

"Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

- Matthew vi,21

Deuteronomy viii

Matthew xxv,1-30

Psalms 5

New Book of Worship, Psalm 32, p.52

If we are not instructed as to the effect of our life here upon the spirit, it may seem harsh to hear it said that repentance after death is impossible, that once in hell forever there.

That Jesus should have said of those who had not received the stranger nor fed the hungry nor visited the sick, "These shall go away into everlasting punishment" seems incredible to some. The sentence is too severe, ill-proportioned to the sin of omission, they say. And we are familiar with the argument that God, who is just and merciful, would not afflict one with everlasting punishment for the sins that could be committed in this short life. Eternal punishment for a few years of evil living? There is no ratio between any fixed time and eternity. How unjust, severe, unmerciful the punishment would be!

And so it would be if consignment to hell for sin were a decree of the Lord in punishment. It is true that the Word speaks of the Lord as punishing and casting into hell, as never changing His judgment and never repenting. But such expressions in the letter were reflections of human states, ideas, and customs and were permitted that those in evil might be checked and turn to better ways. They are not in the letter genuine truths, but express truth as it appears to the natural and uninstructed mind. The Lord is pure mercy, pure forgiveness, increasing love. Any other representation of God is an adaptation to those who have not yet risen to any interior idea of Him or who think of Him as seen when we are in opposition to Him. The Lord sends no one to the realm of the lost. He is pure mercy and love. He exerts all His power to lift everyone into heaven.

The sun in nature is a correspondential but inanimate representative of the Lord. We find ice and cold upon the earth. It seems to come from the sun's low shining, from the sun's withdrawing its heat. But, as we well know, it is actually due to the earth's turning from the sun or withdrawing from it. The sun's entire energy is exerted to warm and light the earth and the other planets. Likewise there proceeds from the Lord naught but spiritual heat and light, naught but love and wisdom. In Him is only one effort, one power, namely to give everywhere light and love. And man is a receptacle of love and wisdom from the Lord; but he is so organized that he can turn from the Lord and so convert what he receives from the Lord, which is essentially unselfish love, into its opposite, into selfishness, whence originates all evil.

But it is argued that an infinite God must have some way, throughout endless time, to remove the evil that one acquires in this life and eventually to save him from his sins. This thought appealed so strongly to one class of people that they organized a church in opposition to the orthodox denominations, teaching that the nature of God is such that eventually all will be saved alike, irrespective of their life on earth. Yet, what greater mistake could be made than to live in such a hope if the truth is that one cannot reform or change his nature after death!

Let us try to make clear how it is that we cannot repent or change our nature after death.

We have an external mind. We can prove this, for we know that we can express

feelings that are just the contrary of those in the heart. We can appear outwardly happy and cordial while the soul is sad or burns with hatred. This could not be if there were not two minds, or an internal and an external mind. The external mind can assume an appearance just the opposite of the internal state. But after death the external mind gradually closes and one comes into the internal mind, and this so completely that when one finally reaches his eternal home - his eternal state - he has but one mind and can not express anything which is not in the heart.

If we understand this difference between the spiritual world and the natural world and something of the relationship of the internal and the external mind, it will clearly appear why there is no repentance after death, why the Lord spoke of "everlasting punishment." The Lord does not punish. Punishment is inherent in evil.

Our life in this world develops as a tree and its seed. While the seed is in the milk, the tree sends its life into the seed, terminating there. The life of the tree terminates in the seed as an ultimate, and forms the seed into a receptacle of its own life and nature. The oak makes the acorn a receptacle of oak life; the olive makes its seed a receptacle of the life of the olive. Finally the seed solidifies, is perfected, matured, and the tree lets go of it. It falls to the earth and reproduces the life that formed it. The acorn will produce naught but an oak and the olive naught but an olive. Since the beginning of creation it has been the law expressed in Genesis: "The fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself."

The internal mind pours its life into the external mind just as the tree sends its life into the seed. Said Jesus, "I am the vine, Ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit." If the internal mind abides in the Lord - in the truth and life of the Word - then the external mind brings forth much fruit, the fruit of good works. But if the internal mind does not abide in the Lord, does not draw its truth and life and purpose from the Word, then the external mind is cast forth as a branch and is withered, and is gathered for the fire. What fire? The fires of hell, the fire of worldly, self-centered, carnal life. Or, in other words, if the internal mind does not receive its life from the Lord and heaven, then it must open to the life of hell, and that life flows down into the external mind and - as with the life of the tree flowing into the seed - makes the external mind a form of infernal life. And when infernal life is in the external mind, the internal life dwells in the external and the life of the external dwells in the internal. The two are then one by correspondence, which is to say that the life of the internal on the spiritual plane is just as the life of the external on the natural plane.

Now if a man dies in this state, what of the hereafter? The Lord has told us in the terms of nature, for nature is a mirror in which spiritual things are seen in image. The Lord said, "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" Here man is compared to a plant. If we are grapes in this life, we must be the same there; if we are thorns here, we shall be thorns there. That is to say, The kind of life that we form in the seed in this world will abide forever. Only the kind of life we live inwardly as well as outwardly here can blossom in the Elysian fields. Our life here makes the mind, the entire soul, a seed which, when planted in the everlasting life, will bear its kind. Its seed will be in itself, bearing after its own quality.

If we understand this principle, it will clearly appear why repentance after death is impossible. Here we have a grain of wheat. Plant it, it will bear wheat. There is a tare; plant it, it will bear tares. Can you change their nature? You cannot turn a

tare into wheat, and neither can you change hell into heaven. The tare is a fixed form. It cannot be put back into the plant and made over. If the tare were put back into a tare, it would again become a tare. So would every person in the world, if he were given another trial after his ruling love has been chosen during his life in this world, choose the same life, and he would choose it with ten times the ardor with which he chose it in the first place, because his choice was not dictated by the Lord. It was his own free choice.

This same principle is also taught by the Lord's parable of the rich man and Lazarus. Between the rich man in hell and the angels in heaven there was a great gulf "fixed." That gulf is the difference between the internal state of the evil and the internal state of the good. This state is fixed at the death of the body. And the gulf is so fixed that they<sup>who</sup> would cross "cannot." One can not pass from an angelic state of life to an infernal one, nor conversely, after death.

This fact seems hard to some. But if it were not so, temptation would continue to eternity, and we should never find peace nor rest. The heart is where our treasure is, no joy except from love, and only in the exercise of the ruling love which we have chosen as our own can we find satisfaction. And in the parable we are given the reason why the ruling love cannot be changed after death. The rich man pleaded that one might be sent to his brethren to inform them, lest they also come into the place of torment. Mark Abraham's reply: "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them... If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither would they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." There is nothing that angels can do for one that the Lord cannot do through the Word. "It shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." If one cannot be led to repent in this life by the power of the Word of God, there is no power in all the heavens that can save him from choosing the abode of the lost.

Then the vital lesson! We are making the eternal life now. We are forming our minds into grapes or thorns, into figs or thistles. And once formed, they will ever bear their kind, because the life of each is "in itself," to produce "its kind." If we choose to be ruled by self instead of by the Lord, the internal mind will become a form receptive only of such life as inflows from the land of the spiritually dead. But if from day to day we choose to be ruled by the Lord, our mind will open to the fuller inflow of life from heaven, both here and hereafter.

Some people reason, "we want another trial." We shall have it. We shall have another trial every time we are tempted. We shall all have another trial before this day is over. Thousands upon thousands of new chances are before us, and as long as the Lord sees that there is a chance left for us to choose heaven rather than hell, He will keep us living upon earth where we are free to make that choice. Man's ruling love abides with him forever. No one goes to hell who does not take his hell with him. No one goes to heaven except he take his heaven with him. It is the spirit that abides.

Each goes to the place he loves. Therefore, "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven." Acquire truths. Let the inner mind abide in the Lord, that the branch may abide in the vine. Bring forth into the external mind the life that comes from above. Make the internal all true, genuine, and righteous, and then there will be no desire to make the external any different. Heaven will be in the life, to enjoy here, and to blossom and bear fruit continually, increasingly throughout the endless life.

"For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."