

**THE LARGER HOPE OR, SALVATION
FOR ALL, INCLUDING THE REJECTERS
OF THE GOSPEL: EXAMINED IN A
REVIEW OF REV. SAMUEL COX'S
"SALVATOR MUNDI"**

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The larger hope or, salvation for all, including the rejecters of the gospel: examined in a review of rev. Samuel Cox's "Salvator Mundi" by Thomas Powell

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REV. SAMUEL COX'S "SALVATOR MUNDI."

BY REV.

THOMAS POWELL, F.L.S.



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1881.

130. e. 141.

PREFACE.

A FRIEND, in whose position and influence the writer takes a deep interest, commended to him the work of the Rev. Samuel Cox as an irrefragable treatise upon the subject of future punishment. The commendation was accompanied by an offer to give a careful consideration to anything in the work which might be pointed out as erroneous. It was this which led to that earnest study of the volume which has resulted in those convictions concerning its contents which are indicated in this review.

That such convictions should have induced the writer to publish the result of this examination of the work, will surprise no conscientious man.

Distance, and other circumstances, having prevented his obtaining the criticisms of the friend above alluded to, he was glad to receive those of others whose standing and literary attainments eminently qualified them to give an opinion as to the merits of those convictions. One of those

friends, who had expressed a deep sympathy with "the larger hope," wrote as follows:—"After reading very carefully your MS., I think it a *very carefully written* and very *effective* reply to the whole book. You seem to have grappled at the very *central* teaching of his book and shrunk from none of his difficulties."

With this encouragement, and impelled by conscience, the author commends the following pages to the careful consideration of his readers, trusting for their usefulness to the blessing of the Holy Spirit.

THE LARGER HOPE.

THE work of Mr. Cox is designed to establish an old theory, designated by many in the present day "The Larger Hope," a hope that *all* who have sinned, do now sin, or will sin against God, whether men or devils, *will be finally reconciled to Him and restored to His favour.*

Concerning the doctrine to which this hope is antagonistic, Mr. Cox says, on page ix. of his preface, "Few of the more thoughtful and cultivated preachers of the gospel now hold the dogma of everlasting punishment." Such a statement, met with ere we enter upon the main argument of the book, read in the light of the decision of the Synod of the United Presbyterian Church, held in Edinburgh in July, 1879, in the case of the Rev. David McCrae, suggests the need of caution in estimating the value of our author's statements in the body of the work. No man can deny the thoughtfulness or the culture of the Presbyterian body, yet, in this case, out of an assembly of 288, only twenty-nine were on Mr. McCrae's side. Here, then, was a majority of 259

in favour of that view which, Mr. Cox would have us believe, is repudiated by the majority of the more thoughtful and cultivated preachers of the Gospel. But supposing this statement were correct, what does it prove? To what a goal have "the *thoughtful preachers of the Gospel*" led Germany!

In preparing the review which follows the writer has given Mr. Cox's work a prolonged and careful examination. He hopes that he has in no case misunderstood or misrepresented the author, but the result of the examination is that he considers the work open to very grave objections. These objections may be stated under six heads.

I.

AT THE VERY COMMENCEMENT THE AUTHOR RAISES A FALSE ISSUE; viz., "Why were *miracles* not wrought in Tyre and Sidon?" (pp. 1, 14).

But the question is not about *miracles*, but *what* Christ and His apostles teach as to future punishment. He seems to introduce this wide-reaching and difficult question in order to beg the whole matter in dispute. He assumes that because the peoples of those ancient cities would have repented had they seen the miracles which Christ wrought on the shores of the Galilean lake, therefore they, and also the peoples of Sodom, Gomorrah, Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum, will ALL be saved before the day of judgment!¹ What a *non sequitur*!

Before, however, stating other particulars which

¹ See Cox, p. 199, *et alias*.

we think prove the untenableness of this assumption, we will endeavour to answer his question which, at p. 14, he puts thus—"If those ancient sinners would have repented unto life had the mighty works of Christ been done in their streets, why were they not done?" We answer—

1st. Because it was IMPOSSIBLE. Mr. Cox himself shows (p. 14) that Christ could not be upon earth when those guilty nations were in existence: the *appointed* "fulness of time" had not come. Therefore, of course, "those ancient sinners" could not possibly see His works. The mere question suggests an anachronism—an absurdity!

2nd. It would have been a *violation of God's plan*, which is *harmonious* and *just* in all its parts, whether we can see it so or not. It is consonant with Scripture and reason to believe that "those ancient sinners" had such opportunities as, in their circumstances, *ought* to have led them to repentance unto life. See especially Romans i. 19-32, and Ezekiel xxxiii. 14-20.

The circumstances of the people of Capernaum, it would seem, rendered it necessary, in order to their being upon a par in this respect with "those ancient sinners," that they should see the mighty works of Christ. It would, apparently, not have been just to Capernaum, bewildered as it was with the subtleties of scribes, Pharisees, Sadducees and others, to let it have only the privileges of Tyre, Sidon, and Sodom, or indeed other than the privileges which were actually vouchsafed to it. And what Jesus seems to mean is, that the extra privileges