deed, some may think it is not strictly proper to say, there is an eternity that is past. But the meaning is easily understood: We mean thereby duration which had no beginning; as by eternity to come, we mean that duration which will have no end.

3. It is God alone who (to use the exalted language of Scripture) "inhabiteth eternity," in both these senses. The great Creator alone (not any of his creatures) is "from everlasting to everlasting:" His duration alone, as it had no beginning, so it cannot have any end. On this consideration it is, that one speaks thus, in addressing Immanuel, God with us: --

Hail, God the Son, with glory crown'd
Ere time began to be;
Throned with thy Sire through half the round
Of wide eternity!

And again: --

Hail, God the Son, with glory crown'd
Ere time shall cease to be;
Throned with the Father through the round
Of whole eternity!

4. "Ere time began to be." -- But what is time? It is not easy to say, as frequently as we have had the word in our mouth. We know not what it properly is. We cannot well tell how to define it. But is it not, in some sense, a fragment of eternity, broken off at both ends? -- that portion of duration which commenced when the world began, which will continue as long as this world endures, and then expire for ever? -- that portion of it, which is at present measured by the revolution of the sun and planets; lying (so to speak) between two eternities, that which is past, and that which is to come. But as soon as the heavens and the earth flee away from the face of Him that sitteth on the great white throne, time will be no more; but sink for ever into the ocean of eternity!

5. But by what means can a mortal man, the creature of a day, form any idea of eternity? What can we find within the compass of nature to illustrate it by? With what comparison shall we compare it? What is there that bears any resemblance to it? Does there not seem to be some sort of analogy between boundless duration and boundless space? The great Creator, the infinite Spirit, inhabits both the one and the other. This is one of his peculiar prerogatives: "Do not I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord?" -- yea, not only the utmost regions of creation, but all the expanse of boundless space! Meantime, how many of the children of men may say,

Lo, on a narrow neck of land,
'Midst two unbounded seas I stand,
Secure, insensible!
A point of time, a moments' space,
Removes me to that heavenly place,
Or shuts me up in hell!

6. But leaving one of these unbounded seas to the Father of eternity, to whom alone duration without beginning belongs, let us turn our thoughts on duration without end. This is not an incommunicable attribute of the great Creator; but he has been graciously pleased to make innumerable multitudes of his creatures partakers of it. He has imparted this not only to angels, and archangels, and all the companies of heaven, who are not intended to die, but to glorify him, and live in his presences for ever; but also to the inhabitants of the earth, who dwell in houses of clay. Their bodies, indeed, are "crushed before the moth;" but their souls will never die, God made them, as an ancient writer speaks, to be "pictures of his own eternity." Indeed all spirits, we have reason to believe, are clothed with immortality; having no inward principle of corruption, and being liable to no external violence.

7. Perhaps we may go a step farther still: Is not matter itself, as well as spirit, in one sense eternal? Not indeed *a parte ante*, as some senseless philosophers, both ancient and modern, have dreamed. Not that anything had existed from eternity; seeing, if so, it must be God; yea, it must be the One God; for it is impossible there should be two Gods, or two Eternals. But although nothing beside the great God can have existed from everlasting, -- none else can be eternal *a parte ante*; yet there is no absurdity in supposing that all creatures are eternal *a parte post*. All matter indeed is continually changing, and that into ten thousand forms; but that it is changeable, does in nowise imply that it is perishable. The substance may remain one and the same, though under innumerable different forms. It is very possible any portion of matter may be resolved into the atoms of which it was originally composed: But what reason have we to believe that one of these atoms ever was, or ever will be, annihilated? It never can, unless by the uncontrollable power of its almighty Creator. And is it probable that ever He will exert this power in unmaking any of the things that he hath made? In this also, God is not "a son of man that he should repent." Indeed, every creature under heaven does, and must, continually change its form, which we can now easily account for; as it clearly appears, from late discoveries, that ethereal fire enters into the composition of every part of the creation. Now, this is essentially *edax rerum*: It is the universal menstruum, the *discohere* of all things under the sun. By the force of this, even the strongest, the firmest bodies are dissolved. It appears from the experiment repeatedly made by the great Lord Bacon, that even diamonds, by a high degree of heat, may be turned into dust: and that, in a still higher degree, (strange as it may seem,) they will totally flame away. Yea, by this the heavens themselves will be dissolved; "the elements shall melt with fervent heat." But they will be only dissolved, not destroyed; they will melt, but they will not perish. Though they lose their present form, yet not a particle of them will ever lose its existence; but every atom of them will remain, under one form or other, to all eternity.

8. But still we should inquire, What is this eternity? How shall we pour any light upon this abstruse subject? It cannot be the object of our understanding. And with what comparison shall we compare it? How infinitely does it transcend all these

! What are any temporal things, placed in comparison with those that are eternal? What is the duration of the longlived oak, of the ancient castle, of Trajan's Pillar, of Pompey's Amphitheatre? What is the antiquity of the Tuscan Urns, though probably older than the foundation of Rome; yea, of the Pyramids of Egypt, suppose they have remained upwards of three thousand years; -- when laid in the balance with eternity? It vanishes into nothing. Nay, what is the duration of "the everlasting hills," figuratively so called, which have remained ever since the general deluge, if not from the foundation of the world, in comparison of eternity? No more than an insignificant cipher. Go farther yet: Consider the duration, from the creation of the first-born sons of God, of Michael the Archangel in particular, to the hour when he shall be commissioned to sound his trumpet, and to utter his mighty voice through the vault of heaven, "Arise, ye dead, and come to judgement!" Is it not a moment, a point, a nothing, in comparison of unfathomable eternity? Add to this a thousand, a million of years, add a million of million of ages, "before the mountains were brought forth, or the earth and the round world were made:" What is all this in comparison of that eternity which is past? Is it not less, infinitely less, than a single drop of water to the whole ocean? -- yea, immeasurably less than a day, an hour, a moment, to a million of ages! Go back a thousand millions still; yet you are no nearer the beginning of eternity.

9. Are we able to form a more adequate conception of eternity to come? In order to this, let us compare it with the several degrees of duration which we are acquainted with: -- An ephemeron fly lives six hours; from six in the evening, to twelve. This is a short life compared with that of a man, which continues threescore or fourscore years; and this itself is short, if it be compared to the nine hundred and sixty-nine years of Methuselah. Yet what are these years, yea, all that have succeeded each other, from the time that the heavens, and the earth were erected, to the time when the heavens shall pass away, and the earth with the works of it shall be burned up, if we compare it to the length of that duration which never shall have an end?

10. In order to illustrate this, a late author has repeated that striking thought of St. Cyprian: -- "Suppose there were a ball of sand as large as the globe of earth: suppose a grain of this sand were to be annihilated, reduced to nothing, in a thousand years: yet that whole space of duration, wherein this ball would be annihilating, at the rate of one grain in a thousand years, would bear infinitely less proportion to eternity, duration without end, than a single grain of sand would bear to all the mass!"

11. To infix this important point the more deeply in your mind, consider another comparison: -- Suppose the ocean to be so enlarged, as to include all the space between the earth and the starry heavens. Suppose a drop of this were to be annihilated once in a thousand years; yet that whole space of duration, wherein this ocean would be annihilating, at the rate of one drop in a thousand years, would be infinitely less in proportion to eternity, than one drop of water to that whole ocean.

Look then at those immortal spirits, whether they are in this or the other world. When they shall have lived thousands of thousands of years, yea, millions of millions of ages, their duration will be but just begun: They will be only upon the threshold of eternity!

12. But besides this division of eternity into that which is past, and that which is to come, there is another division of eternity, which is of unspeakable importance: That which is to come, as it relates to immortal spirits, is either a happy or a miserable eternity.

13. See the spirits of the righteous that are already praising God in a happy eternity! We are ready to say, How short will it appear to those who drink of the rivers of pleasure at God's right hand! We are ready to cry out,

A day without night
They dwell in his sight,
And eternity seems as a day!

But this is only speaking after the manner of men: For the measures of long and short are only applicable to time which admits of bound, and not to unbounded duration. This rolls on (according to our low conceptions) with unutterable, inconceivable swiftness; if one would not rather say, it does not roll or move at all, but is one still immovable ocean. ;For the inhabitants of heaven "rest not day and night," but continually cry, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord, the God, the Almighty, who saw, and who is, and who is to come!" And when millions of millions of ages are elapsed, their eternity is but just begun.

14. On the other hand, in what a condition are those immortal spirits who have made choice of a miserable eternity! I say, made choice; for it is impossible this should be the lot of any creature but by his own act and deed. The day is coming

when every soul will be constrained to acknowledge, in the sight of men and angels,

No dire decree of thine did seal
Or fix the unalterable doom
Consign my unborn soul to hell,
Or damn me from my mother's womb.

In what condition will such a spirit be after the sentence is executed, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels!" Suppose him to be just now plunged into "the lake of fire burning with brimstone," where "they have no rest, day or night, but the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever." "For ever and ever!" Why, if we were only to be chained down one day, yea, one hour, in a lake of fire, how amazing long would one day or one hour appear! I know not if it would not seem as a thousand years. But (astonishing thought!) after thousands of thousands, he has but just tasted of his bitter cup! After millions, it will be no nearer the end than it was the moment it began!

15. What then is he -- how foolish, how mad, in how unutterable a degree of distraction -- who, seeming to have the understanding of a man, deliberately prefers temporal things to eternal? who (allowing that absurd, impossible opposition, that wickedness is happiness, -- a supposition utterly contrary to all reason, as well as to matter fact) prefers the happiness of a year, say a thousand years, to the happiness of eternity, in comparison of which, a thousand ages are infinitely less than a year, a day, a moment? especially when we take this into the consideration, (which, indeed should never be forgotten,) that the refusing a happy eternity, implies the choosing of a miserable eternity: For there is not, cannot be, any medium between everlasting joy and everlasting pain. It is a vain thought which some have entertained, that death will put an end to neither the one nor the other; it will only alter the manner of their existence. But when the body "returns to the dust as it was, the spirit will return to God that gave it." Therefore, at the moment of death, it must be unspeakably happy, or unspeakably miserable: And that misery will never end.

Never! Where sinks the soul at that dread sound?
Into a gulf how dark, and how profound!

How often would he who had made the wretched choice wish for the death both of his soul and body! It is not impossible he might pray in some such manner as Dr. Young supposes:

When I have writhed ten thousand years in fire,
Ten thousand thousand, let me then expire!

16. Yet this unspeakable folly, this unutterable madness, of preferring present things to eternal, is the disease of every man born into the world, while in his natural state. For such is the constitution of our nature, that as the eye sees only such a portion of space at once, so the mind sees only such a portion of time at once. And as all the space that lies beyond that compass is invisible to the mind. So that we do not perceive either the space or the time which is at a distance from us. The eye sees distinctly the space that is near it, with the objects which it contains: In like manner, the mind sees distinctly those objects which are within such a distance of time. The eye does not see the beauties of China: They are at too great a distance: There is too great a space between us and them: Therefore we are not affected by them. They are as nothing to us: It is just the same to us as if they had no being. For the same reason, the mind does not see either the beauties or the terrors of eternity. We are not at all affected by them, because they are so distant from us. On this account it is, that they appear to us as nothing: just as if they had no existence. Meantime, we are wholly taken up with things present, whether in time or space; and things appear less and less, as they are more and more distant from us, either in one respect or the other. And so it must be; such is the constitution of our nature; till nature is changed by almighty grace. but this is no manner of excuse for those who continue in their natural blindness to futurity; because a remedy for it is provided, which is found by all that seek it: Yea, it is freely given to all that sincerely ask it.

17. This remedy is faith. I do not mean that which is the faith of a Heathen, who believes that there is a God, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him; but that which is defined by the Apostle, "an evidence," or conviction "of things not seen," a divine evidence and conviction of the invisible and eternal world. This alone opens the eyes of the understanding, to see God and the things of God. This, as it were, takes away, or renders transparent, the impenetrable veil

Which hangs 'twixt mortal and immortal being.

When

Faith lends its realizing light,
The clouds disperse, the shadows fly;
The invisible appears in sight,
And God is seen by mortal eye.

Accordingly, a believer, in the scriptural sense, lives in eternity, and walks in eternity. His prospect is enlarged: His view is not any longer bounded by present things: No, nor by an earthly hemisphere; though it were, as Milton speaks, "ten-fold the length of this terrene." Faith places the unseen, the eternal world continually before his face. consequently, he looks not at "the things that are seen;" --

Wealth, honour, pleasure, or what else
This short-enduring world can give;

these are not his aim, the object of his pursuit, his desire or happiness; -- but at "the things that are not seen;" at the favour, the image, and the glory of God; as well knowing that "the things which are seen are temporal," -- a vapour, a shadow, a dream that vanishes away; whereas "the things that are not seen are eternal;" real, solid, unchangeable.

18. What, then, can be a fitter employment for a wise man than to meditate upon these things? frequently to expand his thoughts "beyond the bounds of this diurnal sphere," and to expatiate above even the starry heavens, in the field of eternity? What a means might it be to confirm his contempt of the poor, little things of earth! When a man of huge possessions was boasting to his friend of the largeness of his estate, Socrates desired him to bring a map of the earth, and to point out Attica therein. When this was done, (although not very easily, as it was a small country,) he next desired Alcibiades to point out his own estate therein. When he could not do this, it was easy to observe how trifling the possessions were in which he so prided himself, in comparison of the whole earth. How applicable is this to the present case! Does any one value himself on his earthly possessions? Alas, what is the whole globe of earth to the infinity of space! A mere speck of creation. And what is the life of man, yea, the duration of the earth itself, but a speck of time, if it be compared to the length of eternity! Think of this: Let it sink into your thought, till you have some conception, however imperfect, of that

Boundless, fathomless abyss,
Without a bottom or a shore.

19. But if naked eternity, so to speak, be so vast, so astonishing an object, as even to overwhelm your thought, how does it still enlarge the idea to behold it clothed with either happiness or misery! eternal bliss or pain! everlasting happiness, or everlasting misery! One would think it would swallow up every other thought in every reasonable creature. Allow me only this, -- "Thou art on the brink of either a happy or miserable eternity; thy Creator bids thee now stretch out thy hand either to the one or the other;" -- and one would imagine no rational creature could think on anything else. One would suppose that this single point would engross his whole attention. Certainly it ought so to do: Certainly, if these things are so, there can be but one thing needful. O let you and I, at least, whatever others do, choose that better part which shall never be taken away from us!

20. Before I close this subject, permit me to touch upon two remarkable passages in the Psalms, (one in the eighth, the other in the hundred and forty-fourth,) which bear a near relation to it. The former is, "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him?" Here man is considered as a cipher, a point, compared to immensity. The latter is, "Lord, what is man, that thou hast such respect unto him? Man is like a thing of nought His time passeth away like a shadow!" In the new translation the words are stronger still: "What is man, that thou takest knowledge of him!" Here the Psalmist seems to consider the life of man as a moment, a nothing, compared to eternity. Is not the purport of the former, "How can He that filleth heaven and earth take knowledge of such an atom as man? How is it that he is not utterly lost in the immensity of God's works?" Is not the purport of the latter, "How can He that inhabiteth eternity stoop to regard the creature of a day, -- one whose life passeth away like a shadow?" Is not this a thought which has struck many serious minds, as well as it did David's, and created a kind of fear arise from a kind of supposition that God is such an one as ourselves? If we consider boundless space, or boundless duration, we shrink into nothing before it. But God is not a man. A day, and a million of ages, are the same with him. Therefore, there is the same disproportion between Him and any finite being, as between Him and the creature of a day. Therefore, whenever that thought recurs, whenever you are tempted to fear lest you should be forgotten before the immense, the eternal God, remember that nothing is little or great, that no duration is long or short, before Him. Remember that God *ita praesidet singulis sicut universis, et universis sicut singulis*: That he "presides over every individual as over the universe; and the universe, as over each individual." So that you may bold

ly say,

Father, how wide thy glories shine,
Lord of the universe -- and mine!
Thy goodness watches o'er the whole,
As all the world were but one soul;
Yet counts my every sacred hair,
As I remain'd thy single care!

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2005/5/31 19:17

5. The Judgment Seat of Christ

by Leonard Ravenhill

"For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ."
-Romans 14:10 KJV

I want to tell you a story about when I was a young boy going to school. You know, I didn't mind school too much, but in those days I was very envious of the school Captain. His name was Renton, and he sat just across the aisle from me. He was the best soccer player in the school and that's what I wanted to be. He was the best at cricket, and I liked cricket. He was the best runner we had, and I liked running. He was not only an excellent athlete, but a very good artist as well. And on top of all that, he was the smartest guy in the whole school.

If I could ever save up my stomachaches, I'd save them until the day before the final exam. But my mother was smart. She knew I was saving them up. I don't know how she knew, but she always did. I'd get up that morning and say, "Oh mother, I don't feel good at all. I think I should stay home today." But she'd always say, "You can stay home tomorrow - but not today." But staying home tomorrow wouldn't do me any good because today was the day of the final exam. Today was the day of judgment!

I know Renton never felt like that because whenever we had a test, as soon as the questions were put down on the board, he would get his paper and dash through them. He was through the first two or three subjects before I'd even gotten the thing read. He and another fellow used to say, "Oh boy, exams!" They knew they'd be first and second in the class when the grades came out, and so they were excited about taking the test. Final exams didn't scare them. These boys were always at the top. They were not afraid of the Day of Judgment. They were not afraid - because they were prepared for it.

QUALITY NOT QUANTITY

"For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building. "According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building upon it. But let each man be careful how he builds upon it. "For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. "Now if any man builds upon the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, "Each man's work will become evident; for the day will show it, because it is to be revealed with fire; and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work." (I Cor. 3:9-13)

The above scripture is talking about the day all believers will stand before the Lord. When every follower of Jesus will account for his life and his deeds before all of heaven itself. Notice what it says very carefully, "...the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work." Not how much work, but rather what kind of work. Not the quantity but the quality. This scripture is speaking of your whole life's work. In other words, your life's work can be wood or hay or straw -- or it can be silver, gold, or costly stones. And on that day, the fire will put it to the final test. What fire? The Bible tells that God is love, but it also tells us that He is a consuming fire as well. (Heb. 12:29)

Paul continues by saying, "If any man's work which he had built upon it remains, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but he himself shall be saved, yet so as through fire. " (I Cor. 3:14-15) This illustration would be extremely significant to the people of Corinth that Paul was speaking to, because not too long before this was written, their whole city was devastated by fire. They all knew firsthand what damage fire could do. When the fire sw

ept through Corinth, every house that was built out of wood, hay, or straw, was devastated and left in ashes. But the more wealthy people there had houses built with beautiful pillars of granite, and some even had houses built totally out of marble. These houses made of costly stones were still standing after the fire swept through, though they were obviously very badly scorched.

YOUR LIFE INVESTMENT

Let's visualize it another way. One man is given \$10,000 and he invests it in wood - maybe some lovely mahogany. So this man's entire life work is made out of wood. It's very beautiful, but when the fire goes through it, what do you have? All you have is ashes, maybe up to your ankles, and that's all there is left. The next man is given \$10,000 and he invests it in hay. Another man given the same amount invests all of it in straw. Does that sound foolish? Well, people do it every day. Why? Because if you put \$10,000 into hay or straw, it looks like you are getting a lot for your money. You could probably buy half the straw in Texas for \$10,000, but, boy, you're going to have a mess when the fire gets to it. Instead of ashes to your ankles, or ashes to your knees, it'll be up to your nose maybe. But that's what some lives are going to be like: wood, hay, stubble - then ashes.

Now let's look at a few people who made much wiser investments. There's a man over here who has \$10,000, and he invests it in gold. (He won't get much at \$400 an ounce, will he?) The next man invests \$10,000 in silver, and another man invests the same amount in costly stones. Each of the six men I've just spoken of had the same amount of money, but they all chose different things to invest it in. Now, we are talking about your life's work. Do you get the picture? Our whole life, from the very moment we begin to witness for Christ, including all of our service and our labor for Him, is going to be tested by fire. We must be very careful to make wise investments, or in the end, all that will be left is ashes.

ETERNAL VALUE

Will our life's work stand the test of the fire when we come before the Lord? Will it have lasting eternal value - or will it end up in ashes? There's an interesting difference between wood, hay, straw - and gold, silver, and costly stones. Wood, hay, and stubble are found above the ground. They catch the eye, just like many people's ministries do. They are quite plentiful and easy to find. On the other hand, silver, gold, and precious stones are found below the ground. Nobody sees them - again, like many people's ministries. They're not just lying around in a field somewhere for anyone to pick up. They are much harder to come by; in fact, it takes a lot of hard work to get them. That's why they are so expensive. They are of much higher quality than many other things, and much more rare too. Again, it's the quality, not the quantity that sets their value. Many things are difficult in the Christian life, but we should desire to acquire those things which will hold their value, not only on earth, but in heaven as well.

MINISTRY AND MONEY

Every person's life, including all of his ministry, is going to pass through the fire. There's a lot of public ministry that's going to go down in flames on that day, my brothers. The fire is going to take the big showy life of every man and burn it until only a bunch of ashes is left. I'm tired of seeing these fellows begging for money on television. I believe every dime that comes into any ministry will need to be answered for before the Judgment Seat of Christ one day. Jesus talked about these men who'd go and take widows' houses. (Luke 20:46-47) Well, that's what many are doing now. And they're not satisfied that you give while you're living, they ask you to hand over your house and all the rest to them in your will. They're going to give an account to God in that day, but I believe we're also going to give an account.

A brother was telling me this week that when he got baptized and went down into the water, he suddenly realized that he had his wallet in his pocket. Not many wallets get baptized! We kind of say, "Lord, You look after my sins. I'll look after the rest." You'll give an account to God for every penny you've earned since you became the property of Jesus Christ. He doesn't just take your sins - He takes all of you.

Oh yes, many may want to get filled with the Holy Ghost and get a bank balance, but how many of you are big enough to say, "Lord, in this crucial hour in human history, let me fill up with the sufferings of Christ"? Can He share His sorrow with you? Are you prepared to challenge demon power and say, "Listen, I've moved into the place where the Apostle Paul was when he said, I glory in tribulations and necessities and reproaches"? Watch out though, because if you're going to get mature in God, all the dwarfs around you will criticize you and sneer at you and say, "Trying to be holier than the rest of us, huh? So you don't have time for basketball or going to see a baseball game?" No, maybe you don't, but that's nobody's business but yours and God's.

Do you get so near to the heart of God that you share His grief over the world and over the backslidden church that we have today? One of the most famous preachers in the country recently called at nearly midnight and said, "I've come to this conclusion: God Almighty has already taken His hand off America - for the simple reason that we've had so much light and we've rejected it!" It's not only true that we live in a world of bankrupt politics, we live in a world (this is the most tragic part of all) of a bankrupt church.

WILL CHRISTIANS BE JUDGED?

I heard a woman say not long ago, "Well, praise the Lord. I'm glad I don't have to account for anything when I go to heaven. There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." Wait a minute, you can never isolate a scripture by itself. There's no condemnation for our past sins, and I'm sure we are all mighty glad of that. But God was always saying to Israel, "Remember when thou wast a bondsman in Egypt...remember your sin...remember your iniquity."

You might say, "It doesn't say the Christians are going to be judged out of the books." Yes, I think it does. Where? In Malachi (Mal. 3:16). It says that God has a Book of Remembrance, and I think it would do you good before you go to bed every night this week to ask God, "What did You put in Your book today for my life?" It doesn't have to be some outward act. You can worship God on a tractor. It may not be the best way, but you can do it.

The Bible says that "we shall all stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ" (Rom. 14:10 KJV). I think that scripture means just what it says.

THE HOLY DEAD

A hymn writer says,

"From earth's wide bounds and ocean's farthest coast, through gates of pearl, stream in a countless host, singing Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Hallelujah."

All the saints of all the ages are going to be there. There's another old hymn and probably not very many of you could recite it, but I'll bet most of you know the chorus: "Oh, when the saints go marching in." You know, they dance to that every night down in New Orleans. They shuffle their feet along Bourbon Street and have a great time, but that song is not for them, it's for the REDEEMED. It says, "When the saints go marching in." The saints will march into heaven in a multitude which no man can number.

I can't wait to see all the saints of all the ages. Man, I'll be thrilled to look at Isaiah and Jeremiah and those major and minor prophets. We'll be looking around and saying, "Hey, there's Abraham. I didn't think he'd look quite like that." But he's going to be there, all right. And just think of seeing Matthew and Mark and Luke and John and everybody in Acts. Won't it be wonderful to see those men who walked with Jesus!

Let's think about Paul for a moment. He gave his intellect to God. He wrote about 14 epistles and traveled all over Asia Minor. He was lashed at the post 195 times. He was in weariness, and fastings, and pain, and tribulation, and distress, and famine, and nakedness. He was subjected to false brethren and to perils of the deep. What do you think his reward is going to be for living a life like that? GRACE is free, but REWARDS are not free. You might say, "But you're talking about works." Sure I am - because God did. Jesus did!

COSTLY STONES

Silver, gold, precious stones. What are the precious stones? When I read that, I think of the breastplate that was on the priests in the Old Testament. It was divided by four rows of stones - three stones in each row. Each stone was different. Each stone stood for the name of one of the 12 tribes of Israel. The priest wore the breastplate over his heart as he went into the Holy Place to pray for the sins of the people. How do you handle this? Do you enter the holiest place of all to make intercession for the sins of the people? Do you enter into intercession at all? This is only possible through the blood of Christ and the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

Intercession is our job now. We don't need to send a priest into the Holy of Holies. We can go ourselves! The New Testament tells us that we are all priests - that we are a part of the Royal Priesthood (1 Peter 2:9). Do you wonder why the world is poor and sick outside? Because we really don't know how to pray, that's why! Because we're satisfied that we've left our lousy living and we don't drink or lust or damn ourselves every day. We're Christians now...and we're so content and so happy and so satisfied.

SILVER

The silver . . . what is the silver? I guess you can interpret it in different ways. But I like to think of the scripture in the book of Proverbs that says, "The tongue of the righteous is as choice silver" (Proverbs 10:20). I believe that the silver may signify the words that we speak. I believe that God has an eternal record of every word we have spoken since we've been saved. That may be embarrassing. Oh, we won't be ashamed of the good things we've said, but what about our idle words? You know, the gossip, the slander, the criticism, the prejudice. What about the time when somebody upset you and instead of being quiet, you just spilled out everything that was on your heart at that moment? And can you think of all the awesome words we've preached to thousands of people over the years? We're going to answer for every word - and the fire is going to be put to them. Will they be wood, hay, or stubble - or will they abide the fire?

GOLD

What is gold a sign of? I believe it's a sign of our devotion to God. If I could have a small melting pot here, I'd put your \$10,000 worth of gold in it and melt it down. What happens when you burn gold? Nothing! It just changes from solid to liquid, but you don't reduce it. Can you see all the saints standing in heaven? And there's Leonard Ravenhill - standing before Christ whose eyes are filled with holiness. The whole place is breathing holiness. There in the presence and the majesty of an awesome God, the record of my poor life is read before all the saints of all the ages. And He puts the fire to my devotional life. Am I just a good showman? I sure like to preach because God called me to preach. I don't care how I preach, and I don't care whether you believe me either. I'm not responsible for that. I preach out of my heart all I believe, and I'd die for it. But say, am I just a showman? What's my secret life like?

I've said it many times and I'll say it again - no man is greater than his prayer life. I don't care how big his organization is. Let me live with a man awhile and share his prayer life, and I'll tell you how tall I think he is, or how majestic I think he is in God. What's your devotional life like right now? Would you like Gabriel to hand down the book of your devotional life for the last month so it could be read out loud at church this Sunday? The gold is going to be tried through our devotional life.

GREAT MEN OF PRAYER

You'll discover this: The men that have been the most heroic for God have been the men with the greatest devotional life. America has produced some of the greatest prayer warriors in the world. John Hyde was one of them. I knew someone who had prayed with him, and they said it was just awesome when this man went into prayer. There's a little book out on him called "Praying Hyde" that would be well worth your reading.

Edward Payson, better known as praying Payson of Portland, was another great prayer warrior. He used to kneel at the side of his bed and pray, and pray, and pray. When they washed his body for burial, they found great big pads on his knees like a camel has. Tradition says that James had camel's knees, but it's a living fact that Payson had them. When they were washing him, somebody said, "What abnormal knees. They're heavy with callouses." That's because he used to pray at the side of his bed with energy - and he wore two grooves about six or seven inches long into that hard floor where he used to pray and make intercession.

One day I was in the Bible School of Wales and there was dear Mrs. Rees Howells. (Her husband was dead now.) We stood on the terrace and she turned and said, "Do you see the room there?" I said, "Yes, I see that room." "That door?" "Yes." "Daddy (meaning her husband) went through that door at six o'clock in the morning and he stayed there until six o'clock at night every day for 11 months except the one day that his mother died."

Let's preview eternity and look at all the apostles and all the saints of all the ages. Look, there's Charles Finney with his amazing revivals. There's William Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army. There's John Wesley. Here are all the great heroic figures we've all read about, and they are all watching while the book is handed down and somebody's going to read the record. Would you volunteer and say, "Well, I'll be happy to read my record to this multitude"?

Suppose I say, "Gabriel, hand me the record for the year of 1724." When I open the book to that year and go to the "B's," I find the name, David Brainerd. He was a young American who died at the age of 28. All he possessed was a cowhide that he wore with a rope tied around it. He used to ride over the Susquehanna River to follow the Indians. David had a severe case of tuberculosis and only weighed about 95 pounds. I remember reading his diary once. He said, "I got up this morning and the Indians were still committing adultery and drinking and beating their tom-toms and shouting like hell itse

If. I prayed from a half hour after sunrise to a half hour before sunset. There was nowhere to pray in the Indian camp. I went into the woods and knelt in the snow. It was up to my chin." No, he didn't have a heater with him or anything else. He was just there in the frigid snow, tuberculosis and all. He continued, "I wrestled in prayer until a half hour before sunset, and I could only touch the snow with the tips of my fingers. The heat of my body had melted the snow." What amazing in tercessory prayer!

Well, God pity us. We can't even get people into our churches to pray, and we have velvet cushions on the seats and nice stuff on the floor so our darling little knees won't get hurt. David Brainerd, Praying Payson of Portland, John Hyde, and Rees Howells - when God puts the fire to their devotional life, I don't think there will be anything lost. It won't be wood, it won't be hay, and it won't be stubble.

TRUE JOY

I'm embarrassed to be part of the Church today because I believe it's an embarrassment to a holy God. Most of our joy is clapping our hands and having a good time and then afterwards we talk all the nonsense of the world. We're overboard on laughter and happiness. There's an old saying in the world, "Laugh and the world laughs with you." I change it and say, "Laugh and the Church laughs with you, but weep and you weep alone." Because there isn't enough real joy in the house of God, we need entertainment. Entertainment is the devil's substitute for joy. Because there isn't enough power in the house of God, people are always looking for something to take its place. We point the finger at the world, but we need to turn to the Church and say we'd better all get sackcloth and ashes and humble ourselves and say "Almighty God! " When I see the Church in the New Testament, they didn't have stately buildings or paid evangelists or a lot of money. (They couldn't get on television and beg!) But I'll tell you what they did - they turned the world upside-down!

Have you ever seen the little plaque that reads, "Only one life, 'twill soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last?" Well, that's not what the poet wrote. The poet wrote this: "Only one life, 'twill soon be past, only what's done for Christ will last. And when I am dying, how happy I'll be, if the lamp of my life has been burned out for Thee." Do you think all Christians die happy? Not on your life! Some of them die as miserable as sinners. Why? Because they've misused their time and wasted their lives. Many of you have laid dying on a hospital bed and prayed, "Lord, if You would only spare me, I'll do this, that, or the other." Well, have you done it?

I discovered this poem the other day and I want to share it with you.

His Plan For Me

When I stand at the Judgment Seat of Christ
And He shows His plan for me,
The plan of my life as it might have been
Had He had His way - and I see
How I blocked Him here, and checked Him there,
And I would not yield my will,
Will there be grief in my Savior's eyes,
Grief though He loves me still?
Would He have me rich and I stand there poor,
Stripped of all but His grace,
While memory runs like a hunted thing,
Down the paths I cannot retrace.
Lord, of the years that are left to me
I give them to Thy hand
Take me and break me and mold me,
To the pattern that Thou hast planned!
-Author Unknown

The only thing that will tie me in victory continually, through the blood of Christ, is that I give Him my adoration and my tribute every day. It's more than my service. It's more than giving money. But I need to love Him, magnify Him, and adore Him. I need to take Him, as it were, by the feet and worship Him. If we will do this, then we will experience real joy and lasting happiness.

CROWNS, CROWNS, CROWNS!

I don't believe there will be any envy in heaven, but I could remind you that there are at least five crowns to be given in reward. Paul says the Lord will give him a crown of righteousness, which he says the Lord will not only give to him, but to all those who love His appearing (II Tim. 4:8). There's a crown for the martyrs - those who have died and those yet to die. Crowns, crowns, crowns! We won't all be the same in heaven. There will be great distinctions there. When you see a political convention, you see people holding up signs from California or somewhere. Well, maybe there will be signs in heaven. "These are the Prayer Warriors." "These are the Great Sufferers." "These are the Travellers." "These are the Missionaries." "These are the Failures." All kinds of people are going to be listed in that Great Day. There will be great distinctions between people in heaven.

There was a little woman in Ireland who had two shops. She paid all the family expenses with what she made from one shop and she saved all the money that came in from the other shop for missions. She ended up sending four of her children to the mission field and she financed each one of them. Man, she's going to have a reward some day, isn't she? Because she was doing it as unto Him!

Take a look at the dying thief. Oh, he'll be in heaven all right because Jesus said he would - but he wasted his life. Then look at John Wesley for example. He was saved soundly when he was 35 years of age, and he served the Lord for the next 53 years. You couldn't think that the dying thief, a man who got in at the last tick of the clock, is going to have the same reward as John Wesley, could you? Wesley made an awful lot of money. Do you know what he did with it? He built orphanages and churches. He printed Bibles and hymn books. There was no time wasted in his life. He was methodical and systematic. He went to dinner with the greatest man in English literature and the man said, "Now you've finished dinner, let's fold our legs under the table and have a nice time of conversation." Wesley said, "I'm sorry, I have to go." "But it's not yet nine o'clock, why are you going?" Wesley said, "I have an appointment in the morning at four o'clock." "At four o'clock tomorrow morning?" "Every morning of my life," he said. "With whom?" "With God." He disciplined his life. He disciplined his body in eating. He disciplined his hand in his pocket. He'll stand at the Judgment Seat of Christ...an awesome prospect for any of us. "We ought to live every day as though we've come out of another world into this world - but with the power of that world still upon us. We should live and speak and move in that power, and have our whole being in Jesus Christ!"

THE FRAGRANCE OF WORSHIP

I heard the story for years, about the woman who came to Jesus with an alabaster box of ointment, before I understood it - before I realized that she came for one reason only. She came to worship Jesus. How do I know? Because she brought the most sacrificial gift she had and because she never said a word while she was there. How do I know? Because she didn't wash His feet with water, but with her tears. She didn't dry His feet with a towel, but she dried His feet with the hair of her head. And she poured out that costly fragrance and then wiped His feet. So what happened? The fragrance she poured out on Him came back on her.

Do you wonder why your life isn't more fragrant? It's because you don't take time to be holy. You don't take time to be with Jesus. Because you think all the knowledge you get at Bible school is enough. Oh no, God isn't going to measure your intellect. He's going to try your life with His fire. Did you get up this morning and thank God you were pure? Did you thank Him that He broke that devilish fever you used to have for sniffing cocaine or something? Are you really glad you're not a prostitute anymore, but now you're a part of the Bride of the Lamb instead? Are you glad He removed your bad temper and all those creepy horrible things that used to master you?

I think again of a statement A. W. Tozer made to me once. He said, "Len, you know, we'll hardly get our feet out of time into eternity that we'll bow our heads in shame and humiliation. We'll gaze on eternity and say, 'Look at all the riches there were in Jesus Christ, and I've come to the Judgment Seat almost a pauper.'" For God had not only given us Jesus Christ - He has with Him freely given us all things (Rom. 8:32).

A DIFFERENT PEOPLE

I remember crossing a square in the city of Bath in the 1940s. I saw two very fine young ladies - well, one was a young lady and the other was only a girl. They were beautifully dressed and as they marched across that square I thought, "There's something different about those girls." Then I discovered that they were princesses. It was our present Queen of England, Queen Elizabeth, and her sister, Margaret. They were part of English royalty, and you know, there was a dignity a

about them very different from anybody else who walked there. Well, as Christians, we are part of GOD'S Royal Family, and it should be evident to all that we meet that we are a different type of people. If we can't live as a different people on this earth, we've no right to live here. We shouldn't be affected by changing customs or changing styles or changing opinions, or whether the stock market goes up or down, or whether the clouds are gathering for war. Those things don't make any difference. We ought to live every day as though we've come out of another world into this world - but with the power of that world still upon us. We should live and speak and move in that power, and have our whole being in Jesus Christ!

BAPTISM OF OBEDIENCE

That final day is going to be awesome. Have you figured how you'll get on when you stand there? You and I will stand there alone on that day and be judged for every aspect of our lives - for our praying, our giving, our talking, and our doing. I still believe in the majesty of that eternal court, with the King of kings and the Lord of lords and the Judge of judges. You see, there's no possibility of any rehearsal, and what's more, there's no possibility of any repetition. Because, again, this is the Final Judgment, and to some God will say, "Come, ye blessed," but to others He'll say, "Depart from Me." No, it's not so simple to be a Christian after all. It's a majestic thing.

We ought to live our lives conscious of eternity - ready to be cut off at any moment. If you were to stand before the Lord at this very moment, would you like your life story read by all the millions in eternity? None of the outcasts of hell are going to be there. Won't it be wonderful - or will it? Or do you think you might shrink a bit when you hear now God used David Brainerd or John Wesley or some little washerwoman that had a life of intercession?

There's no burden too heavy, or no situation too hard for the one that you love. If we are love-controlled, love-motivated, and love-energized, it will be all right when we stand up there, because if there's anything about love - it's obedient. We need to become a people who are baptized with obedience. We need to be submissive to the total will of God, not concerned about human opinion, and not asking for more to spend on ourselves. We need to say, "Oh God, I want this life of mine to glorify You, so that when I stand in Your awesome presence, as John says, I shall not be ashamed at Your appearing" (1 John 2:28).

Re: - posted by sermonindex (), on: 2005/5/31 19:18

6. The Eternity of Hell

by George Whitefield

Matthew 25:46 "These shall go away into everlasting punishment."

The excellency of the gospel dispensation, is greatly evidenced by those sanctions of rewards and punishments, which it offers to the choice of all its hearers, in order to engage them to be obedient to its precepts. For it promises no less than eternal happiness to the good, and denounces no slighter a punishment than everlasting misery against the wicked: On the one hand, it is a favor of life unto life," on the other, "A favor of death unto death." And though one would imagine, the bare mentioning of the former would be sufficient to draw men to their duty, yet ministers in all ages have found it necessary, frequently to remind their people of the latter, and to set before them the terrors of the Lord, as so many powerful dissuaves from sin.

But whence is it that men are so disingenuous? The reason seems to be this: The promise of eternal happiness is so agreeable to the inclinations and wishes of mankind, that all who call themselves christians, universally and willingly subscribe to the belief of it: but then there is something so shocking in the consideration of eternal torments, and seemingly such an infinite disproportion between an endless duration of pain, and short life spent in pleasure, that men (some at least of them) can scarcely be brought to confess it as an article of their faith, that an eternity of misery awaits the wicked in a future state.

I shall therefore at this time, beg leave to insist on the proof of this part of one of the Articles of our Creed; and endeavor to make good what our blessed Lord has here threatened in the words of the text, "These (that is, the wicked) shall go a way into everlasting punishment."

Accordingly, without considering the words as they stand in relation to the context; I shall resolve all I have to say, into this one general proposition, "That the torments reserved for the wicked hereafter, are eternal."

But before I proceed to make good this, I must inform you that I take it for granted,

All present do steadfastly believe, They have something within them, which we call a soul, and which is capable of surviving the dissolution of the body, and of being miserable or happy to all eternity.

I take it for granted farther, That you believe a divine revelation; that those books, emphatically called the Scriptures, were written by the inspiration of God, and that the things therein contained, are founded upon eternal truth.

I take it for granted, That you believe, that the Son of God came down to die for sinners; and that there is but one Mediator between God and man, even the man Christ Jesus.

These things being granted, (and they were necessary to be premised) proceed we now to make good the one general proposition asserted in the text, That the torments reserved for the wicked hereafter are eternal. "These shall go away in to everlasting punishment." The

First argument I shall advance to prove that the torments reserved for the wicked hereafter, are eternal, is, That the word of God himself assures us, in line upon line, that it will be so.

To quote all the texts that might be produced in proof of this, would be endless. Let it suffice to instance only in a few. In the Old Testament, in the book of Daniel, chap. 12, ver. 2 we are told, that "some shall wake to everlasting life, and others to everlasting contempt." In the book of Isaiah, it is said, that "the worm of those that have transgressed God's law, and die impenitently, shall not die, nor their fire be quenched." And in another place the holy Prophet, struck, no doubt, with astonishment and horror at the prospect of the continuance of the torments of the damned, breaks out into this moving expostulation, "Who can dwell with everlasting burnings?"

The New Testament is still fuller as to this point, it being a revelation which brought this and such-like particulars to a clear light. The Apostle Jude tells us of the profane despisers of dignities in his days, that "for them was reserved the blackness of darkness forever." And in the book of the Revelation, it is written, that "the smoke of the torments of the wicked ascendeth for ever and ever." And if we believe the witness of men inspired, the witness of the Son of God, who had the Spirit given him, as Mediator, without measure, is still far greater: and in St. Mark's gospel, He repeats this solemn declaration three several times, It is better for thee to enter into life maimed;" that is, it is better to forego the gratification of thy lust, or incur the displeasure of a friend, which may be as dear to thee as a hand, or as useful as a foot, "than having two hands and feet, (that is, for indulging the one, or disobeying God to oblige the other) to be cast into hell, where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

And here again, in the words of the text, "These (the wicked) shall go away into everlasting punishment."

I know it has been objected by some who have denied the eternity of hell-torments, That the words everlasting and ever and ever, are often used in the Holy Scriptures (especially in the Old Testament) when they signify not an endless duration, but a limited term of time.

And this we readily grant: but then we reply, That when the words are used with this limitation, they either manifestly appear to be used so from the context; or are put in opposition to occasional types which God gave his people on some special occasions, as when it is said, "It shall be a perpetual or everlasting statute," or, "a statute for ever;" that is, a standing type, and not merely transient or occasional, as was the pillar of cloud, the manna, and such-like. Or, lastly, they have a relation to that covenant, God made with his spiritual Israel; which, if understood in a spiritual sense, will be everlasting, though the ceremonial dispensation be abolished.

Besides, it ought to be observed, that some of the passages just now referred to, have neither of these words so much as mentioned in them, and cannot possibly be interpreted, so as to denote only a limited term of years.

But let that be as it will, it is evident even to a demonstration, that the words of the text will not admit of such a restrained signification, as appears from their being directly opposed to the words immediately following, "That the righteous shall go into life eternal." From which words, all are ready to grant, that the life promised to the righteous will be eternal. And why the punishment threatened to the wicked should not be understood to be eternal likewise, when the very same word in the original, is used to express the duration of each, no shadow of a reason can be given.

But, Secondly, There cannot be one argument urged, why God should reward his saints with everlasting happiness, whi

ch will not equally prove that he ought to punish sinners with eternal misery.

For, since we know nothing (at least for a certainty) how he will deal with either but by a Divine Revelation; and since, as was proved by the foregoing argument, he hath as positively threatened eternally to punish the wicked, as to reward the good; it follows, that his truth will be as much impeached and called in question, did he not inflict his punishments, as it would be, if he did not confer his rewards.

To this also it has been objected, That though God is obliged by promise to give his rewards, yet his veracity could not be called in question, supposing he should not execute his threatenings, as he actually did not in the case of Nineveh; which God expressly declared by his Prophet Jonah, "should be destroyed in forty days:" notwithstanding the sequel of the story informs us, that Nineveh was spared.

But in answer to this objection we affirm, that God's threatenings, as well as promises, are without repentance; and for this reason, because they are both founded on the eternal laws of right reason. Accordingly we always find, that where the conditions were not performed, on the non-performance of which the threatenings were denounced, God always executed the punishment threatened. The driving Adam out of Eden, the destruction of the old world by a deluge of water, and the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, are, and will be always so many standing monuments of God's executing his threatenings when denounced, though to our weak apprehensions, the punishment may seem far to exceed the crime.

It is true, God did spare Nineveh, and that because the inhabitants did actually repent, and therefore performed the conditions upon which it was supposed, by the Prophet's being sent to warn them, the threatened punishment should be withheld.

And so in respect to gospel threatenings. If men will so far consult their own welfare, as to comply with the gospel, God certainly will not punish them, but on the contrary, confer upon them his rewards. But to affirm that he will not punish, and that eternally to, impenitent, obstinate sinners, according as he hath threatened; what is it, in effect, but to make God like a man, that he should lie, or the son of man, that he should repent?

But the absurdity of such an opinion will appear still more evident from

The Third argument I shall offer to prove, that the torments reserved for the wicked hereafter are eternal, From the nature of the christian covenant.

And here I must again observe, that it was taken for granted at the beginning of this discourse, that you believe the Son of God came down to save sinners; and that there is but one Mediator between God and men, even the Man Christ Jesus.

And here I take it for granted farther, (unless you believe the absurd and unwarrantable doctrine of purgatory) that you are fully persuaded, this life is the only time allotted by Almighty God for working out our salvation, and that after a few years are passed over, there will remain no more sacrifice for sin.

And if this be granted (and who dares deny it?) it follows, that if the wicked man dieth in his wickedness, and under the wrath of God, he must continue in that state to all eternity. For, since there is no possibility of their being delivered out of such a condition, but by and through Christ; and since, at the hour of death, the time of Christ's mediation and intercession for him is irrecoverably gone; the same reason that may be given, why God should punish a sinner that dieth under the guilt of his sins for a single day, will equally hold good, why he should continue to punish him for a year, an age, nay all eternity.

But I hasten to the Fourth and last argument, to prove, That the torments reserved for the wicked hereafter are eternal, Because the devil's punishment is to be so.

That there is such a being whom we call the devil; that he was once an angel of light, but for his pride and rebellion against God, was cast down from heaven, and is now permitted, with the rest of the spiritual wickednesses, to walk to and fro, seeking whom they may devour; that there is a place of torment reserved for them, or, to use the Apostle's words, "That they are reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day;" are truths all here present were supposed to be convinced of, at the beginning of the discourse, you believing the Holy Scriptures to be written by the inspiration of God, wherein these truths are delivered.

But then if we allow all this, and think it no injustice in God to punish those once glorious spirits for their rebellion; how can we think it unjust in him, to punish wicked men for their impenitency to all eternity?

You will say, perhaps, that they have sinned against greater light, and therefore deserve a greater punishment. And so we grant that the punishment of the fallen angels may be greater as to degree, than that of wicked men; but then we affirm, it will be equal as to the eternal duration of it: for in that day, as the lively oracles of God inform us, shall the Son of Man say to them on his left hand, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Where we find that impenitent sinners are to be cast into the same everlasting fire, with the devil and his angels; and that too very justly. For though they may have sinned against greater light, yet Christians sin against greater mercy. Since Christ took not hold of, did not die for, the fallen angels, but for men and for our salvation. So that if God spared not those excellent beings, assure thyself, O obstinate sinner, whoever thou art, he will by no means spare thee.

From what then has been said it plainly appears, that verily the torments reserved for the wicked hereafter, were eternal. And if so, brethren, how ought we to fly to Jesus Christ for refuge; how holy ought we to be in all manner of conversation and godliness, that we may be accounted worthy to escape this wrath to come!

But before I proceed to a practical exhortation, permit me to draw an inference or two from what has been said.

And First, If the torments reserved for the wicked hereafter are eternal, what shall we say to those, who make an open profession in their creed to believe a life everlasting, a life of misery as well as happiness, and yet dare to live in the actual commission of those sins which will unavoidably, without repentance, bring them into that place of torment? Thou believest that the punishments of the impenitently wicked in another life, are eternal: "Thou dost well, the devils also believe and tremble." But know O vain man, unless this belief doth influence thy practice, and makes thee bid adieu to thy sins, every time thou repeatest thy creed, thou doest in effect say, I believe I shall be undone for ever.

But, Secondly, If the torments reserved for the wicked hereafter are eternal, then let this serve as a caution to such persons, (and it is to be feared there are some such) who go about to dissuade others from the belief of such an important truth: There being no surer way, in all probability, to encourage and promote infidelity and profaneness, than the broaching or maintaining so unwarrantable a doctrine. For if the positive threats of God concerning the eternity of hell-torments, are already found insufficient to deter men from sin, what a higher pitch of wickedness may we imagine they will quickly arrive at, when they are taught to entertain any hopes of a future recovery out of them; or, what is still worse, that their souls are hereafter to be annihilated, and become like the beasts that perish? But woe unto such blind leaders of the blind. No wonder if they both fall into that ditch. And let such corrupters of God's word know, that I testify unto every man that heareth me this day, "That if any one shall add unto, or take away from the words that are written in the book of God, God shall take his part out of the book of life, and shall add unto him all the plagues that are in that book."

Thirdly and Lastly, If the torments reserved for the wicked hereafter are eternal, then this may serve as a reproof for those who quarrel with God, and say it is inconsistent with his justice, to punish a person to all eternity, only for enjoying the pleasures of sin for a season. But such persons must be told, that it is not their thinking or calling God unjust, will make him so, no more than a condemned prisoner's saying the law or judge is unjust, will render either duly chargeable with such an imputation. But knowest thou, O worm, what blasphemy thou art guilty of, in charging God with injustice? "Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, why hast thou made me thus?" Wilt thou presume to arraign the Almighty at the bar of thy shallow reasoning? And call him unjust, for punishing thee eternally, only because thou wishest it may not be so? But hath God said it, and shall he not do it? He hath said it: and let God be true, though every man be a liar. "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" Assuredly he will. And if sinners will not own his justice in his threatenings here, they will be compelled ere long to own and feel them, when tormented by him hereafter.

But to come to a more practical application of what has been delivered.

You have heard, brethren, the eternity of hell-torments plainly proved, from the express declarations of holy scriptures, and consequences naturally drawn from them. And now there seems to need no great art of rhetoric to persuade any understanding person to avoid and abhor those sins, which without repentance will certainly plunge him into this eternal gulf. The disproportion between the pleasure and the pain (if there be any pleasure in sin) is so infinitely great, that supposing it was only possible, though not certain, that the wicked would be everlastingly punished, no one that has the reason of a man, for the enjoying a little momentary pleasure, would, one might imagine, run the hazard of enduring eternal pain. But since the torments of the damned are not only possible, but certain (since God himself, who cannot lie, has told us so) for men, notwithstanding, to persist in their disobedience, and then flatter themselves, that God will not make good his threatenings, is a most egregious instance of folly and presumption.

Dives himself supposed, that if one rose from the dead, his brethren would amend their lives, but Christians, it seems, will not repent, though the Son of God died and rose again, and told them what they must expect, if they continue obstinate in evil-doing.

Would we now and then draw off our thoughts from sensible objects, and by faith meditate a while on the miseries of the damned, I doubt not but we should, as it were, hear many an unhappy soul venting his fruitless sorrows, in some such piteous moans as these.

"O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death!" O foolish mortal that I was, thus to bring myself into these never-ceasing tortures, for the transitory enjoyment of a few short-lived pleasures, which scarcely afforded me any satisfaction, even when I most indulged myself in them. Alas! Are these the wages, these the effects of sin? O damned apostate! First to delude me with pretended promises of happiness, and after several years drudgery in his service, thus to involve me in eternal woe. O that I had never hearkened to his beguiling insinuations! O that I had rejected his very first suggestions with the utmost detestation and abhorrence! O that I had taken up my cross and followed Christ! O that I had never ridiculed serious godliness; and out of a false politeness, condemned the truly pious as too severe, enthusiastic, or superstitious! For I then had been happy indeed, happy beyond expression, happy to all eternity, yonder in those blessed regions where they sit, clothed with unspeakable glory, and chanting forth their seraphic hallelujahs to the Lamb that sitteth upon the throne for ever. But, alas! These reflections come now too late; these wishes now are vain and fruitless. I have not suffered, and therefore must not reign with them. I have in effect denied the Lord that bought me, and therefore justly am I now denied by him. But must I live for ever tormented in these flames? Must this body of mine, which not long since lay in state, was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day, must it be here eternally confined, and made the mockery of insulting devils? O eternity! That thought fills me with despair: I must be miserable for ever."

Come then, all ye self-deluding, self-deluded sinners, and imagine yourselves for once in the place of that truly wretched man I have been here describing. Think, I beseech you by the mercies of God in Christ Jesus, think with yourselves, how racking, how unsupportable the never-dying worm of a self-condemning conscience will hereafter be to you. Think how impossible it will be for you to dwell with everlasting burnings.

Come, all ye christians of a lukewarm, Laodicean spirit, ye Gallie's in religion, who care a little, but not enough for the things of God; O think, think with yourselves, how deplorable it will be to lose the enjoyment of heaven, and run into endless torments, merely because you will be content to be almost, and will not strive to be altogether christians. Consider, I beseech you consider, how you will rave and curse that fatal stupidity which made you believe any thing less than true faith in Jesus, productive of a life of strict piety, self-denial, and mortification, can keep you from those torments, the eternity of which I have been endeavoring to prove.

But I can no more. These thoughts are too melancholy for me to dwell on, as well as for you to hear; and God knows, as punishing is his strange work, so denouncing his threatenings is mine. But if the bare mentioning the torments of the damned is so shocking, how terrible must the enduring of them be!

And now, are not some of you ready to cry out, "These are hard sayings, who can bear them?"

But let not sincere christians be in the least terrified at what has been delivered: No, for you is reserved a crown, a kingdom, an eternal and exceeding weight of glory. Christ never said that the righteous, the believing, the upright, the sincere, but the wicked, merciless, negatively good professors before described, shall go into everlasting punishment. For you, who love him in sincerity, a new and living way is laid open into the Holy of Holies by the blood of Jesus Christ: and an abundant entrance will be administered unto you, at the great day of account, into eternal life. Take heed, therefore, and beware that there be not in any of you a root of bitterness springing up of unbelief: but on the contrary, steadfastly and heartily rely on the many precious promises reached out to you in the gospel, knowing that he who hath promised is faithful, and therefore will perform.

But let no obstinately wicked professors dare to apply any of the divine promises to themselves: "For it is not meet to take the children's meat and give it unto dogs:" No, to such the terrors of the Lord only belong. And as certainly as Christ will say to his true followers, "Come, ye blessed children of my Father, receive the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world;" so he will unalterably pronounce this dreadful sentence against all that die in their sins, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

From which unhappy state, may God of his infinite mercy deliver us all through Jesus Christ; to whom, with thee O Father, and thee O Holy Ghost, three Persons and one eternal God, be ascribed, as is most due, all honor, power, might, majesty, and dominion, now and for ever more.

Heaven
by J.C. Ryle

There is a glorious dwelling place provided by Jesus Christ for all His believing people. The world that now is, is not their rest: they are pilgrims and strangers in it. Heaven is their home.

There will be a place in heaven for all sinners who have fled to Christ by faith, and trusted in Him : for the least as well as the greatest. Abraham took care to provide for all his children, and God takes care to provide for His. None will be disinherited; none will be cast out; none will be cut off. Each shall stand in his lot, and have a portion in the day when the Lord brings many sons to glory. In our Father's house are many mansions.

Reader, I want you to go to heaven, after this life is over. I want heaven to be very full, and I want you to be one of its inhabitants. Listen to me for a few moments, while I tell you something about the manner of the place.

I can tell you a little of the blessedness of heaven, but not all. What mortal man can explain the full nature of the inheritance of the saints in light? Who can describe the glory which is yet to be revealed and given to the children of God? Words fail, language falls short. Mind cannot conceive fully, and tongue cannot express perfectly, the things which are comprised in the glory yet to come upon the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. Oh, it is indeed a true saying of the Apostle John : "It doth not yet appear what we shall be" (1 John iii. 2).

The very Bible itself only lifts the veil a little, which hangs over this subject. How could it do more? We could not thoroughly understand more, if more had been told us. Our constitution is as yet too earthly, Our understanding is as yet too carnal to appreciate more if we had it. The Bible generally deals with the subject in negative terms, and not in positive assertions. It describes what there will not be in the glorious inheritance, that thus we may get some faint idea of what there will be. It paints the absence of certain things, in order that we may drink in a little the blessedness of the things present. It tells us that the inheritance is incorruptible, undefiled, and fadeth not away. It tells us that the devil is to be bound,-that there shall be no more night and no more curse,-that death shall be cast into the lake of fire,-that all tears shall be wiped away, and that the inhabitant shall no more say, "I am sick." And these are glorious things indeed! No corruption!-No fading!-No withering!-No devil! No curse of sin!-No sorrow!-No tears!-No sickness!-No death! Surely the cup of the children of God will indeed run over!

But reader, there are positive things told us about the glory yet to come upon the heirs of God, which ought not to be kept back. There are many sweet, pleasant, and unspeakable comforts in their future inheritance, which all true Christians would do well to consider. There are cordials for fainting pilgrims in many words and expressions of Scripture, which you and I ought to lay up against time of need.

Is knowledge pleasant to us now? Is the little that we know of God, and Christ, and in the Bible, precious to our souls, and do we long for more? We shall have it perfectly in glory. What says the Scripture?-"Then shall I know even as also I am known" (1 Cor. xiii. 12). Blessed be God, there will be no more disagreements among believers! Episcopalians and Presbyterians, Calvinists and Arminians, Millenarians and Anti-Millenarians, friends of Establishments and friends of the Voluntary system, advocates of infant baptism and advocates of adult baptism,-all will at length be of one mind. The former ignorance will have passed away. We shall marvel to find how childish and blind we have been.

Is holiness pleasant to us now? Is sin the burden and bitterness of our lives? Do we long for entire conformity to the image of God? We shall have it perfectly in glory. What says the Scripture?-"Christ gave Himself for the Church, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing" (Eph. v. 27). Oh, the blessedness of an eternal good-bye to sin! Oh, how little the best of us do at present! Oh, what unutterable corruption sticks, like birdlime, to all our motives, all our thoughts, all our words, all our actions! Oh, how many of us, like Naphtali, are godly in our words, but, like Reuben, unstable in our works! Thank God, all this shall be changed!

Is rest pleasant to us now? Do we often feel faint though pursuing? Do we long for a world in which we need not be always watching and warring? We shall have it perfectly in glory. What saith the Scripture?-"There remaineth therefore a rest

t for the people of God" (Heb. iv. 9). The daily, hourly conflict with the world, the flesh, and the devil, shall at length be at an end: the enemy shall be bound; the warfare shall be over; the wicked shall at last cease from troubling; the weary shall at length be at rest. There shall be a great calm.

Is service pleasant to us now? Do we find it sweet to work for Christ, and yet groan, being burdened by a feeble body? Is our spirit often willing, but hampered and clogged by the poor weak flesh? Have our hearts burned within us when we have been allowed to give a cup of cold water for Christ's sake; and have we sighed to think what unprofitable servants we are? Let us take comfort. We shall be able to serve perfectly in glory, and without weariness. What saith the Scripture?-"They serve Him day and night in His temple" (Rev. vii. 15).

Is satisfaction pleasant to us now? Do we find the world empty? Do we long for the filling up of every void place and gap in our hearts? We shall have it perfectly in glory. We shall no longer have to mourn over cracks in all our earthen vessels, and thorns in all our roses, and bitter dregs in all our sweet cups. We shall no longer lament, with Jonah, over withered gourds. We shall no longer say, with Solomon, "All is vanity and vexation of spirit." We shall no longer cry, with aged David, "I have seen an end of all perfection." What saith the Scripture?-"I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likenesses" (Psalm xvii. 15).

Is communion with the saints pleasant to us now? Do we feel that we are never so happy as when we are with the excellent of the earth? Are we never so much at home as in their company? We shall have it perfectly in glory. What saith the Scripture?-"The Son of man shall send His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which work iniquity." "He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet; and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds" (Matt. xiii. 41; xxiv. 31). Praised be God, we shall see all the saints of whom we have read in the Bible, and in whose steps we have tried to walk.

We shall see apostles, prophets, patriarchs, martyrs, reformers, missionaries, and ministers, of whom the world was not worthy. We shall see the faces of those we have known and loved in Christ on earth, and over whose departure we shed bitter tears.

We shall see them more bright and glorious than they ever were before. And, best of all, we shall see them without hurry and anxiety, and without feeling that we only meet to part again. In glory there is no death, no parting, no farewell!

Is communion with Christ pleasant to us now? Do we find His name precious to us? Do we feel our hearts burn within us at the thought of His dying love? We shall have perfect communion with Him in glory. "We shall ever be with the Lord" (1 Thess. iv. 17). We shall be with Him in paradise: we shall see His face in the kingdom. These eyes of ours will behold those hands and feet which were pierced with nails, and that head which was crowned with thorns. Where He is, there will the sons of God be. When He comes, they will come with Him: when He sits down in His glory, they shall sit down by His side. Blessed prospects indeed! I am a dying man in a dying world; all before me is unseen: the world to come is a harbour unknown! But Christ is there, and that is enough. Surely if there is rest and peace in following Him by faith on earth, there will be far more rest and peace when you see Him face to face. If we have found it good to follow the pillar of cloud and fire in the wilderness, we shall find it a thousand times better to sit down in our eternal inheritance with our Joshua, in the promised land.

Ah, reader, if you are not yet among the heirs of glory, I do pity you with all my heart. How much you are missing! How little true comfort you are enjoying! There you are, struggling on, and toiling in the fire, and wearying yourself for merely earthly ends,-seeking rest and finding none,-chasing shadows and never catching them-wondering why you are not happy, and yet refusing to see the cause,-hungry, and thirsty, and empty, and yet blind to the plenty within your reach,-your expectations all perishing, and none to look forward to beyond the grave. Oh, that you were wise! Oh, that you would hear the voice of Jesus, and learn of Him.

Reader, if you are one of those who are heirs of glory, you may well rejoice and be happy. You may well wait, like the boy Patience in Pilgrim's Progress: your best things are as yet to come.-You may well bear crosses without murmuring: your light affliction is but for a moment; the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory which is to be revealed. When Christ our life appears, then you also shall appear with Him in glory.-You may well not envy the transgressor and his prosperity: you are the truly rich.

Well said a dying believer, in my own parish, "I am more rich than I ever was in my life." You may say, as Mephibosheth said to David, "Let the world take all: my King is coming again in peace." You may say, as Alexander said when he gave all his riches away, and was asked what he kept for himself: "I have hope." You may well not be cast down by sickness: t

he eternal part of you is safe, and provided for, whatever happens to your body. You may well look calmly on death: it opens a door between you and your inheritance. You may well not sorrow excessively over the things of the world,-over partings and bereavements,-over losses and crosses: the day of gathering is before you; your treasure is beyond reach of harm. Heaven is becoming every year more full of those you love, and earth more empty. Glory in your inheritance. It is all yours by faith, if you are a son of God : it shall soon be yours in possession.

re:a vision of the lost - posted by IRONMAN (), on: 2005/6/17 14:06

bro greg

I read that vision by william booth and it further confirms what God has been showing me of late. we've been complacent and content with our own salvations. God did not save us for the sake of saving us, we're not called to sit on our butts after being saved. God has a work for each of us, the question is will we step to the plate and do it?

thanks for posting that, i'll be reading the rest of the thread as God permits and likewise responding.

on eternity - posted by IRONMAN (), on: 2005/6/17 19:32

It seems the thought of eternity causes me to have to shut down and reboot my brain :-? it's a thing like so many other attributes of God namely His grace and mercy and power which even if i tried my utmost i simply could not even begin to begin to comprehend. i have to shut down and reboot again...i wonder what it will be like in eternity.

Re: - posted by IRONMAN (), on: 2005/6/20 13:21

I wonder how much of what I have done "in the name of the Lord" will abide the fire. I've thought back on some of the discussions I've been involved in here and I know some of my responses were not edifying nor inspired by the spirit, those are wasted opportunities. I wonder how many other such responses/discussions are out there. How many times do people want to glorify themselves while pretending to glorify God or how many times we have flexed our interlectual muscles instead of turning loose the power of God. How many times have we all said things which sounded good enough and misled people because they were not things which God taught us or asked us to say?

Many of us will get into heaven by grace only and have no crowns or glory beyond whatever one gets upon entry into heaven.