

## THE THREE BIBLE HELLS HAVE BEEN CONFUSED

(Brother Wilmer Pomeroy of Philadelphia explains how words having different meanings have been misconstrued. From St. Paul Enterprise, Friday, December 10, 1915, page 1.)

There are three different hells mentioned in the Scriptures, and failure to discriminate between them has given rise to all the contradictions and confusion on this subject existing today. When we come to philosophically differentiate the matter, we find these three hells to be separate and distinct, in time of beginning, in continuance, in character, and in purpose. Two are in existence now; the third is not yet.

The first hell was instituted at the death of Abel. God explains that Adam's disobedience brought death, and, at death, all pass from life to *sheol* (Greek, *hades*). In speaking of the place or state of the dead, God never uses any word other than *sheol*. The translators, evidently, failed to see either the nature of death or the character of *sheol*. The Scriptures show very clearly and specifically that the dead are really dead and "know not anything." However, it appears that the translators could not rid themselves of the immortality of the soul doctrine; for, since it seems improper to send the good and the bad to the same place (even though God says that very thing happens), when the record speaks of the death of the wicked, they promptly translate *sheol* to be "hell," but when *sheol* concerns the righteous, they translate it "the grave."

Many of the denominational theological text-books teach the truth about *sheol*, but the lack of discrimination spoken of at the beginning of this article has made "confusion worse confounded." Once upon a time the quarterly conference of Centenary Methodist Episcopal church of Philadelphia put a series of text-books in my hand, the first of which was "*Binney's Theological Compendium Improved*." On page 147 I was amazed to read these words: "Hell: this word, translated from the Hebrew *sheol* and the Greek *hades*, originally means the concealed place, the state or condition of all departed spirits, whether righteous or the wicked, and, therefore, does not necessarily denote a place of torment." Bishops, please take notice.

It could not be a place of torture, for God says: "There is no work nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in *sheol*, whither thou goest." This is the first of the three hells mentioned in the Bible, the place or condition of the silent dead.

The second hell did not begin to exist (as a hell) until about 1,600 years after the first hell was instituted.

The first hell is the abode of silence, and death and oblivion are its characteristics; but this hell, the second hell, is the habitat of grief and wailing, of intrigue and hate, of cunning and murderous plans. It is not inhabited by men, and no human being ever was

there; it is the abode of devils.

God hath, now, His innumerable messengers, His angels, encamping round about His servants in particular and the world in general. They are powerful, but strictly invisible. The Word tells us that some of the angels of God were once guilty of violating their trust. Given the power to materialize or assume the human body, that they might the better serve and assist men, they became enamored of the daughters of Eve and took them to wife. Thus they lost their first estate of purity and power. The results of these unions were men of renown: giants in body and mind, and wicked in heart above all that men had ever devised. Soon the earth became so corrupt and filled with violence that God sent the last great flood of waters and swept them, all but faithful Noah and his family, to death.

Of course, the humans went to *sheol*, or hell, or the death state, to await the resurrection. But God says that He cast the fallen angels, the spirits, the demons, out into the abyss of *Tartarus*. Note, He did not cast them into *hades*, or hell, but into *Tartarus*, the black abyss surrounding the earth. We read in Jude that “the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day.” Also Peter tells us that “God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to *Tartarus*, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.”

But, Alas! Alas! The translators rendered *Tartarus* “hell,” also, thus confusing and confounding the ages since their day. These demons, being in *Tartarus*, are in touch with the earth, and in every land and in every age, they have sought to commune with men. And they have succeeded; not only in communicating with men, but in deceiving them, by pretending that they are the departed, the dead, of earth, communicating with the living. Oft-times this goes so far that they get entire control of the lives of their victims, completely wrecking them. This is spiritism, commonly called spiritualism. Spiritualism is demonism, and is a direct product or emanation from the second hell of the Bible. Eph. 6:11, 12: “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits [margin] in high places.”

We see, then, that, according to the unfortunate rendering of *Tartarus*, it is true that hell is full of devils, and that the powers of hell are all abroad, trying to deceive and wreck mankind. But we must not confound the two hells. This is not the hell into which men go at death (*sheol*), but the hell into which the fallen angels were cast—*Tartarus*.

But the worst is not yet told! The third hell is the symbolical lake of fire. By uniting these three hells into one, we have the devils in the lake of fire, into which men go at

death. This is the common idea of hell.

Now, what is this lake of fire, the third hell? Rev. 20:14 and 21:8 explain that it “is the second death.” From Adam’s day to the present time, men have been dying, one by one. This is the first death. They are to be made alive again, and may die the second time; that will be the “second death.” The first death is imposed because of Adam’s sin. “By one man’s disobedience sin entered, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men.”

This was “the curse” or penalty for sin. Then, Jesus became a curse for us and suffered the penalty, that we might be restored to life again. “He tasted death for every man,” and “As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”

Before they are made alive again, Satan will be bound for 1,000 years. The devils and their master, Satan, will be entirely restrained from communicating with or tempting mankind for 1,000 years. Thus will man come into his own. This transpires during the establishment of Christ’s kingdom; it is man’s Judgment day.

At the end of the 1,000 years men are to be finally tested or judged, and Satan and his angels will be loosed again for that purpose. To the devout mind it seems almost impossible, but the Scriptures indicate or seem to, that even after 1,000 years of blessing, many will not be fully submissive to God’s will. In Jesus’ parable illustrating this time, these are called “goats” in contrast to the “sheep” who will be not only perfect in mind and body, but also perfect in loyalty to God. The sheep will live on forever—have everlasting life. But what of the “goats?”

We read that God hath foreordained the destruction of the devil and his angels. They are to be cut out of the universe of God—annihilated. This annihilation is symbolized by a lake of fire, as fire destroys. The destruction is accentuated by brimstone. Indeed, everything that is destroyed is spoken of as being cast into this lake of fire, even symbolic things themselves. Thus the symbolic “beast” is cast into the symbolical lake of fire; likewise the false prophet; and even *sheol* (*hades*) itself, is “cast into the lake of fire.” So, also, all those who, at the end of the thousand years, are not worthy of life—the “goat” class—are “cast into the lake of fire; which is the second death”—or destruction.

Now, it so happened that when Jesus sought to warn certain ones against the possibility of becoming so hardened that they would be in danger of the second death, or the lake of fire, he compared their fate to being cast into the continuous fires burning outside of Jerusalem for the destruction of garbage and dead animals—the vale of *Hinnom* or *Gehenna*. And now comes the culmination of our disasters. The translators also called this third place “hell.”

Oh, Confusion! Confusion! Here we have three words with most diverse meanings and

ideas, translated by the same word—hell: *Sheol*, the oblivious place of death; *Tartarus*, the abode of demonical devils; *Gehenna*, the fiery figure of destruction.

But, thanks to the wave of knowledge and discrimination that is sweeping over the world, those who will, may look and see and discern, and thus know that God’s word is true, and there is no contradiction. To every sincere soul, He will make it plain.

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“TRUTH is always consistent with itself, and needs nothing to help it out. It is always near at hand, sits upon our lips, and is ready to drop out before we are aware. A lie is troublesome, and sets a man’s invention on the rack, and one trick needs a great many more to make it good. It is building upon a false foundation, which is continually in need of props to shore it up.”

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In most situations of life the consciousness of innocence is truly our best shield, and our firmest security.

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