



Psalms 78:2-4

I will open my mouth in a parable, I will utter dark sayings of old... We will not conceal them.

Parables Bookshelf - Series 1.8.6

This issue of PARABLES BOOKSHELF concludes the book *God's Plan of the Ages*.

Some years ago I was asked by a minister of a church whether I considered myself to be a Calvinist in my theology. The man was shocked when I told him that I did not.

I explained to this man that one of the five points of Calvinism is that God has provided only a "Limited Atonement" for mankind. Calvinism teaches that the majority of mankind will never be reconciled to God.

I explained to the minister that although the reconciliation of all men to

the Father will not occur in this age, it will come to pass before the reign of Christ is complete.

This is the testimony of the Scriptures.

Romans 5:18-19

So then as through one transgression there resulted condemnation to all men, even so through one act of righteousness there resulted justification of life to all men.

For as through the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, even so through the obedience of the One *the many will be made righteous*.

The apostle Paul tells us that we do not see all things put under Christ's feet at this time. Before

the end of the ages, however, all things will be summed up in the Son. There will be nothing left out of this summing up other than the Father.

Hebrews 2:8

For in subjecting all things to him, He left nothing that is not subject to him. But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him.

Some will not receive this testimony even when the Scriptures are patiently explained to them. The pastor I shared these things with was offended, telling me that I could not teach at his church, or even take communion with them. Nevertheless, the truth must be taught..

Food for Thought

"Our Lord's determined purpose and design was to overcome the devil, not by the exercise of His power, but by means of His own self-abasement."

Saint Jerome

"An ungrateful man is like hog under a tree eating acorns, but never looking up to see where they come from.."

Timothy Dexter

Scripture Memory

I Corinthians 15:28

But when the whole universe has been made subject to Him, then the Son Himself will also become subject to Him who has made the universe subject to Him, in order that GOD may be all in all.

Weymouth Translation

Parables Newsletter

- *God's Plan of the Ages*
- What is Aionian Life?
- The Ages of the Earth
- A Final Note
- Addendum

God's Plan of the Ages

What is Aionian Life?

Note: in this chapter I am using the word "aionian" as a transliteration of the Greek word that is often interpreted as "eternal" in the most popular English Bibles. Rather than translating the word as "age-abiding," "age-lasting," or "age-during" as some literal translations have done, I am presenting it in a form that serves as an English equivalent to the actual Greek word form.

Aionian life is... a life in union with the Father and the Son.

interpreted as "eternal" in the most popular English Bibles. Rather than translating the word as "age-abiding," "age-lasting," or "age-during" as some literal translations have

As I have taught the doctrines relating to God's plan of the ages I have encountered some common objections to what is being set forth. One of the more frequently raised protestations is that the same word is used in Scriptures to describe "*aionian*" fire and "*aionian*" life. The saints have heard it proclaimed with such repetitiveness that Christ has come to bring men "eternal" life, that any suggestion to the contrary is anathema to them. I am convinced, however, that God never meant to place man's focus upon the length of the life which He provides. Aionian life is not an unending life, it is a life in union with the Father and the Son.

The two Scriptures below include the word *aionios*. Certain things can be discerned by looking at them.

Jude 6-7

And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in eternal (*aidios*) bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day, just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of eternal (*aionian*) fire.

NAS

Mark 10:29-30

Yahshua said, "Truly I say to you, there is no one

who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms, for My sake and for the gospel's sake, but that he will receive a hundred times as much now in the present age (*kairos*), houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and farms, along with persecutions; and in the age (*aion*) to come, eternal (*aionian*) life."

NAS

I have specifically chosen these two passages from the Scriptures as they show forth the problem of interpreting the Greek word "aionian" as eternal. In the first passage we read that God has been keeping disobedient angels in bonds *until* they can be delivered up for judgment at "the great day." Seeing that these bonds are intended to hold these angels for a limited period of time, they cannot be eternal bonds. What is spoken of are temporal bonds.

In the second passage we read that Christ's disciples will receive aionian life in the *aion* to come. We have observed previously that the Greek word *aion* means an age. How then can one receive eternal life inside the bounds of an age to come? This would be akin to trying to contain that which is infinite inside something that is finite.

In the passage from Jude we find that the first occurrence of the English word "eternal" is translated from the Greek "*aidios*." This word only occurs twice in Scripture. Numerous Bible translations have rendered this word as "hidden" or "unknown" rather than "eternal." If we examine the other Scripture in which this word occurs, we see that it is appropriate to render it this way.

Romans 1:20

For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his *eternal* (*aidios* - hidden) power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse...

KJV

Parables Bookshelf

The context of this sentence reveals that it is speaking about things that are invisible to the creation. If we translate the word “aidios” as *hidden*, or *unknown*, we find that there is a consistency of meaning to this passage. God is Spirit, and the Scriptures declare that no man has seen Him at any time.

John 6:46

“Not that anyone has seen the Father, except the One who is from God; He has seen the Father.”

Colossians 1:15

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

Although Yahweh is Spirit and no man has seen Him, He has made known His invisible attributes, including His power and godhead. This is the sense of Paul’s words in Romans 1:20. The invisible God has revealed Himself in creation. When man observes the cosmos he is faced with the evidence of a divine Creator, for Yahweh’s power and wisdom are evident through the things that are made.

Jeremiah 51:15

It is He who made the earth by His power, who established the world by His wisdom, and by His understanding He stretched out the heavens.

Although Yahweh’s power is eternal, this is not what Paul is declaring in Romans 1:20. Paul is speaking of God’s hidden power and sovereignty. No man has actually seen God, or observed Him seated on the throne of heaven. Yet, we can discern Yahweh’s power and sovereign rule through that which He has created.

The Greek word “aidios” is followed by the related word “aidos” in Strong’s Concordance. James Strong defined “aidos” in the following manner.

aidos; perhaps from NT:1 (as a negative particle)

and NT:1492 (through the idea of downcast eyes); bashfulness, i.e. (towards men), modesty or (towards God) awe:

Observing the similarity between these two words, and perceiving that “aidos” is expressing the idea of “downcast eyes,” it is not unreasonable to conclude that “aidios” would convey a similar concept. When one’s eyes are looking down, as when one is bashful, then they are not looking directly at something in front of them. In the same way, man cannot look directly at God’s presence, His power and godhead. Yet, we can look at the things Yahweh has made and discern much about His power and godhead.

Following is a rendering of this passage from Jude that I believe more accurately communicates the thought of the author.

Jude 6-7

And angels who did not keep their own domain, but abandoned their proper abode, He has kept in *hidden* bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day, just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities around them, since they in the same way as these indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh, are exhibited as an example in undergoing the punishment of *age-abiding* fire.

Another point in support of this rendering is the reference to Sodom. We read previously that Sodom will be restored to her habitation one day. Sodom’s inhabitants are at this time kept hidden away in bonds, but they are not eternal bonds.

Sodom will be restored to her habitation one day.

Ezekiel 16:55

Your sisters, Sodom with her daughters and Samaria with her daughters, will return to their former state, and you with your daughters will also return to your former state.

God's Plan of the Ages

The question remains, "If *eternal life* is not the correct understanding of aionian life, then what is this expression intended to convey?" If I do not err, aionian life must refer to that life that God provides

This present creation is not eternal.

for man within the bounds of the ages. This present creation is not eternal. It must one day pass away. Yahweh has devised a plan for the creation encompassing many ages. All will cul-

minate in one great age of ages when all is reconciled to the Father and sin and death are no more. Then comes the end when Christ delivers up the kingdom, all rule and authority, to the Father. All things, including the Son, are then summed up in Yahweh so that He becomes "all in all."

Aionian life must therefore constitute that divine life that is free of sin and death which Christ provides for men during the ages (aions) of creation. Aionian life is that exceptional life entered into by men who have been reconciled to the Father. These ones partake of fellowship with God, knowing Him, and being known by Him.

I Corinthians 13:12

For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known.

There are many Scripture verses that speak of aionian life as something promised, something set before the Christian as a hope. Although we are partakers of the life of Christ now, we have not yet arrived at the fulness that Paul speaks of in the verse above. One day we will know (Yahweh and His Son) fully even as we are known. This is the end toward which all things are heading.

Knowing God is the predominant characteristic of aionian life.

John 17:1-3

Yahshua spoke these things; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You, even as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give aionian life. ***This is aionian life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Yahshua Christ whom You have sent.***"

In these words of Christ we see that the true characteristic of aionian life is not eternal length, rather it is unfettered fellowship with the Father and the Son. Christ came to set the captives free. Those whom the Son sets free are free indeed. No longer will sin and death keep men from knowing the Father. The Son has brought life that all may know the Father and the Son.

I John 5:20

And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding so that we may know Him who is true; and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Yahshua Christ. ***This is the true God and aionian life.***

Many Christians are taught that Christ came to give them *eternal* life. This places the emphasis upon the length of life. Such a translation obscures the true meaning of that life Christ provides. Yahshua made a way for mankind to KNOW GOD. I do not mean that Christians may simply know things about Yahweh. Rather, an entrance into fellowship and union with the Father is provided. Those who are "in Christ" are able to experience union with the Father, a true, deep, abiding intimacy with the One who created them.

I John 1:1-3

What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life - and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the ***aionian life***, which was with the Father and was

Parables Bookshelf

manifested to us - what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have **fellowship** with us; and indeed **our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Yahshua Christ.**

In this passage we once again see aionian life related to fellowship with God and His Son. This is the true characteristic of aionian life; not that it is eternal, but that it is an entering into union with Christ and the Father. If a man were to live forever he might have eternal life. Yet only in Christ are men able to experience aionian life in union with the Father. This is why Christ came.

John 17:20-23

“I do not ask on behalf of these alone, but for those also who believe in Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as You, Father, are in Me and I in You, that they also may be in Us, so that the world may believe that You sent Me. The glory which You have given Me I have given to them, that they may be one, just as We are one; I in them and You in Me, that they may be perfected in unity, so that the world may know that You sent Me, and loved them, even as You have loved Me.”

Savor these words of Christ. He yearns that men might experience a union with the Father and Himself that was not possible before His crucifixion and resurrection. Adam’s sin had brought a separation between man and God. Christ came to repair the breach. To be restored to fellowship with the Father and the Son is to become a partaker of aionian life.

I John 5:11-12

And the testimony is this, that God has given us aionian life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.

Notice a key thought conveyed by John in these words. Aionian life is not like a gift one man would give to another. Aionian life is not something separate from Christ that can be handed to another per-

son. Aionian life is found only “IN” God’s Son. This is what Christ symbolized at the last supper when He invited His disciples to drink the wine as a symbol of His blood.

Mark 14:23-24

And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, and they all drank from it. And He said to them, “This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many.”

The Bible teaches that life (the soul) is in the blood. We must sup up the life of Christ; His divine nature must be found in us; we must be directed and empowered by His Spirit if we are to truly experience aionian life.

John 6:53-56

So Yahshua said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has aionian life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.”

Here is the crux of the matter. ***Abiding in Christ is the essence of aionian life.***

Consider for a moment the attitude of many Christians today. Many testify happily that in Christ they have received eternal life, but their actions reveal that they have little desire for intimacy or fellowship with the Son. It is a rare event for many Christians to spend intimate time in communion with Christ through seasons of prayer, meditation upon His word, or walking daily with a consciousness of His presence. Such ones are not abiding in Christ. They are not partaking of aionian life. Nor are they much concerned at this

Aionian life is found only “IN” God’s Son.

God's Plan of the Ages

deficiency in their Christian walk. They are content to have ministers and other Christians assure them that they will live forever because they have said a sinner's prayer and confessed belief in the Son of God.

Are not a great many Christians committing the same grave error as the Jews to whom Christ first appeared? To them He declared:

John 5:39-40

"You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have aionian life; it is these that testify about Me; and ***you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life.***"

Many Christians study doctrine and quote Bible passages while neglecting to daily abide in Christ. Knowledge about Christ, and a hope of living forever, is not a substitute for eating Christ's flesh and drinking His blood. The very life of Christ must be in us. Consider the implications of the following words of Yahshua.

John 12:49-50

"For I did not speak on My own initiative, but the Father Himself who sent Me has given Me a commandment as to what to say and what to speak. I know that His commandment is aionian life; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me."

Yahshua did not do anything of His own initiative. Any action or word that is independent of the Father is contrary to life. We are only partaking of aionian life when we are being led of the Spirit in those things we say and do. When the life of God is animating us and directing us, then we are truly experiencing life. This was Christ's meaning. He testified that to do the Father's will, fulfilling Yahweh's commandments to Him, is the essence of life. Such life by necessity is one of fellowship and union. We must know the mind of the Father, and we must look to the strength He provides to accomplish His will.

To walk in the light of truth we need to conform our thoughts to God's thoughts. When we hear or read about aionian life, we need to think about union, intimacy, and fellowship with the Father and the Son. There should come to our minds a vision of abiding in the Son and the Father.

I John 2:24-25

As for you, let that abide in you which you heard from the beginning. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, you also will abide in the Son and in the Father. This is the promise which He Himself made to us: aionian life.

Mankind entering into an abiding relationship with the Father and the Son is the promise which God has given to us. This is aionian life.

*The very life of Christ
must be in us.*

Parables Bookshelf

The Ages of the Earth

Yahweh established a plan for the creation that encompasses a determined number of ages. This truth is taught in the Bible, but given little attention by Christians today. The church has very little understanding of the ages of the earth. Our world has known many different ages, and there are yet more ages to come.

The Scriptures reveal that there will be three creations of the earth, and the earth will abide in seven distinct states. The numbers three and seven are very significant in Scriptures. The tertiary (three-fold) and septenary (seven-fold) design of Yahweh is seen profusely both in the creation and in the Scriptures. We have previously observed that Yahweh established three great feasts to be observed annually by the Jews. These three feasts break down into seven individual moedim, or appointed times.

Passover:	Feast of Unleavened Bread Firstfruits Passover
Pentecost:	Pentecost
Tabernacles:	Rosh Hashanah (Feast of Trumpets) Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) Sukkot (Tabernacles, Booths)

This pattern is a reflection of the godhead. God is revealed to be a tripartite being in Scriptures, consisting of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Matthew 28:19

“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit...”

We have previously looked at the three-fold relationship of God through the parable of speech. There is Yahweh (the Father), His breath (the Holy Spirit), and His word (the Son). The Scriptures proclaim the tri-part nature of God, but they also reveal a seven-fold character.

Revelation 4:5

And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God...

Revelation 5:6

And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders a Lamb standing, as if slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent out into all the earth.

Some have correlated these seven Spirits of Yahweh to the following passage from Isaiah.

Isaiah 11:2

The Spirit of Yahweh will rest on Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of Yahweh.

Spirit of Yahweh
Spirit of Wisdom
Spirit of Understanding
Spirit of Counsel
Spirit of Strength
Spirit of Knowledge
Spirit of the Fear of Yahweh

Because Yahweh formed mankind in His image, man conforms to this same pattern. The new man in Christ is a tripartite being. He consists of body, soul and spirit.

God's Plan of the Ages

I Thessalonians 5:23

Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your **spirit** and **soul** and **body** be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Yahshua Christ.

The apostle Paul lists the three parts of man in the order of their intended ascendancy. The spirit is to rule over the soul and the soul over the body. These three parts of man can be further subdivided into seven parts forming a perfect parallel to the Feasts of Yahweh.

Soul: Cognition (Mind)
Volition (Will)
Emotion

Body: Body (Sensory life)

Spirit: Conscience
Intuition
Communion

I have laid this framework in order to establish the concept of the earth also having a tertiary and septenary design. The earth is closely related to man, for Adam was formed of the dust of the earth. From dust man came, and to dust man shall return. In Yahweh's plan of the ages, the earth will exist in three distinct forms.

The First Earth

Genesis 1:1

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

After the creation of the first earth, but prior to the creation of Adam, Satan rebelled and was cast out of heaven with one third of the angels. At this event

the first earth was destroyed. It was made formless, void, and covered in darkness until the time Yahweh moved to create the earth anew. We find the re-creation of the earth described in Genesis chapter one verses 3-31. This present earth is the second creation of the earth. It must pass away and be replaced by a third earth.

The Second Earth

II Peter 3:7, 10

But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men... But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, in which the heavens will pass away with a roar and the elements will be destroyed with intense heat, and the earth and its works will be burned up.

There will then come a third and final creation of the earth.

The Third Earth

Revelation 21:1

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea.

Kenneth F. McKinley, in his book *Scanning the Plan*, breaks down the three creations of the earth into seven subsidiary states.

Original Earth

Before Satan's fall. *In the beginning...* This is the earth of the dinosaurs. We are not told how long this earth existed before Satan rebelled and it was destroyed.

Chaotic Earth

This is the earth after the fall of Satan. It is now

Parables Bookshelf

formless and void and covered in darkness. The length in which the earth lay under this judgment is not known. Being sealed in darkness, this was likely a period in which the earth was covered in ice, corresponding with evidence of an ancient ice age.

Adamic Earth

This is the re-created earth as described in Genesis chapters one and two, before the fall of man. The earth is a paradise. There is no rain, but a mist arose from the ground to water the earth (Genesis 2:6). There is no sin or death.

Pre-Flood Earth

This is the earth after Adam sinned. Sin and death has now entered the creation. The earth no longer gives forth abundantly. Man must cultivate it by the sweat of his brow.

Present Earth

This is the earth after the flood of Noah. It is an earth under human government. After the flood Yahweh shortened man's life span from a thousand years to one hundred-twenty years (Genesis 6:3). This present state of the earth will continue until the millennial reign of Christ.

Millennial Earth

During this period Satan will be bound for a thousand years. Christ will reign upon the earth with His overcoming saints. Sin and death will still be present, but greatly mitigated.

Isaiah 65:20

There shall no more be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who dies prematurely; for the child shall die a hundred years old, and the sinner who dies when only a hundred years old shall be [thought only a child, cut off because he is] accursed.

[Amplified Bible]

Christ's reign will transform the earth.

Isaiah 11:4-8

With righteousness He will judge the poor, and decide with fairness for the afflicted of the earth; And He will strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips He will slay the wicked. Also righteousness will be the belt about His loins, and faithfulness the belt about His waist. And the wolf will dwell with the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little boy will lead them. Also the cow and the bear will graze, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. The nursing child will play by the hole of the cobra, and the weaned child will put his hand on the viper's den.

After a thousand years Satan will be loosed and war and judgment will fall once more. The present earth will be consumed with fire. Then will come the third and final creation of the earth, which will also be the seventh state of the earth.

New Earth

There will be no sea on the new earth. Seas represent death, and death will be no more. These seven states of the earth conform to that septenary structure God has imprinted upon the creation.

When one correctly discerns the Biblical teaching of the earth and its ages, they will find that many of the conflicts the church has with science are removed. Yahweh is the author of both the Bible and the creation. There is no conflict between them when they are correctly understood.

*Yahweh is the author
of both the Bible and
the creation.*

There is much evidence that points to the earth being quite ancient. The Bible does not deny this. Those who have misapprehended the words of

God's Plan of the Ages

Genesis have supposed that the earth can be no older than six thousand years. They have not discerned that there exists a gap of ages between verses one and two of the first chapter of Genesis. This understanding is obscured by erroneous English translations of the ancient Hebrew Scriptures. Men translate according to their understanding and beliefs, which are quite often faulty.

Genesis 1:1-2

1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. 2 **And** the earth **was** without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

KJV

The most popular modern English translations render this passage similarly to the KJV Bible. The translation makes it sound like God created the earth formless and void, yet other Scriptures reveal that this is not true.

The phrase "*And the earth was without form and void*" should be properly rendered, "*but the earth became formless and void.*" The words in question are rendered correctly in other places in the first few chapters of Genesis. The translators knew they

could be rendered this way, but it did not fit with their understanding, or the orthodoxy of the day. The word rendered in the KJV as "was" is the Hebrew word "hayah." It is the same word used in

There exists a gap of ages between verses one and two of the first chapter of Genesis.

Genesis 2:7, "Adam *became* a living soul." Strong's concordance defines the meaning of this word as "to become" or, "come to pass." Similarly the word rendered "and" is the Hebrew "wa." This word is a conjunction. The KJV translators rendered this word as "but" in the very next chapter, for in Genesis 2:6 we read, "*but* a mist used to..."

The translators could have rendered the first two verses of Genesis in the following manner:

Genesis 1:1-2

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. **But** the earth became formless, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep.

By examining the testimony of other portions of Scripture we can discern that this is the correct interpretation of these verses. The following passage from Jeremiah provides a key to understanding. As you read it, note clearly the context of a judgment occurring due to the presence of sin and rebellion.

Jeremiah 4:16-28

Make ye mention to the nations; behold, publish against Jerusalem, that watchers come from a far country, and give out their voice against the cities of Judah. As keepers of a field, are they against her round about; because ***she hath been rebellious against me, saith Yahweh.*** Thy way and thy doings have procured these things unto thee; this is thy wickedness, because it is bitter, because it reacheth unto thine heart. My bowels, my bowels! I am pained at my very heart; my heart maketh a noise in me; I cannot hold my peace, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the sound of the trumpet, the alarm of war. Destruction upon destruction is cried; for the whole land is spoiled: suddenly are my tents spoiled, and my curtains in a moment. How long shall I see the standard, and hear the sound of the trumpet? For my people are foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children, and they have none understanding: they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge. ***I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light.*** I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of Yahweh, and by his fierce anger. ***For thus hath Yahweh said, The whole land shall be desolate; yet will I not make a full end. For this shall the earth mourn, and the heavens above be black:*** because I have spoken it, I have purposed it, and will not repent, neither will I turn back from it. KJV

This passage is speaking of a judgment of Yahweh

Parables Bookshelf

falling upon the earth due to rebellion and disobedience. As part of this judgment the land is made formless, void, and covered in darkness. These are the three same descriptive elements we find in Genesis 1:2. These words only occur in this combination in these two passages, and one other. The third instance is in Isaiah 34 where the destruction of Babylon is prophesied.

Isaiah 34:11

But the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it; the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it: and he shall stretch out upon it the line of **confusion**, and the stones of **emptiness**.

KJV

The words that were rendered as “formless” and “void” in the previous verses are rendered as “confusion” and “emptiness” in Isaiah. In the Hebrew the words are “tohu” and “bohu.” Seeing that both Jeremiah and Isaiah used these words to describe the appearance of the earth, or a portion of it, brought about by a judgment of God, we can reasonably conclude that a judgment of God precipitated the condition of the earth found in Genesis 1:2.

The Bible provides more evidence in support of this understanding. Isaiah tells us the following:

Isaiah 45:18

For thus says Yahweh, who created the heavens (He is the God who formed the earth and made it, He established it and **did not create it a waste place**, but formed it to be inhabited)...

Yahweh did not create the earth as a waste place, yet in Genesis 1:2 we find that it has become one. Let us look once more at the correct rendering of the first 2 verses of Genesis.

Genesis 1:1-2

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. **But** the earth **became** formless, and void;

and darkness was upon the face of the deep.

At the very beginning of the creation God made the heavens and the earth. He did not create them a waste. He created them perfect. Yet something occurred to mar their perfection. By looking at the language of verse two and comparing it to the rest of scripture

As part of this judgment the land is made formless, void, and covered in darkness.

we understand that it was due to a judgment of God that the earth was made formless, void and covered in darkness. The remainder of Genesis chapter one speaks of the re-creation of the earth, not its original creation.

What occurred on this original earth that caused Yahweh to judge it so completely? We are only given one event that could have caused such a judgment to be rendered. This event occurred prior to the creation of Adam. It was the rebellion of Satan.

Ezekiel 28:12-18

Thus says Yahweh GOD, "You had the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. "You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering: the ruby, the topaz and the diamond; the beryl, the onyx and the jasper; the lapis lazuli, the turquoise and the emerald; and the gold, the workmanship of your settings and sockets, was in you. On the day that you were created they were prepared. You were the anointed cherub who covers, and I placed you there. You were on the holy mountain of God; you walked in the midst of the stones of fire. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created until unrighteousness was found in you. By the abundance of your trade you were internally filled with violence, and you sinned; therefore **I have cast you as profane from the mountain of God. And I have destroyed you, O covering cherub**, from the midst of the stones of fire. Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendor. **I cast you to the ground**; I put you before kings, that they may see you. By the multitude of your iniquities, in the unrighteousness of

God's Plan of the Ages

your trade you profaned your sanctuaries. **Therefore I have brought fire from the midst of you; it has consumed you, and I have turned you to ashes on the earth** in the eyes of all who see you.”

Where did the judgment of Satan take place? We are told that God cast Satan “to the ground.” Yahweh turned Satan to ashes “on the earth.” The judgment of Satan took place on the earth, and the earth suffered judgment in his fall.

Isaiah 14:12-15

"How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn! **You have been cut down to the earth**, you who have weakened the nations! But you said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God, and I will sit on the mount of assembly in the recesses of the north. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.' Nevertheless you will be thrust down to Sheol, to the recesses of the pit.

The Scriptures reveal that the angels existed prior to man, and among the angels was a most magnificent cherub called Lucifer. He was created perfect in

You can only replenish something that has been made empty.

beauty and in wisdom, and his role among the angels was very exalted. Yet this being took his eyes off of his Creator and began to look at his own magnificence. This led to

pride and the corrupting of his wisdom. Paul refers to Satan's transgression in the following verse where he is speaking to Timothy about the qualifications for an elder:

I Timothy 3:6

and not a new convert, so that he will not become conceited and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil.

Satan's fall began with the formation of conceit within his heart. Conceit led to rebellion, and ended

in judgment. After an undisclosed period of time God began to re-create the earth. At this time Satan was released from his first imprisonment, even as he will be released at the end of Christ's millennial reign. There is much more Biblical evidence to support the understanding that Yahweh was re-creating the earth in Genesis chapter one.

Genesis 1:27-28

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and **replenish the earth**, and subdue it:

KJV

The phrase "replenish the earth" means to fill it again. You can only replenish something that has been made empty. We speak of replenishing the supply of food in our cupboards when the cupboards have been emptied. Some of the translators of our common English Bibles have perceived that the word replenish infers that the earth was being re-filled. This thought is not in accord with the teaching of a large portion of the church. Therefore the translators in some instances chose to use the word "fill" instead of "replenish." The original language supports the usage of the word replenish. The root word in the Hebrew is 'male' (mal - ay), which means to fill. However, the form of the word found in this passage, and in only a few other occurrences, express the idea of a replenishing, or refilling. We find this same word form used in Genesis 9:1 where God is speaking to Noah after the flood.

Genesis 9:1

And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and **replenish the earth**.

KJV

We know that 'replenish' is the appropriate word to be used in this passage, for all but a remnant of living creatures perished in the flood of Noah's day. Only eight descendants of Adam survived. They were instructed by Yahweh to replenish the earth

Parables Bookshelf

which had formerly been populated. Noah's sons and daughters were not filling the earth a first time. They were re-filling it. This same Hebrew word form is found in the following verse.

Genesis 1:21-22

And God created great whales, and every living creature that moves, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good. And God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and **replenish** the waters in the seas..."

When we perceive that Yahweh was re-creating the earth in Genesis chapter one, we also discover that the earth's creations and states conform to a tertiary and septenary pattern. When we "rightly divide the word of God" we see that all fits according to the pattern Yahweh has established. When we fail to rightly divide the word of God, the pattern is broken.

This septenary structure is further observed in the opening chapters of Genesis in that Yahweh appointed six days for the creation of the earth, and on the seventh day He rested. The number seven is equated with rest. When the seventh state of the earth appears, it will be an earth at rest. The seventh and final state of the earth will have no seas. There will be no sin or death. Yahweh will no longer dwell in the heavens and man on earth. Yahweh will dwell among man.

Revelation 21:1-5

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea... And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away." And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." And He said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true."

A Final Note

It is my hope that the revision of this book will prove effectual in leading those who seek truth to the discovery of Yahweh's magnificent plan of the ages. It is not possible in any writing to answer every question that could be raised. To write an exhaustive teaching of these truths is beyond the ability of this author, and would certainly prove tiresome to many who are not requiring an exhaustive work.

It has been my aim to lay a foundation for understanding that which is taught in the Scriptures concerning the reconciliation of the creation to the Father. It is the responsibility of every saint to pursue truth. All of Christ's disciples must acquit themselves as workmen, laboring to become skilled and knowledgeable in the truths of Yahweh's kingdom. Those who are most faithful will surely reap the rewards of their labors.

In this teaching it has been established that all who died in Adam will be made alive in Christ, but "each in his own order." Yahweh has appointed some as barley, some as wheat, and others as grapes. Each will be harvested at the appointed time. Each must come to maturity according to the election of God.

That salvation is a gift of God, granted to those whom He chooses, at the time He appoints, should be patiently considered. We were all at some point children of wrath.

Ephesians 2:3

Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

That any should repent and be reconciled to God is not due to man, but rather is a gift from God.

God's Plan of the Ages

Ephesians 2:4-5

But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)...

It should not offend any Christian to learn that God will in the end demonstrate His mercy to all whom

*If you are a Christian...,
it is not due to your own
piety ...*

He has created. If you are a Christian, a disciple of Christ, it is not due to your own piety that you were shown mercy. Your eyes were not opened to perceive the salvation of God because you were

better than other men. Yahweh simply chose to have mercy on you, while He has chosen to harden others.

Consider for a moment the plight of the Jewish people today. At this time Yahweh has given grace to Gentiles, while hardening the majority of the natural descendants of Abraham.

Romans 11:25-27

For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, **that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in.** And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: "The Deliverer will come out of Zion, and He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; For this is My covenant with them, when I take away their sins."

II Corinthians 3:14

But their minds were hardened; for until this very day at the reading of the old covenant the same veil remains unlifted...

Why does God find fault with the Jews, seeing that it is by His will that a hardening has occurred? Would you condemn to an eternal hell those whom God has prevented from perceiving the truth? Yah-

weh has appointed a time when all Israel will be saved, but the time is not yet. Seeing that Yahweh hardens some, and has mercy on others, how can those who have received mercy hold any greater desire in their heart than for Yahweh to demonstrate the mercy they received to others?

Romans 9:14-18

What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not! For He says to Moses, "I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion." So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy. For the Scripture says to the Pharaoh, "For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth." Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens.

None can come to Christ unless the Spirit draws them (John 6:44).

Is it right for those who have been granted mercy to revile those who have not, saying that they are getting what they deserve? To receive mercy is to obtain that which is **not** deserved. All men have sinned and are deserving of death. At this time we see Yahweh demonstrating mercy to some, while hardening others. This is the situation of all men. We are all born as children of wrath. Yahweh has shown mercy to some at this time, while hardening others.

A remnant from among men have seen their peril. They have become aware of the judgment and wrath that awaits the sons of disobedience. Yahweh has opened their eyes to perceive the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. It is appointed to them to be among the first to see and believe. Will such ones not desire that the mercy shown them be made manifest to all men?

Christ has come to deliver men from sin and the penalty of death, but each in his own order. Some are appointed to be firstborn sons, and others latter born sons. Yahweh does all things according to His own counsel. He reveals Christ to some, while blind-

Parables Bookshelf

ing the eyes of others.

Romans 11:5-8

Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work. What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded. Just as it is written: "God has given them a spirit of stupor, eyes that they should not see and ears that they should not hear, to this very day."

Romans 10:20

But Isaiah is very bold and says: "I was found by those who did not seek Me; I was made manifest to those who did not ask for Me."

An hour will come when those whom Yahweh has hardened will be shown mercy. Those rejected will be accepted. Those dead in their sins will receive life in Christ. Yahweh sent His Son into the world that all men might be saved.

Isaiah 45:22-23

Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth; For I am God, and there is no other. I have sworn by Myself, the word has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness and will not turn back, that to Me every knee will bow, every tongue will swear allegiance.

Titus 2:11

For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men...

We see at this time a firstfruits company who have received mercy. This is a token and pledge of that full redemption which is to come.

I John 2:2

And He Himself is the propitiation (merciful cover-

ing) for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.

Let not those who have now obtained mercy despise those who have not. It was by no merit of your own that you have obtained grace. When God's plan of the ages has reached its final conclusion there will be left nothing in creation that has not been reconciled to the Father. Christ's will wield the power given to Him to subject all things to Himself.

Hebrews 2:8

For in subjecting all things to him, He left nothing that is not subject to him. But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him.

The church has failed to perceive the meaning of the words "not yet." What we see today is "not yet" the end of Christ's rule. Christ must reign until He has subjected all things to the Father. Then will come the end. This is the testimony of Scripture.

Revelation 5:13

And **every created thing** which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things in them, I heard saying, "To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever."

What is excluded from the phrase "**every created thing**"? Every creature "*in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and in the sea*" will worship God in spirit and in truth.

Philippians 2:10-11

At the name of Yahshua every knee shall bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and every tongue shall confess that Yahshua Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Hallelujah! Jesus Christ, Yahshua the Messiah, is the Savior of the world!

God's Plan of the Ages

Some Who Held This View

Due to the doctrine of the reconciliation of all things rarely being taught in the churches today, many Christians have mistakenly assumed that it must be a new teaching. Some have even asked me if I am the only one who believes and teaches these things. I am very happy to respond by pointing the saints to the great antiquity of this doctrine, and the many who have embraced it as truth.

Augustine (often referred to as Saint Augustine) lived from 354-430 A.D.. He is widely hailed as the father of Roman Catholic doctrine. Augustine was a believer in eternal torment, but acknowledged that this was not the universal view of the day in which he lived. Augustine made mention of Christians who embraced the doctrine of the reconciliation of all things to God, and of a limited duration to God's punishments of sinners in hell, or the lake of fire.

I must now, I see, enter the lists of amicable (friendly) controversy with those tender-hearted Christians who decline to believe that any, or that all of those whom the infallibly just Judge may pronounce worthy of the punishment of hell, shall suffer eternally, and who suppose that they shall be delivered after a fixed term of punishment, longer or shorter according to the amount of each man's sin. In respect of this matter, Origen was even more indulgent; for he believed that even the devil himself and his angels, after suffering those more severe and prolonged pains which their sins deserved, should be delivered from their torments... Very different, however, is the error we speak of, which is dictated by the tenderness of these Christians who suppose that the sufferings of those who are condemned in the judgment will be temporary...

[Augustine, *The City of God*, Book 21, Ch 17]

Augustine referenced Origen, one of the early church fathers, who dwelt in Alexandria, Egypt. Origen had a wide influence upon the doctrine of the early church. Origen lived nearly two centuries before Augustine, his life spanning the years of 184-253 A.D.. Origen was less than two centuries distant

from the time of Christ's bodily ministry, and he wrote and taught in support of the doctrine of the reconciliation of all things to God through Christ.

Origen was a pupil of an even earlier church father, Clement of Alexandria (Clemens Alexandrinus), who lived from 150-215 A.D.. Clement also taught the doctrine of the reconciliation of all things in the catechetical school in Alexandria, which was a type of early seminary, or Bible college. These men in turn pointed to the teachings of the apostles of Christ in setting forth their beliefs, even as I have done in this writing. The great antiquity of this doctrine is well documented. It is not a new teaching as some suppose.

In more recent times there have been a number of notable saints that have believed in the universal reconciliation of all. Among them are Jane Leade, author of *A Revelation of the Everlasting Gospel Message*; William Law, in *A Humble Earnest and Affectionate Address to the Clergy* (John and Charles Wesley made William Law required reading for the Methodists); Hannah Hurnard who wrote *Hinds' Feet on High Places* (In her book *Unveiled Glory*, Hannah Hurnard discusses her belief in this doctrine); Hannah Whitall Smith, author of *The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life* (It was in her autobiography titled *The Unselfishness of God* that she discusses her belief in the reconciliation of all. Several chapters were devoted to this topic, but have been removed by others from later re-prints of her book.); and Sadhu Sundar Singh.

I have previously cited Andrew Jukes, a minister in England who wrote *The Restitution of All Things* in the year 1876, and J. Preston Eby who penned the worthy teaching series titled *The Savior of the World*. These represent some of the saints who have held to this teaching in these latter days, demonstrating that this doctrine has never been extinguished. It has always been held by a remnant of God's people.

In 1895 a Biblical encyclopedia was published that included an entry on the origin and history of the doctrine of universal reconciliation. The authors of

Parables Bookshelf

the encyclopedia were Reverend John McClintock, and James Strong. This is the same James Strong who compiled *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. Neither of these men were adherents of a belief in the restitution of all things, but they provided an unbiased account of the history of this doctrine, and of some who taught this view. The Biblical encyclopedia is now out of copyright, and is in the public domain, so I am including the majority of the text from the article in this addendum.

McClintock and Strong did not provide an exhaustive history of this doctrine, nor name all of those who have taught this truth, but what they did provide is well researched and serves to provide an understanding that this is not some new teaching that has recently appeared. As you read this article, I would draw your attention to the persecutions suffered by many who taught this view, and note the role of the Roman Catholic Church in the suppression of this doctrine. The Roman Church is not known to be a champion of truth, but has frequently been the persecutor, and executioner, of men and women of conscience who have sought to walk in the light of truth.

The following is taken from the *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, Volume 10, 1895, pp. 109-133, Rev. John McClintock and James Strong.

I. Origin and History. -

(I.) Informal. -

1. In Former Centuries.... In 195 Clements Alexandrinus, who was president of the Catechetical School at Alexandria, advocated Universalism on the ground of the remedial character of all punishment. His pupil and successor in the school, Origen Adamantius, famous alike for his learning, piety, and zeal, taught Universalism on the ground of the ever-continuing freedom of the will, the deep mental and spiritual anguish occasioned by the light and knowledge of the truth until it leads to repentance, and then the harmony of the soul with God. Origen's position, abilities, and untiring efforts for

the spread of the Gospel gave him great influence with his pupils, and with the Church at large, in whose behalf he became a voluminous writer. In addition to his position and work in the school of Alexandria, he also had care for several years, in connection with Pamphilius, of the theological school at Caesarea, one of whose distinguished pupils was the celebrated Gregory Thaumaturgus, a great admirer of his master's theories, and finally, about A.D. 235, his strong defender and ardent eulogist. Pamphilius, and Eusebius, the first Church historian, also defended Origen's doctrines from charges brought against them by the Western Church, and in answering the complaint that he denied all future punishment they quote from his writings in contradiction thereof, not only his positive assurances of future and severe punishment, but his equally positive assertion that such correction is purifying and salutary. In A.D. 364, Titus, bishop of Bostra, wrote in advocacy of Universalism, contending that, although there are torments in the abyss of hell, they are not eternal, but that their great severity will lead the wicked to repentance and so to salvation. Gregory of Nyssa, A.D. 380, also advocated Universalism on the same grounds. Contemporary with him was the justly celebrated defender of orthodoxy, Didymus the Blind, a successor of Origen in the school at Alexandria, and a zealous Universalist. Prominent among his scholars was Jerome, eminent alike for his abilities, his inconsistencies, and instability. Universalism as taught by Origen is clearly and ably set forth by Jerome in his commentaries on the epistles, and in his letters. John, bishop of Jerusalem at this period, was also an advocate of Universalism on Origen's theory. Another contemporary, Diodorus, a teacher of great repute in the school at Antioch, and afterwards bishop of Jerusalem, was also a Universalist, who, in opposition to the then general prevalence of allegorical interpretation, strictly adhered to the natural import of the text in his many commentaries on the Scriptures. He defended Universalism on the ground that the divine mercy far exceeds all

God's Plan of the Ages

the effects and all the desserts of sin. His pupil and successor in the school, Theodore of Mopsuestia, A.D. 420, called "the crown and climax of the school of Antioch," and by the Nestorians, whose sect he founded, "the interpreter of the Word of God," and whose writings were text-books in the schools of Eastern Syria, was a prominent and influential Universalist. His theory was that sin is an incidental part of the development and education of the human race; that, while some are more involved in it than others, God will overrule it to the final establishment of all in good. He is the reputed author of the liturgy used by the Nestorians, a Church which at one time equaled, in its membership the combined adherents of both the Greek and Latin communions, and which has had no rival in military zeal. In the addresses and prayers of this liturgy Universalism is distinctly avowed. Theodoret, A.D. 430, bishop of Cyprus in Syria, a pupil of Theodore of Mopsuestia, was also a Universalist, holding the doctrine on the theory advocated by the Antiochian school. For some time prior to this, certain opinions of Origen on pre-existence and on the salvation of the devil had been in dispute and pronounced heretical by a synod; but his doctrine of the universal salvation of the human race had not been involved in this condemnation. At a local council called by the emperor Justinian at Constantinople, A.D. 544, Origen's doctrine of universal salvation was declared heretical. Nine years later another council was held by the same authority at the same place, when condemnation was pronounced on the Nestorians, although their belief in Universalism was not mentioned. It has been common to call this an ecumenical council, but without warrant (see the action of the Latin Church in refusing to recognize it or to send a legate to it). Doderlein, in his *Institutes of Christian Theology*, after quoting the decree of Justinian against Origen, says, "That was not the belief of all, and in proportion as any one was eminent in learning in Christian antiquity, the more did he cherish and defend the hope of the termination of future "torments." Drexelius, in his defense of eternal punishment, gives this

testimony, "That God should doom the apostate angels and men at the day of retribution to eternal torments seemed so hard and incredible a doctrine to some persons that even Origen himself who was mighty in the Scriptures, and no less famous for his admirable wit and excellent learning, presumed to maintain in his book of principles that both the devils and the damned, after a certain period of years, the fire having purged or cleansed them from their pollutions, should be restored to grace. Augustine and others set forth his error and condemned him for it. But, notwithstanding their condemnation, this error has found a great many in the world who have given it a kind of civil reception. The Anti heretics so called, dispersed this error throughout all Spain under various interpretations." Gieseler, the ecclesiastical historian, says, "The belief in the inalienable capacity of improvement in all rational beings and the limited duration of future punishment, was so general, even in the West, and among the opponents of Origen, that, even if it may not be said to have arisen without the influence of Origen's school, it had become entirely independent of his system." And Augustine bears this testimony: "Some - nay, very many - from human sympathy commiserate the eternal punishment of the damned and their perpetual torture without intermission, and thus do not believe in it; not, indeed, by opposing the Holy Scriptures, but by softening all the severe things according to their own feelings, and giving a milder meaning to those things which they think are said in them more terribly than truly." Universalism almost wholly disappeared during the period known as the Dark Ages, although there are occasional glimpses of it even in the mutilated records which the papal Church has permitted to descend to us. In the 7th century, Maximus, the Greek monk and confessor taught Universalism; in the 8th, Clement of Ireland was deposed from the priesthood for teaching that when Christ descended into hell he restored all the damned; while in the 9th, John Scotus Erigena, a famous philosopher who stood at the head of the learned of the court of France, was a bold defender of

Parables Bookshelf

Universalism. In the 11th century, the Albigenses were, according to papal authorities, Universalists; In the 12th, Raynold, abbot of St. Martin's, in France, was charged before a council with holding "that all men will eventually be saved;". In the 13th, Solomon, bishop of Bassorah, discussed the question of universal salvation, answering it in the affirmative. The Lollards in the 14th century taught Universalism in Bohemia and Austria; and at the same period a council convened by Langman, archbishop of Canterbury, gave judgment against Universalism as one of the heresies then taught in that province. In the early part of the 15th century, a sect called "Men of Understanding" taught Universalism in Flanders, advocating it on the ground of the German Mystics, as did Tauler of Strasburg, and John Wessel, who, with others, have been called "the Reformers before the Reformation," whose writings Luther industriously studied and greatly admired.

2. In Modern Times. - With the Reformation, Universalism made a fresh appearance early in the 16th century, chiefly among some of the Anabaptist sects. The seventeenth article of *the Augustine Confession*, 1530, was expressly framed to "condemn the Anabaptists, who maintain that there shall be an end: to the punishments of the damned and of the devils." Denk, Hetzer, and Stanislaus Pannonius were the most eminent defenders of Universalism at this period. Later in the century, Samuel Huber, divinity professor at Wittenberg, taught Universalism, it is alleged by Spanheim; and because, says Musheim, he would not go back to the old methods of teaching, "he was compelled to relinquish his office and go into exile." Early in the 17th century, Ernest Sonner, professor of philosophy at Altorf, published "*a theological and philosophical demonstration that the endless punishment of the wicked would argue, not the justice, but the injustice, of God.*" John William Petersen, at one time court preacher at Lutin, and subsequently superintendent at Lunenberg, adopted and defended Universalism with such zeal that he was cited before the

consistory, and, as he could not conscientiously renounce his convictions, was deprived of his office and forced into private life. In his retirement he wrote and published three folio volumes on Universalism, entitled *Musterion Apokatastaseos Paltan*, in which he mentions many who had defended that doctrine. The volumes appeared between the years 1700 and 1710. They opened a century of spirited controversy, of which Mosheim says, "The points of theology which had been controverted in the 17th century were destined to excite keener disputes in the 18th, such 'as the eternity of hell torments, and the final restoration of all intelligent beings to order, perfection, and happiness.'" Dietelmair, an opponent of Universalism, wrote on its history about the middle of this century. In the preface to his work he speaks of the contests which raged vehemently enough within the very bounds of the orthodox Church in the end of the last century 'the' beginning of the present." Among the defenses of Universalism contained in the first volume of Petersen's work was *the Everlasting Gospel*, attributed to Paul Siegvolk, which was but an assumed name of George Klein-Nicolai, deposed for his Universalism as preacher of Friessdorf. He published other works in defense of Universalism, but the most rapid and lasting popularity belonged to *the Everlasting Gospel*, which in forty-five years passed through five editions in Germany. In 1726 John Henry Haug, professor at Strasburg, having procured the assistance of Dr. Ernest Christoph Hochman, Christian Dippel, Count De Marcey, and others, commenced the publication of the *Berleburger Bibel*, an entirely new translation and commentary of the Holy Scriptures. They made themselves familiar with all the writings of the Mystics, and in their great work taught and defended Universalism from the Mystical standpoint. Their work fills eight large folio volumes, the last of which was published in 1742. Strong persecution assailing them, and no printer being willing to risk his office in doing their work, they were compelled to purchase their own type and a small press. When the

God's Plan of the Ages

Church they had established was at last broken up by their enemies, the members fled to America, taking their press with them, and it was set up by Christopher Sower in Germantown, Pa. One of De Marcey's intimate friends was George De Benneville, born of French parents in London in 1703. Before he was twenty years of age he commenced preaching in France, where he was arrested and condemned to die, but was reprieved on the scaffold by Louis XV. Making his way into Germany, he there preached Universalism several years, and then came to America. In 1727 appeared Ludvig Gerhard's *Complete System of the Everlasting Gospel of the Restoration of All Things, together with the Baseless Opposite Doctrine of Eternal Damnation*. The author was at one time professor of theology in the University of Rostock, and his publication called forth, according to Walch, no less than fourteen volumes in reply. Jung, Stilling in the latter part of the 18th century, an able defender of Christianity against German rationalism, was an ardent and eminent Universalist. Prof. Tholuck wrote, in 1835, that this doctrine "came particularly into notice through Jung-Stilling, that eminent man who was a particular instrument in the hand of God for keeping up evangelical truth in the latter part of the former century, and at the same time a strong patron to that doctrine." During the present century, Universalism has made rapid progress in Germany. Olshausen says of it that it "has, no doubt, a deep root in noble minds, and is the expression of a heart-felt desire for a perfect harmony of the creation." Dr. Dwight wrote in 1829, "The doctrine of the eternity of future punishment is almost universally rejected..."

In England the Protestants, in drawing up their *Forty-two Articles of Religion*, in 1552, condemned Universalism. Ten years later, when the convocation revised the doctrines of the Church, the number of articles was reduced to thirty-nine, omitting, among others, the one condemning Universalism. Since that time Universalism has not been a forbidden doctrine in the Church of England, but has been advocated and defended

by some of the most eminent members of its communion—such men as Dr. Henry More, Sir George Stonehouse, Bp. Thomas Newton, Dr. David Hartley, William Whiston, Dr. Thomas Burnet, Revs. Frederick W. Robertson, Charles Kingsley, Stopford Brooke, and canon Farrar, and indirectly by archbishop Tillotson. The Presbyterian Parliament of 1648, which temporarily overthrew Episcopacy, passed a law against all heresies, punishing the persistent holders of some with death, and of others with imprisonment. "That all men shall be saved" was among the heresies punishable in the latter manner. This law was not long operative, for the Independents, headed by Cromwell, soon overthrew the law-makers. Gerard Willstanley published a work in advocacy of Universalism only a few days after the passage of the law, which was soon followed by similar works from his pen. William Earbury fearlessly preached Universalism. Richard Coppin was active in its advocacy, publishing largely in its exposition and defense, and was several times tried for his offence. Samuel Richardson, an eminent Baptist, also wrote strongly in its behalf. Sir Henry Vane (the younger), member of the Parliament dissolved by Cromwell, and in 1636 governor of Massachusetts, was a Universalist. Jeremy White, one of Cromwell's chaplains, preached Universalism, and published a work which has passed through several editions. Jane Lead, a Mystic, was the author of several Universalist books. Henry Brooke, a literary writer, avowed his belief in Universalism in his *Fool of Quality*, and in a poem on the Messiah. William Law, author of *the Serious Call*, declared in his Letters, "As for the purification of all human nature, I fully believe it, either in this world or some after ages." The English literary reviews of the last century contain many notices of works in defense of Universalism. In 1750 James Rely, who had been a preacher in Whitefield's connection, shocked at the doctrine of reprobation, was by meditation and study led into another scheme of redemption, some of the peculiarities of which may be said to have had their origin with him. Accepting as true the common theory that

Parables Bookshelf

all men, having sinned in Adam, justly incurred eternal damnation, and that Christ had borne this infinite guilt and punishment in behalf of all who should be saved, Rely was moved to find, if possible, some ground of justice in such a scheme. The divine law explicitly declares that "the soul which sinneth, it shall die," and that the innocent shall not suffer for the guilty. How could a transfer of human sin and penalty to Christ be consistent with that law? How could it be reconciled with equity? The divine sovereignty, without regard to inherent justice in the plan, could not account for it for the absoluteness that could set justice aside might just as easily, and more mercifully, have gone straight to its aim by remitting instead of transferring sin and its deserts. To say that the sufferings of Christ were merely accepted as satisfaction for human deserts, only reckoned as such, by God's sovereign pleasure, was no adequate explanation, since they were thus only a fictitious, not a real, satisfaction; and, further, any sufferings whatsoever, even those of a man, would have answered just as well as an arbitrary acceptance of the coequal of God. The perfect consistency of God's procedure, its absolute harmony with justice and equity, Rely found, as he claimed, in such a real and thorough union of Christ with the human race as made their acts his, and his theirs. All men, he held, were really in Adam and sinned in him, not by a fictitious imputation, but by actual participation; equally so are all men in the second Adam, "the head of every man," and he is as justly accountable for what they do as is the head in the natural body, accountable for the deeds of all the members united to that head. Accordingly Christ, in his corporate capacity, was truly guilty of the offence of the 'human race, and could be, as he actually was, justly punished for it; and the race, because of this' union, really suffered in him all the penalty which he endured, and thus fully satisfied justice. There is no more punishment, therefore, due for sin, nor any further occasion for declaring the demands of the law, except to make men feel their inability to obey, and thus compel them to an exclusive reliance on Christ the head. He has

effected a complete and finished justification of the whole world. When man believes this he is freed from the sense of guilt, freed also from all doubt and fear. Until he believes it he is, whether in this world or in another, under the condemnation of unbelief and darkness, the only condemnation now possible to the human race. In illustration and defense of this theory, Rely wrote and published several books, preached zealously in London and vicinity, and gathered a congregation in the metropolis. After his death in 1778, two societies were formed from his congregation; but both have now ceased to exist, as has the society gathered by Winchester about 1789, and the Church founded by David Thom, D.D., in Liverpool in 1825. The Unitarians in England are all believers in Universalism, as are also many of the Congregationalists.

3. In America Universalism is the result of the proclamation of a variety of theories, some of them at a very early date, all resulting in one conclusion - the final holiness of the human race. Sir Henry Vane as was said above, was a Universalist. It is not known that while in America he made any public avowal of that belief; but the presumption is that he did not stand alone. In July, 1684, Joseph Gatchell, of Marblehead, Mass., was brought before the Suffolk County Court for discoursing "that all men should be saved," and, being convicted, was sentenced "to the pillory and to have his tongue drawn forth and-pierced with a hot iron." Dr. George De Benneville, also mentioned above, came to America in 1741, expressly called of God, as he believed, to preach the Gospel in the New World. For more than fifty years he preached in various parts of Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, and the Carolinas. He was not an organizer, but simply a preacher, and quite a voluminous writer, though only a few of his productions were published. For several years he was welcomed to the pulpits of the "Brethren" (Dunkers). It was no doubt at his suggestion that Siegvolk's *Everlasting Gospel* was translated into English, and published by Christopher Sower, printed, proba-

God's Plan of the Ages

bly, on the identical press on which the *Berleburger Bibel* had been struck off. This edition was reviewed by Rev. N. Pomp, a German minister in Philadelphia. Alexander Mack, an eminent preacher among the Dunkers, replied to Pomp, defending Siegvolk's views. This work was never published, but the MS. is still preserved. There was found among Dr. De Bonneville's papers, after his death, in 1793, a *Commentary on the Apocalypse*, which was printed in German, at Lebanon, Pa., in 1808. There was also Universalism in the Episcopal Church. Rev. Richard Clarke, rector of St. Philip's in Charleston, S. C., from 1754 to 1759, was a pronounced advocate of it; as was Rev. John Tyler, rector of the Church in Norwich, Conn., who wrote a work in its defense, which was published by some one to whom he had loaned his MS., about 1787. Some of the Congregationalists of New England were believers in Universalism; among them Dr. Jonathan Mayhew, minister of the West Church in Boston from 1747 to 1766, who distinctly avowed his belief in it in a published Thanksgiving Sermon, Dec. 9, 1762. Dr. Charles Chauncy, minister of the First Church in Boston from 1727 to 1787, issued a pamphlet on the subject in 1782, which was reviewed by Dr. Samuel Mather. In 1784 his larger work *The Salvation-of All Men* was published, a second edition following in 1787. Dr. Joseph Huntington, minister in Coventry, Conn., from 1762 to 1794, left a work in favor of Universalism, entitled *Calvinism Improved*, which was published in 1796.

[End Article]

Should any desire to read further, I recommend the following as some of the most thorough writings documenting the history of this teaching.

Ancient history of Universalism: from the time of the apostles to the fifth general council, with an appendix tracing the doctrine to the Reforma-

tion

by Hosea Ballou. This book consists of 313 pages.

Following closely on this writing was one by a different author.

The Modern History of Universalism: from the era of the Reformation to the Present Time. This book is 458 pages in length and was written by Thomas Whittemore. It should be pointed out that "*the Present Time*" is a reference to the year 1830 in which this book was published. These two books together provide perhaps the most comprehensive history of the doctrine of universal reconciliation as can be found today. Both of these books can be read online, or freely downloaded from Google Books.

Final Note: Today, the term *Universalism* is used to denote a wide array of very diverse views, and often incompatible, views. Some have asked me if I consider myself to be an Universalist. Following is a reply I recently gave to one who asked this question.

It is necessary to define what you mean by the term "Universalism" as the word means very different things to different people. Some who consider themselves "Universalists" are clearly heretical in their beliefs. The Unitarian Universalist church is an example of this. They believe that all religions provide various paths that lead to God.

What I proclaim is that there is only ONE Mediator between God and man, and that is Yahshua, the Son of God. He is THE gate through which ALL MEN must enter. There is no other name given under heaven by which men must be saved.

Parables Bookshelf

There are many who are called Universalists who deny the uniqueness of Christ. Like thieves and robbers they seek to enter by another way. I would not want to in any way be associated with such false doctrines and beliefs.

For this reason, I find it expedient to avoid labels. I do not call myself an Universalist. I am a son of God who believes that Christ has been given the singular role to reconcile the creation back to the Father. I believe His power is sufficient to subject all things unto Himself, and by extension, unto the Father. I believe Christ's reconciling work will not be complete until every enemy has been brought to repentance, and every knee bows before the Father. I believe that what God has sworn is true. Every tongue will confess "Surely in Yahweh I HAVE righteousness and strength," and all who were incensed with Him will be ashamed.

This is what I teach, for it is what has been delivered to the saints by the Holy Spirit and the Word of God.

May you be blessed with peace and understanding in these days,

Joseph Herrin (November 25, 2011)

Heart4God/Parables



Bringing hidden things to light...

Parables Bookshelf

P.O. Box 804

Montezuma, GA 31063

Websites:

Parables

www.heart4god.ws

Parables Blog

www.parablesblog.blogspot.com

Heart4God/Parables
P.O. Box 804
Montezuma, GA 31063

«AddressBlock»

Parables Bookshelf — Series 1.8.6

PARABLES PRECEPT— The Bible



Every Christian must strive to be a student of the Scriptures. This effort is to be approached with great eagerness and steady labor. If a man does not find this eagerness inside of himself, he should inquire of God to know what is the source of this deficiency.

The great saints of old were great lovers of the Word of God.

Psalms 1:1-2

How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked... his delight is in the law of Yahweh, and in His law he meditates day and night.

David was a man highly praised by God, so much so that the Christ is often referred to as “the son of David.” David had a passion for the word of God that was unusual among men. He wrote the following:

Psalms 19:7-8

The law of Yahweh is perfect, restoring the soul; The testimony of Yahweh is sure, making wise the simple. The precepts of Yahweh are right, rejoicing the heart; The com-

mandment of Yahweh is pure, enlightening the eyes.

David loved God, therefore He loved God’s word. If we love God we will be passionate about His word. There is no other book given to mankind that was inspired by the Holy Spirit to reveal the deep things of God. Those who yearn with great desire to know Yahweh, and His Son, will treasure the Bible above all worldly possessions. It contains great riches. In it is found the knowledge of God.

Those who seek to discover the mysteries of God will give much attention to the holy Scriptures.