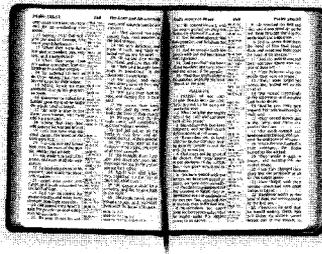


THE INSTRUCTOR



"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." (2 Timothy 3:16)

Volume 40

NOVEMBER, 2003

Number 11

GOD'S CHILDREN SHOULD REPENT, CONFESS AND PRAY!

When we who are God's children sin, we should *repent, confess* our sins and *pray* for forgiveness.

The child of God is taught to *deny* himself and *live soberly, righteously and godly* in this present world. (See Lk. 9:23; Titus 2:11-12). He is taught to be steadfast and to always abound in the work of the Lord. (See 1 Cor. 15:58). He is taught to *seek first* the kingdom of God and His righteousness; to *watch* and *pray* that he enter not into temptation; to *set his affections* on things above and not on things on the earth and to *crucify* the unlawful desires of the flesh. (See Mt. 6:33; 26:41; Col. 3:1-2; 3:5-10; Gal. 5:24). The child of God is also taught to *walk in the light, abide in Christ and be faithful unto death*. (See 1 John 1:5-10; John 15:1-10; Rev. 2:10; Heb. 10:38-39).

Although the child of God is admonished to *serve God* faithfully and not sin, it is certainly possible and probable that a child of God *will* sin. (See 1 John 1:8-10; 2:1)

When a child of God sins, what should he do? *Listen to what the Word of God says.*

In Acts 8:12-24 we have a record of a child of God sinning. Note this facts. (1) Simon became a child of God because he did exactly what the other Samaritans in verse 12 did. He *believed and was baptized!* (See v. 13) (2) He tried to buy the gift of God (a miraculous power to enable him to impart

the Holy Spirit in a miraculous way by the laying on of his hand) with money. In so doing, he sinned. His *heart was now not right with God*. He was in a *perishing condition!* He was in the *gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity*. (3) He was told to *repent of his wickedness* and *pray God* if perhaps the thought of his heart might *be forgiven him*. (v. 22). NOTE: He was *not* told to *be baptized* again! Baptism is *not* for the *child of God* who sins. It is for the *alien sinner* who wants *to be saved* and thus *become* a child of God.

In addressing "brethren" James exhorted them saying, "**Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another that ye may be healed...**" (5:16). NOTE: Obviously, this is spiritual healing or salvation from sins. (Thayer's Lexicon says: "trop. to make whole i.e. to free from errors and sins, to bring about (one's) salvation...") Page 296.

1 John 1:9 says: "**If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**" NOTE: The antecedent of *we, us, and our* is *John* and those whom he is writing (other children of God)! John was not telling alien sinners that they would be forgiven if they confessed their sins!

When we take the *sum* of these verses we learn that God requires the child of God who sins to *repent, confess his sins* and *pray for forgiveness!* When we who are God's children sin we must meet these conditions in order to receive pardon (or forgiveness of sins)!

(CRS)

THE INSTRUCTOR

(USPS # 581680)

Published monthly in the interest of truth and righteousness by the congregation of Christ, meeting at 4777 US Highway 431, Albertville, Alabama.

<i>ELDERS</i>	<i>DEACONS</i>
Lionel Gary	Mike Pack
Rex Henson	Jerry Tucker
Carrol R. Sutton	Gerald White

CARROL RAY SUTTON
Editor

Send all questions, comments and criticisms to the Editor, 4777 US Highway 431, Albertville, AL 35950 (256) 878-0920 or rcsutton@Hiwaay.net
Second-class postage paid in
Albertville, AL 35950.

Editorial...

HELL! IS THERE A PLACE OF ETERNAL TORMENT FOR THE WICKED? (NO. 20)

In our prior studies of *Hell*, we have been dealing with the *false doctrine* that *the wicked will not be tormented eternally*, but that *they will be annihilated* and thus *will cease to exist*. It is also contended that the dead are in a state of unconsciousness. Those who teach this doctrine also teach that *man is wholly mortal* and thus *he does not have an eternal soul or spirit within his physical body*.

Let us resume our study of some *arguments* that are made in an effort to prove that there is not a place of eternal torment for the wicked.

XII. ARGUMENT: "THERE CAN BE NO ETERNAL TORMENT FOR THE WICKED BECAUSE WHEN THEY DIE, ARE CUT OFF, OR ARE DESTROYED, THEY CEASE TO EXIST. THEY BECOME EXTINCT. THEY ARE ANNIHILATED."

REPLY:

1. The above argument is assertion based upon an assumption. It is easy to assume something and assert it as if it were a fact, but it is quite a different matter for a person to *prove* his assertions.

2. Most words can have different means as used in different contexts. A person who does not understand this about the usage of words cannot be trusted as a teacher. Some who claim to be "scholars" will make arguments that completely disregard this principle. It is certainly unfair and dishonest for a person to contend that a word must always have the same meaning regardless of the context in which it appears and how it is used.

3. Curtis Dickinson listed over 100 passages that he claims show that "*New Testament writers used the strongest terms at their command to assert a total bringing to nought* (Webster defines *nought* as "*nothing...nothingness, none-existence*" - ed) or *ultimate excision of those who believe not the gospel and obey not God.*" (What the Bible Teaches about Immortality and Future Punishment, pages 20-21). Not one of the passages listed *proves* that the wicked go out of existence at death or become extinct or are annihilated at death.

The very first words listed are "*blot out of existence*" and he lists Heb. 9:26 which mentions "*the sacrifice of himself*"; Rev. 3:5 which (speaking of the overcomer) says, "*I will not blot his name out of the book of life*" and Rev. 18:21 which says "*with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and shall be found no more at all.*" NOTE: Not one of the passages say "*blot out of existence.*" The nearest thing to it would be "*blot his name out of the book of life.*" Not blotting *him* out of existence!

If the expression "*the sacrifice of himself*" means to "*blot out of existence*" this passage is teaching that Christ went out of existence! Is this what Dickinson, Fudge, Maxey,, Seventh Day Adventists and so-called Jehovah's Witnesses really believe? Do they really believe that Jesus Christ was *blotted out of existence* when He died on the cross? If not, what is their point?

We learn from Rev. 18:21 that the power or those represented by "*that great city Babylon*" would *with violence* "*be thrown down*", and would "*be found no more at all.*" NOTE: Babylon (as a city or power) would no more be found at all.

The second expression listed is "*bring to nought*" and 1 Cor. 1:19 is listed. The verse says: "*For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.*" NOTE: This verse does not say one word about (Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

the wicked ceasing to exist, becoming extinct, being annihilated or being ultimately excised. It says that God "will destroy *the wisdom* of the wise and will bring to nothing *the understanding* of the prudent." It does *not say* that the *wise* and the *prudent* will be *annihilated* and *cease to exist!*

The third expression (or expressions) listed is "*cast away, cast off*". Mt. 13:42, 48, 50 & John 12:31 are the Scriptures listed. Mt. 13:42 says: "And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." NOTE: This verse speaks of the wicked being cast into a furnace of fire and there being wailing and gnashing of teeth. It neither says nor implies that the wicked will be annihilated or cease to exist.

Mt. 13:48 says: "Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away." NOTE: This verse simply shows a separation of the good from the bad which had been gathered in a net from the sea. The good was put into vessels and the bad was cast away. QUESTION: What does this have to do with the wicked ceasing to exist at death? Or being annihilated? Or not being tormented eternally? See next verses.

Mt. 13:49-50 says "So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth." NOTE: Not one word about the wicked ceasing to exist or being annihilated or becoming extinct! In fact, there will be torment in the furnace of fire! If not, why the wailing and gnashing of teeth? Other passages such as Mk. 9:43-48; Mt. 25:31-46; Rev. 20:10 and Rev. 21:8 tell us how long the fire will burn and how long the wicked will be tormented. The fire "never shall be quenched" and the wicked "shall go away into everlasting punishment". They "shall be tormented day and night forever and ever"! NOTE: In view of these facts how could any sincere truth-seeker think that the

above passages teach that the wicked will be annihilated, become extinct or cease to exist? The above passages certainly do not teach it!

Romans 16:20 is another passage listed by Dickinson to prove that the wicked become non-existent or cease to exist as to their final disposition. The word he gives is *crush*. (The New World Translation published by Watch Tower Bible & Tract Society says *crush*.) The passage says: "And the God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly..." NOTE: The word *bruise* (or *crush*) does not mean *bring to non-existence*, or *annihilate*. This passage has absolutely no relevance to the study of final disposition of the wicked ones. The same word (in a different form) *bruising* is used in Luke 9:39 in describing how an unclean spirit threw a child down and tore him, "bruising him." QUESTION: Would any reasoning, sincere, truth-seeking person think that the evil spirit annihilated the child, causing him to go out of existence? Of course not! Could a wicked person be "bruised" (or *crushed*) with suffering, anguish and torment without being annihilated? Surely so!

Jude 12 which says: "...clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots" is also listed by Dickinson under the expression "*root out*." As you can see, the KJV says "plucked up by the roots". However, the New World Translation, published by Watch Tower and Tract Society says "having been uprooted". NOTE: The words *root out*, *plucked up by the roots* or *having been uprooted* do *not* mean having been annihilated or having gone out of existence! It doesn't take a Solomon to draw the proper conclusion on this.

Dickinson lists *vanish away* and gives Heb. 8:13 as a passages that teaches "a total bringing to nought or ultimate excision" of those who do not obey God. It says: "In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away." (Cont'd on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

NOTE: The expression "bringing to nought" means bringing to "nothing, nothingness, non-existence." I don't know how a reference to the first covenant being ready to vanish away can prove that the Scriptures teach that those who do not obey God will be brought to nothing, to non-existence. How could this passage teach that the wicked will be annihilated and cease to exist when it does not even deal with the subject? Dickinson and other advocates of such teaching should find a passage of Scripture that says the wicked will vanish into non-existence or nothingness.

Another word listed by Dickinson that is supposed to teach the wicked will be annihilated and cease to exist is *ruin* and Mt. 7:27; Lk. 6:49; 2 Cor. 10:8 & 2 Cor. 13:10. As we examine these passages we will see that they, too, fall short of the purpose for which they were listed.

Mt. 7:27 says "And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house;

and it fell: and great was the fall of it." NOTE: *Annihilated* is not the meaning of the word *fell*.

In Luke 6:49 it says: "...and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great." NOTE: *Annihilation* is not the meaning of the word *ruin*. So what is the point!

2 Cor. 10:8 says: "...our authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for your destruction..." NOTE: The ASV says: "not for casting you down." Green's Interlinear says: "not for pulling down of you." The same points can be made about 2 Cor. 13:10.

Under *overthrow* Dickinson lists Luke 1:52. It says: "He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree." NOTE: The expression "*put down*" does not mean *annihilated*! God did not *annihilate* the mighty, but he "*put down* the mighty from their seats." A big difference!

No, the Scriptures do *not* teach that the wicked will go out of existence at death! Or be *annihilated*! (To be Cont'd)

SENTENCE SERMONS

Those who deserve love the least, may need it the most.

* * * * *

The "nobodies" of the earth can be converted by the Gospel and be made "somebodies."

* * * * *

You and I and the whole world need "the peace of God which passeth all understanding."

* * * * *

Rumors get around quickly although they have no legs to stand on.

* * * * *

A good name is a precious inheritance that parents can leave their children.

CHURCH OF CHRIST
4777 US Highway 431
Albertville, AL 35950

Second-class postage