

The Old Hickory Bulletin

Old Hickory Church of Christ

841 Old Hickory Blvd.

Jackson, TN 38305

oldhickorycofc.com

June 26, 2016

Volume 36, # 26

The Future State of the Wicked

By David Lipscomb (Gospel Advocate, June 27, 1901)

Brother Lipscomb: We would like an article from you on the fate of the wicked after death. We have some brethren here who take the position that the wicked are annihilated, destroyed at once, and that there is no eternal punishment. It seems to be a very wholesome doctrine and very full of comfort to some. We think the scriptures on the subject plain enough, but perhaps you will be able to turn on the light a little stronger than some of the rest of us (T.M. Sowell, Corsicana, Texas).

I have never been able to see why any good man desires to convince people that wickedness would not meet a terrible punishment. This effort to convince them that the only penalty for sin is to pass into non-existence and forgetfulness encourages and satisfies people to remain in wickedness. Is not that the meaning, the purpose, and the effect of it? Why object to the idea of eternal punishment? Is not the answer: It gives an idea of terrible punishment of sin and of cruelty of God toward impenitent sinners? To whom does it give such an idea, and who is it that draws back from the idea of that punishment? Is it not the wicked? Yet it does not seem terrible enough to deter them from wickedness. But God intended the punishment he inflicted on sin to deter the wicked from sin. John the Baptist warned them to flee from the wrath to come. Paul says: "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." Everywhere God represents himself as a God of terror to the wicked. The future punishment of the wicked, so far as time is concerned, is described by exactly the same

words that describe the duration of the happiness of the righteous: "These shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life" (Matt. 25:46, RV). Revelation 14:11, RV, says of those who worship the beast: "The smoke of their torment goeth up forever and ever." Take these two expressions, and suppose God had intended to teach eternal suffering; what words could he have used to teach it if these do not? God used the words that, in their common and natural meaning, convey the idea of eternal suffering. He could easily have used words that mean annihilation. Why did he use those which mean eternal suffering or punishment if he intended to convey the idea of ceasing to exist at death? These persons who now insist that he means ceasing to exist at death never use the terms God used, except to try to explain them away and break their force. Then the wicked are raised from the dead. Why raise them from the dead to annihilate them? They were to be punished with a punishment much sorer than death without mercy (Heb. 2:2,3). There is a life after death, a punishment worse than death; and when does that punishment after death end? It exists "forever and ever," it is eternal. No language has terms indicating a longer existence than this in happiness or in woe.

It is said the wicked shall be destroyed. But destruction does not mean annihilation; it means the relations the person holds to other things will be broken and the associations and connections that have hitherto brought good will bring evil. A nation is destroyed by being broken up in its relations and disorganized. It is doubtful if the idea of annihilation of anything or being is found in the Bible. Paul describes the punishment that shall be inflicted upon those that obey not the gospel: "Who shall suffer punishment, even eternal destruction from the face of the Lord and from the glory of his might" (2 Thess. 1:9, RV). This plainly says the destruction shall be from the presence of God, and this destruction shall be an eternal one. It shall never be restored. In the presence of God are blessing and joy and all good; away from that presence are sorrow and woe and all evil. This is to be eternal. These scriptures are so clear that it seems to me none willing to receive the truth can doubt them. In making the punishment for sin light, we make the sin itself a light and indifferent matter. To make sin against God a light matter is to derogate from the honor, majesty, holiness, and power of

God; it derogates from the importance of the mission and death of Christ. Is it likely Christ would have left heaven, with its glories, and have come to earth to suffer and die to save men from a state of unconsciousness? All effort to minimize or lighten the punishment of sin destroys the enormity of the sinfulness of sin; lessens the majesty, dignity, and holiness of God; lessens the magnitude and the grace of Christ and the importance of his death. It derogates from man and makes him only a brute; it destroys the difference between virtue and vice, sin and holiness, in men. The Bible affords no ground for such a position and leads to no such conclusions. If men would study to avoid sin instead of trying to excuse it, it would be much better for men.

-via Guardian of Truth, 10/03/1991

Buried Treasure

As a child, the idea of buried treasure excited me very much. Just thinking of all the mystery and adventure involved made my young head swirl with delight. And then, the dream of spending all of that treasure on balls and toys and candy. I've now grown from childhood, and I no longer find a pirate's treasure of any interest at all. However, I am now a child of God, and guess what? As His child, I still love buried treasure! Not pirate's treasure, but the treasures found on the pages of inspiration. There are numerous little nuggets of truth saturated between the pages of God's word. I just love the adventure and excitement of digging up more precious truths day after day. Many times I've said that studying God's word is like hunting for and finding treasure every day. What a glorious thought! David was a treasure hunter. He said God's word was "better to me than thousands of coins of gold and silver" (Psa. 119:72). There's buried treasure of priceless value found within the word of God. You'd better get digging!

- Michael Pickford

Don't Play On the Rocks

One day, a friend and I were fishing at the Neely Henry dam. We had never been to a dam before, nor did we know the dangers associated with one. We were on the rocks below it fishing very casually when we heard a siren. We had no clue what it meant; all we knew was that it was scaring off all our fish. Suddenly, two turbines were empowered and the water was rising fast around us. All we could do was scurry off. Due to our nonchalance, we nearly drowned. Had we paid attention to the signs around that said "Stay Off The Rocks" and "Fast Rising Turbulent Waters," we would not have been in that situation in the first place.

We are told to "be sober, be watchful; because your adversary the devil walks about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8). The devil will try any snare to get us to sin. The devil's devices may be subtle or they may be blatantly obvious. Therefore, we must be on the guard for whatever he throws at us. We must give ourselves wholly to study and meditation upon God's word. We all have to stand guard against Satan and his traps. If we study and follow the word of the Lord and resist the devil, God promises us that Satan will flee from us (James 4:7). And the Lord is not slack concerning His promises (2 Peter 3:9).

A strong warning in Deuteronomy 28:15 reads, "But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the Lord your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you." If the people obeyed His voice, they were spared and blessed; if the people ignored the warnings, God punished them. Just as my friend and I endangered our physical lives by playing on the rocks, we must all be aware of the warning signs that the Lord gives us and obey Him. Let us remember that the Lord is not slack concerning His promises.

Let us walk circumspectly from day to day. If we do not give heed to the cautions set before us, we will more easily fall into the grasps of sin. As the words of the old song go, "Careless soul, O heed the warning."

- Aaron Beard

Book, Chapter and Verse, Please!

"Jesus said it is most noble to investigate to see whether what we are being told is true. This is the best practice in politics and religion. God would have us do this very thing for it is what Luke (Luke 1:3) and the Bereans (Acts 17:11) did. Don't believe it if you can't prove it by The Book. If you want to abide with Christ and God, then abide in the doctrine of Christ (2 John 9-11)."

"Jesus is proclaimed as the Son of God with power because He was raised from the grave (Romans 1:3,4). No other self-proclaimed saviour of man can make that claim. If His power does not work for you, maybe you're too far away. Come closer (Jas. 4:8)!"

- > "It is easier to build strong children than to repair adults!"
 - > "Dusty Bibles lead to dirty lives!"
 - > "Never give the devil a ride -- he will always want to drive!"
 - > "God and children hate divorce. Do you?"
-