

HELL...

A Terrible Reality!

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“The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God” (Psalm 9:17).

The popular god is not the God of the Bible. The popular god is a dead trunk. He has no eyes, he cannot hear; no feet, he cannot pursue; no arms, he cannot punish.

Listen, O heavens! God has changed – (though in our simplicity we used to think Him unchangeable!) Our modern god is not at all the same as the ancient God. The God of the ancients had iron for Sodom and Samaria and Tyre and Jerusalem and Balaam and Belshazzar. The God of Abraham used to thunder in His ire. He ruled with a rod of iron, and dashed to pieces sinning nations like a potter’s vessel. But our modern god has no iron in his constitution. He has sheathed his sword, and sat down helpless in heaven, an indulgent weakling! Sinai’s thunders are hushed forever; and the arm which used to visit vengeance swift and dire upon impenitent sinners, now hangs nerveless and paralyzed. This is the popular god, and I for one, refuse to worship him, for I have nothing to do with the creation of men’s wishes, but with *the God of the Bible*.

God is unchanged and unchangeable. “I am Jehovah, I change not,” is the word that smites modern thought and popular infidelity right on the cheekbone and teeth, and will one day put an end to all unbelief in His power to punish – *in hell!*

The reign of iron lasts still! The same God – who hurled oceans over Alps and Andies, drowning a world, and scorched Sodom to cinders in a hurricane of fire, and choked the streets of Jericho with corpses, and threw the Roman dogs on Jerusalem, to tear it limb from limb, until, in wild struggles of darkness and fire a nation found its grave – reigns still. The same God – who cursed Cain, and sent remorse upon Esau, and dug a grave for Korah, flung Jezebel to the dogs, and slew Belshazzar at his own banquet table, and hurried Judas to a suicide’s eternity – reigns still, unchanged forever, and what He has done before, He can do again.

God has two sides – mercy and justice. *At Sinai He sets forth His justice. At Calvary He is just and merciful.* If you find me a god that is all mercy and not just, I will not scruple to call him an idiot of your imagination. I totally refuse to have anything to do with your india-rubber god, at whom you can shake your fist and yet live; for he is not the God of the Bible. Justice and mercy are twin pillars of His throne; and the day that God ceases to be just and punish sin, He will cease to be, and heaven will grow dark.

The popular god, who is all mercy, is not the God of the Bible, not the God of His people, not the God of Calvary, not the God of heaven!

There is a hell. Understand this first, and be mercilessly clear on this point. The Hebrews took their idea of this awful place from Hinnom's Vale, a deep gorge on one side of Jerusalem. Here red-handed Manassah passed his children through the fires to Moloch – horrid king! – while thundering drums drowned their dying screams. It was the sewer of the city – the abominable receptacle of every conceivable filth and impurity; to consume which, fires were kept constantly burning. The cries of bloated vultures, the unceasing fires – now smouldering, now blazing out anew, as the wind rose and fell – and the deep banks of stenchful smoke always lying over a horrid vale, made it, in the eyes of every Jew, a picture of hell.

There is a hell, though Universalism – or the devil's theory of hell – with the blandest of smiles comes to tell us, that all alike, saint and sinner, will turn up in heaven at last. The murderer and the murdered, the seducer and the seduced, the hater and the hated, the robber and the robbed, to their surprise, will all find heaven at last. Nero and Paul, Christ and Herod, Judas and Peter, Cain and Abel, Elijah and Jezebel, will all come out at the same side of the judgment throne. A strange heaven indeed! - with all the hypocrites and blasphemers standing on the glassy sea. I say in the name of reason, the thought is blasphemous.

The more popular theory of this age is Annihilationism; that is "I die like my dog." I die a sinner, and am nowhere ever after. The coffin that holds my body is the grave of my soul, and, of course, punishment of any kind in eternity is an impossibility. Now this theory denies the immortality of soul; for when the body dies my soul dies. But God says: "The wicked shall be turned into hell." "Where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

To your Bibles, men, and let us have the truth, whatever it may be. I will cite the eternal God Himself, and hear what He says, "The wicked shall be turned into hell" (Psalm 9: 17). You may scatter the everlasting mountains or split the sun in twain, until, with shorn locks and dimmed eye, it stumbles on the pathway of light; but you cannot alter God's Word. I cite the tender-hearted Saviour! And three times in one chapter (Mark 9) He speaks of *a worm that never dies, and a fire that never shall be quenched.* Now be mercilessly clear, for your soul is at stake. Answer me this question, *Did the Lord Jesus lie when he spoke of the unquenchable fire?* Did the Son of God picture a lie when He shows us the rich man lifting up his eyes in torments, and begging a drop of water to cool his tongue? Nay; but answer me. Of course not, you say: "It is impossible for God to lie." Well, then, it is impossible that there is no hell; and let that settle the question forever.

If there is no hell, there is no heaven. They have the same foundation – God's truth – and if hell is a fable, heaven is a fable too. There is as much proof in the Bible for a hell, as for a heaven. The threatenings are as numerous as the promises. God woos, and as distinctly thunders. Drown the fires of hell and you drown the music of heaven, and like our dogs let us die. The plan of redemption is one. Take hell out of it and the whole scheme falls.

There is a hell then. Let no doubt rest in your mind here, as you love your soul. Because if not, Calvary was a huge mistake; the death of Jesus Christ was the greatest blunder of the ages. The eternity of punishment and the divinity of Christ stand or fall together. The Book which tells of the one tells of the other. By the permanency of sinful character, the demands of a broken law, the truth of God's Word, and the death of yonder Son of God, *there is a hell!*

Understand, second, that the *wicked shall be turned into it.* I have no delight in preaching hell. I would refrain from harrowing your feelings, but that necessity is laid upon me. Woe is me if I preach not the Truth, the half of which is: "*He that believeth not shall be damned.*" I dare not, on peril of my soul, preach a one-sided Gospel, lest I should be found smoothing your road to perdition.

If there is no hell, certainly we ought to stop preaching the lie. But if there is, I ask you, as you love your soul, is it a thing to be hid from you until you are in it? Is he your friend who hides it from you until you are there, and past redemption? If you were walking on a precipice, and about to put your foot on thin air unawares, would I not be branded as a murderer did I not with loud cries warn you? *With endless torment on the track you tread, and only a few steps from it, how dare I stand silently by while you move forward?*

Now for one warning ere you sink, sinner! "*The wicked shall be turned into hell!*" Many have had foretastes of it ere they died. Esau found no place for repentance, though he sought it carefully, with tears. Saul's troubled spirit foreshadows the restlessness of hell, with no harp of David to soothe it. Judas feels the undying worm twisting in his soul, and takes the halter to escape it. The dying cries of Voltaire were echoes of the shrieks of the damned. Mirabeau prayed for laudanum that he might forget the eternity to come – a wail from the sea of woe.

These last moments of wicked men ought to burn into your soul the stern fact that, "*The wicked shall be turned into hell!*" Colonel Sharteris, while dying, offered thirty thousand pounds to have it proved conclusively that there is no hell, but his offer was of no avail.

Unsaved sinner, you shall be turned in *there!* Your companions – fiends and murderers, and adulterers, hypocrites, and blasphemers. There is no death in hell. Death, which is a monster on earth, would be an angel in hell. If death went there, all the damned would fall down and worship him, and a shout of triumph would rend the fiery vault until all was still. But there is no death in hell. As long as heaven lasts, hell will last. Farewell, offers of mercy and wooing of love. Farewell, voices of mirth and songs of gladness. No more forever shall mercy woo thee. No more forever shalt thou rest in thy sin. It *was* sweet. Now it will haunt you and scare you and damn you. Never shall you rise again. Black clouds thunder from above, "No rest!" The tongues of flame around say, "No rest!"

You MUST go there! No entreaties shall save you. No power can rescue you. The arm of God Almighty will turn you into hell. Drunkard! You shall be hurried from your cup, smitten with everlasting thirst. Swearer! God will rivet the last oath on your tongue, and drag you into judgment. The last laugh you will have at the Lord Jesus Christ, scoffer, will remain in your soul, and echo there forever!

I warn you, decent and respectable sinners, YOU shall be turned into hell, all ye that forget God – not despise, not reject, not hate, not blaspheme – merely forget God, ye shall die the second death. Cowardly and unbelieving, you shall have your portion with the hypocrites, where is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. Your decency is damning you while it keeps you from the Saviour. The harlots and publicans shall go into heaven before you who make a Christ of your morality. Decent unbelievers, you are going from the communion table to an endless hell.

“And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every man according to their works. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.” (Revelation 20: 10, 13, 15).

BUT

God loves you with an infinite love. He longs that you may spend eternity with Him. But He is holy, and cannot admit into His presence one stain of sin or imperfection. You and I have sinned. God says that every thought and imagination of our hearts is evil continually; that our best deeds are as filthy rags in His sight. Thus to believe God is to be assured that nothing we can do will ever save or help save us.

Being holy and just, He must punish sin, and every sin. But thanks be to God, He has punished sin. He sent His beloved Son into the world and to the cross, and there laid on Him your sins and mine. There is only one way of escape from this awful hell. “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him” (John 3: 36). We beseech you, in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God. “As many as received Him (the Lord Jesus Christ), to them gave He power to become the sons of God” (John 1:12). To all who receive Him, He says,

“I give unto them eternal life and they shall never perish” (John 10: 28).

“Behold, NOW is the accepted time” (II Corinthians 6:2). “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.”
