

and if they needed a schooling of this kind He, as their Father and Creator, was the proper one to adjudge their punishment.

Sometime after this there were certain cities that had become very corrupt, such as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the Lord had a reckoning with them, handled them in His own way according to His best judgment. Abraham was a man who feared God, and God said: "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do." So He informed Abraham about it. Abraham plead with the Lord, "Why," said he, "Lot lives down there, a nephew of mine, and a pretty good sort of a man, and there may be a great many others." The Lord said: "If I find in Sodom fifty righteous, within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes." Abraham, however, thought this was more than he could pick out. I expect there was a crowd of mean "cusses" among them as we have among us. And finally the Lord said that if ten righteous could be found in the city, He would not destroy it for ten's sake. But ten righteous people could not be found, and therefore the city had to be destroyed. What! All the people? Yes, all the people. But before they were destroyed he sent two angels and they brought out Lot, his wife and daughters. His wife was a little tinctured with gentility: she looked back, and the Scriptures tell us she was turned into a pillar of salt. When they got away, brimstone and fire fell upon the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and destroyed them. Thus the Lord has taken the privilege in many instances of correcting mankind. He used the children of Israel to kill the people who dwelt in the land of Canaan, and directed them to spare them not, because of their wickedness, to cut them off root

and branch. He raised up one nation and put down another, and raised up one king and put down another.

There were times when the iniquity of these people was not yet full. In Abraham's day the Lord told that Patriarch that he should go to his fathers in peace, but in the fourth generation his posterity should "come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full:" by the days of Moses they appear to have filled the cup of their iniquity, for he enjoined upon the Israelites, thou shalt utterly destroy them," "as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee." So that the Lord takes upon Himself to manipulate the nations according to the counsels of His own will, and as they all of them have to do with eternity as well as time, He adjudges them according to the eternal laws and principles by which He is governed; and hence we are told that eternal punishment is God's punishment, and everlasting punishment is God's punishment, thus men and nations are adjudged by the Almighty, according to the infinite and eternal laws and principles which exist in the heavens, and with a reference to eternal duration and not according to the finite, erratic and limited ideas of men. Jonah was sent to the city of Ninevah, to tell the people to repent, and that if they did not repent they would all be destroyed. But they listened to the voice of the Prophet. They clothed themselves in sackcloth and sat in ashes and repented before the Lord, and then the Lord forgave them. Why was it that a great many people were thus judged by the Almighty? It was because of their iniquity. The same thing prevailed upon this continent. The spirit of evil and contention, war and strife, existed among the ancient