

## Question and Answer.

No. 147

*Does the word "Today" refer to the Lord's words or to the time of the repentant thief's entrance into Paradise? (Luke 23. 43).*

1. On the day when our Lord was crucified He died, and His body was laid in the grave. According to His Own words, "The Son of man shall be three days and three nights *in the heart of the earth* (Matt. 12. 40). His soul *went down* into Sheol (Hades) (Psalm 16. Acts 2. 27, 31).

2. Paradise is a place above, not below (2 Cor. 12. 2-4. "Up to the third heaven." "Into Paradise."

3. When our Lord was raised the third day, on that same day He ascended (John 20. 17). Doubtless, He often ascended and descended during the forty days (Acts 1. 3) for heaven was His home, and His body was glorified. His final ascent was at the end of those forty days (Acts 1. 9 ; 3. 21).

4. When our Lord was raised, He also "delivered" those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage (Heb. 2. 14, 15). These were old time saints who at their death went to sheol (hades). The word "deliver" means to "change from," and therefore to bring from one place to another. From this it is inferred that these old time saints, and the penitent thief, were changed from Sheol to Paradise by the Lord at His resurrection.

5. It is quite grammatical to translate, "I say unto thee *today*." Indeed, is it not refreshing and encouraging that, in such a dark *day* of rejection and humiliation, the Lord could speak so triumphantly and assuringly? Note also frequently in Deuteronomy, for example, the words, "I command thee this day."

6. Although many who hold heretical views adopt this translation for their own sinful ends, we need not be afraid of it. By acknowledging the reasonableness of it, we can cut the ground from under their feet, and go on to shew:—

- (a) That the souls of those who depart to be with Christ do always go upward, for they are seen "under the altar" (Rev. 6. 9) a heavenly position.
- (b) That they are *conscious*, and not "sleeping souls," for they cry out and are answered and receive white robes.