

Did Jesus Believe

In

**ETERNAL
PUNISHMENT?**

By

John R. Church D.D.

THE HERALD PRESS
Louisville, Kentucky

(CONTINUE TO THE NEXT PAGE)

RETURN TO THE MAIN MENU

INTRODUCTION

It is an interesting fact of history that the great revivals that have broken out in the past have not come by the preaching of any new doctrine but rather by the resurrection of, and the emphasis given to, neglected ones. This is clearly seen in the preaching of the doctrine of justification by faith which brought about the reformation in Germany and the mighty revival under the Wesley's. If great revivals are to break out preaching designed to produce them is absolutely necessary.

In this booklet written by Dr. Church on "Jesus Believed in Eternal Punishment," an old doctrine has been resurrected until it appears refreshingly new. Seldom is a sermon heard today on this important subject. However, it is necessary if we are to have great revivals.

The writer shows us clearly that the spirit in man is immortal and consequently he will have an eternal existence, either in heaven or in hell.

Dr. Church shows the large emphasis which Christ gave to this subject in the Scriptures. It is revealed that Christ makes more references to the subject of eternal punishment for the wicked than He does of eternal reward to the righteous. Lest some should think that God is too good to send a soul to hell we are brought to see that man by his own choice seals his own destiny. The writer would have us see that the teaching on this subject is fully compatible with the character of God in all His creation. The same Christ who drove the money changers from the temple is the Christ who gave us the parable of the prodigal son.

There is no conflict between judgment and justice, Mt. Sinai and Calvary.

This addition to Christian literature will prove most valuable in our day to instruct people of the character of our God and furthermore the power of individual choice with which every human being is created.

While the author by no means denies that there is literal fire in hell he ably convinces the reader that the fires of memory, conscience and remorse burning eternally in the human consciousness are enough within themselves to bring torment beyond human conception.

While our brother ably depicts to us the horrors of eternal punishment, he fulfills the exhortation of the late Dr. W. B. Godbey who constantly exhorted his brother ministers when preaching on hell to preach it in love.

The dark background which he paints on the canvas only makes the glorious cross of Christ stand out in bolder relief. The cross and the cross alone is seen to be the one remedy for sin. We are made to see that there is nothing that Satan has done that God cannot undo. "As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive." That God never made hell for mankind but for the devil and his angels. He willeth not the death of any but that all should come to repentance. He concludes this timely sermon with an exhortation to seek Christ and not spend eternity in hell, but find everlasting bliss and joy in the mansions that He has gone to prepare, for those who repent and believe.

As is the case with the author whether he is preaching or writing, his utterances are always pungent, powerful and profound. May the reading of this book

bring to the reader afresh the solemn responsibility for individual choice. May it serve as a constant reminder for eternal vigilance. May it magnify the importance of making preparation now and create an increased zeal and passion for Christian people to rescue the lost as brands from the burning. If these objectives are achieved the author will feel well repaid for sending this little volume out upon its mission.

WARNER P. DAVIS, D. D.

Pastor, EPWORTH METHODIST CHURCH
Lexington, Kentucky

DID JESUS BELIEVE IN ETERNAL PUNISHMENT?

Lesson: Luke 16:19-31.

"There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he lifted up his eyes, being in *torments*, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am *tormented* in this flame. But Abraham, said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art *tormented*. And beside all this, between us and you there is a *great gulf fixed*: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; *neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence*. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into *this place of torment*. Abraham saith unto him, they have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And

ETERNAL PUNISHMENT

he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will *repent*. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

WHERE WILL YOU SPEND ETERNITY?

As a scriptural basis for this message I want to read three brief statements that fell from the lips of the Son of God. I would like for you to remember that these are not the words of some mere man, but they are the words of the Son of God. He speaks with an authority with which no other man can ever speak. His words are final on any subject. These three statements are:

Matthew 25:41. "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into *everlasting fire*, prepared for the devil and his angels."

Matthew 25:46. "And these shall go away into *everlasting punishment*; but the righteous into life eternal." (The same word that is translated in one place, *everlasting*, is translated in the other place, *eternal*.)

John 14:2, 3. "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

In traveling over the highways of our land we see many kinds of billboards and signs. Most of them are advertising some commercial product. However, there is a group of people that have taken it upon themselves

JESUS BELIEVED IN

to place some religious signs along the highways. Quite often you will see signs with some such message as this: "Jesus saves." "The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin." "Jesus is soon coming." "Prepare to meet thy God." Many times you will meet this question: "*Where will you spend eternity?*" When I first began to see this question, I said to myself, "That question is not worded properly, for eternity will never come to an end, and therefore no one can possibly spend eternity. You can't spend something that will never come to an end." After spending a little time, however, in thought on that question this truth was brought to my mind: man is a *spirit being* and his spirit will forever survive somewhere, and therefore there is a sense in which we will all spend eternity somewhere. Our spirit will survive death and will never cease to be. This is a truth that is clearly taught in God's Word, but is often either overlooked, or is even denied by some people.

There are some great basic truths that are set forth in God's Word, but the Bible does not try to prove that they are true. You will not find any lengthy arguments trying to prove that these things are true. The Bible sets them forth and then assumes that they are true. You will not find any lengthy arguments in the Bible trying to prove the existence of God. The Bible opens with the statement, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," and then the rest of the Bible goes on the assumption that there is a God. The Bible does say, "The fool hath said in his heart there is no God," but certainly no one but a fool would say such a thing.

ETERNAL PUNISHMENT

The Bible does not try to prove that man is a free moral agent. The Bible does say that God created man in His own image and after His likeness: and then the Bible goes on the assumption that man is a sovereign being with a free-will and power of choice. The very plan of salvation is based upon this assumption. The plan is that whosoever believeth on the Son hath everlasting life, and the assumption is that man has the power and privilege to either believe or to refuse to believe. The responsibility is with man. God has made the provision for the salvation of every man, but man has the power to refuse salvation if he so desires. Every promise given in the Bible is based on this assumption.

The Bible does not try to prove that man is a *spirit being*. It makes the statement that God breathed into man the breath of *lives*. (The word translated life is plural. It means more than one kind of life. Man not only has animal life, but he also has *spirit* life.) The whole Bible is based on the assumption that man is a trinity. He is *body*, *soul*, and *spirit*. He not only has life like other animals, but he also has *spirit* life. This *spirit* life came from God, and can no more be destroyed than God can be destroyed. Paul prayed that our *spirit*, *soul* and *body* might be preserved blameless. In Hebrews we are told that the word of God is quick and powerful and that it can divide asunder, separating *soul* and *spirit*. Animals have *soul* life, but they do not have *spirit* life.

This is a great basic truth that many good people have never recognized in their study of the Word. Many people talk about the *soul* being destroyed in

JESUS BELIEVED IN

hell, but they overlook the fact that even should the soul be destroyed in hell there still is the spirit nature that will survive forever and ever. It would pay you to take a good Analytical Concordance and study the subject and see how many, many times the term *spirit is* used. It is used in a threefold sense in the Bible. In some instances it means the Holy Spirit. In other instances it means the spirit or attitude that is manifested under certain circumstances. However, there are many other instances in which it is used, and it clearly indicates that it refers to the spirit nature that was imparted to man. It is a nature that all men have regardless of their relationship to God. They are spirit beings. I do not have time nor space to give all of these instances in which this term is used, but I do feel that it would be worth our while to call your attention to some of them, for there is a great basic truth involved at this point. I list some of these passages where the word is used in speaking of the spirit *nature of man*. In the Hebrew there are two different words used in speaking of this nature. One of them is the word *neshamah*, and it means breath or spirit. I call your attention to two passages where this word is used. One is Job 26:4: "To whom halt thou uttered words? and whose *spirit came from thee*?" Here Job is declaring that his spirit nature came from God. The second is Prov. 20:27: "The *spirit* of man is the candle of the Lord." (The marginal reading is: "The spirit of man is the lamp of the Lord.") Both of these passages clearly indicate that man has a spirit nature that came direct from God.

The other Hebrew word that is translated *spirit is*

ETERNAL PUNISHMENT

the word *Ruach*, and it means wind or breath. It is the equivalent of the Greek word *pneuma*, that is used in the New Testament. This word, *Ruach*, is used many times in the Old Testament and in various ways. However, there are a number of instances in which it means the *spirit nature* of man, that was given by the Lord at creation. I will call your attention to some of them.

Job 27:3: "All the while my *breath* (or spirit) is in me, and the *spirit* (or breath) of God is in my nostrils."

Job 32:8: "But there is a *spirit in man*: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding."

Job 33:4: "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the *breath of the Almighty hath given me life*."

Psalms 31:5: "Into thine hand I commit my *spirit*."

Proverbs 16:32: "He that ruleth his *spirit is* better than he that taketh a city."

Ecclesiastes 8:8: "There is no man that hath power over the *spirit* to retain the *spirit*."

Ecclesiastes 12:7: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the *spirit shall return unto* God who gave it."

Isaiah 26:9: "With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my *spirit* within me will I seek thee early." (Notice that the prophet mentions both the *soul* and *spirit*.)

Isaiah 38:6: "O Lord, by these things men live, and in all these things is the life of my *spirit*."

Zachariah 12:1: "The burden of the word of the Lord for Israel, saith the Lord, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth,

JESUS BELIEVED IN

and formeth the spirit of man within him."

There are many other such passages that might be quoted from the Old Testament, but these are sufficient to prove that man has a *spirit* nature in him that came direct from God. He has this nature regardless of whether he is a Christian or not. It was given to him at creation.

In the New Testament we find the same great truth brought out many times. In the New Testament the Greek word, *pneuma*, is used and it means breath in its classical sense, but in the New Testament it means *spirit*. Many times it is used in speaking of the Holy Spirit, but in many instances it is used in referring to the *spirit nature of man*. I cite a few cases to prove the point.

Mark 14:38: "The *spirit* truly is ready, but the flesh is weak."

Luke 23:46: "Father, into thy hands I commend *my spirit* and having said thus he gave up the ghost." (When the *spirit* left the body the body was dead.)

Acts 7:59: "And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, *receive my spirit*. (Stephen did not believe in soul sleep. He expected to go to be with Jesus at that time. Paul had the same idea when he said, "Having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better." Philippians 1:23, 24.)

Romans 8:16: "The Spirit itself beareth witness *with our spirit*," etc.

1 Cor. 2:11: "For what man knoweth the things of a man, *save the spirit of man which is in him?* even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of

ETERNAL PUNISHMENT

God." (Note the two *spirits* mentioned here. One is the Holy Spirit of God, the other is the *spirit* of man.)

1 Cor. 6:20: "For ye are bought with a price therefore glorify God in your body, *and in your spirit*, which are God's."

1 Cor. 7:34: "The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body *and in spirit*."

1 Cor. 14:14: "For if I pray in an unknown tongue, *my spirit* prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful."

2 Cor. 7:1: "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh *and spirit*, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord."

1 Thess. 5:23: "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole *spirit* and soul and *body* be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Hebrews 4:12: "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of *soul* and *spirit*," etc. (Now, if the soul and *spirit* are one and the same thing then they could never be *divided*. *They are bound to be two distinct things, or they could never be divided.*)

Hebrews 12:23: "To the general assembly and the church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the *spirits* of just men made perfect." (It is the *spirit* that goes to heaven at death.)

James 2:26: "For as the body without the *spirit*

JESUS BELIEVED IN

is dead, so faith without works is dead also." (Notice that James says that when the spirit leaves the body, then the body is dead. It is the spirit that gives life to the body.)

Now these many passages of Scripture clearly indicate that man is more than a physical being. It clearly indicates that man has something more than animal life. Man is a spirit being. God breathed into him the breath of life and he became a living soul. He has in him a spirit nature that came from God. This spirit nature can no more be annihilated or destroyed than God can be destroyed. When we are born of the Spirit of God our spirit nature is quickened and we receive eternal life. However, we have had spirit *life all* the time just as we have had animal life. This is a great truth that many people have overlooked, and because of that much error has arisen. The spirit nature of man can no more be destroyed in the sense of annihilation than you can destroy God. All men have this spirit nature, both saint and sinner.

In fact, this idea of the complete destruction or annihilation of the lost is unsound both from the standpoint of science and the Bible.

Scientists are telling us that you cannot completely destroy matter in the sense of doing away with it. You may change its form, but you cannot annihilate it. You may burn this desk behind which I stand, but immediately it becomes ashes and gases, and the gases arise into the air to be breathed in by the leaves of other trees to make more lumber, and the ashes go into the earth to add to the fertility of the soil to grow other trees. According to the findings of science there

ETERNAL PUNISHMENT

is not one single atom of matter that has ever passed out of existence. It may have changed its form many times but it still exists somewhere in this universe.

If this is true of matter then it is a thousand times more true of the spirit nature of man. You cannot destroy *spirit or personality*. You may mutilate this body of mine but when you have done that you have not even touched the real John Church who lives in this temple of clay. I am not a body. I *have* a body. I am a spirit being. You are a spirit being and your spirit will always exist somewhere. As long as God lives your spirit will survive. You can no more destroy your spirit nature than you can destroy God. Therefore, you and I will spend eternity somewhere.

Not only does the Bible teach that we are spirit beings, but the Bible also teaches that every one of us is going to be resurrected from the grave. The wicked will be resurrected as well as the just. The lost will have resurrected bodies as well as the saved. In Luke 20:36, Jesus in speaking of people that shall be resurrected, says, "*Neither can they die anymore: for they are equal unto the angel.*" Of course He is speaking here primarily of the righteous dead that shall rise, but Jesus also speaks of the resurrection of the wicked, or unrighteous dead, and He gives no indication that there will be any difference in the kind of bodies that all men shall have. All the Bible evidence, that we have as to the resurrection of the bodies of all men, would certainly indicate that those bodies will be immortal and indestructible. Paul in 1st Corinthians, the fifteenth chapter, says, "For as in Adam *all die*, even so in Christ shall *all be made alive.*" Paul also teaches

JESUS BELIEVED IN

that there is a *spiritual body* just as there is a physical body. He says that this corruptible must put on *incorruption* and this mortal must put on *immortality*. Jesus spoke of having both soul and body cast into hell. Certainly these things would indicate that lost men cannot be annihilated.

Jesus clearly teaches that not only will the righteous people be resurrected, but he declares that the wicked will also have resurrected bodies. In John 5:28, 29, he says, "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And *shall come forth*; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation."

Now, since these things are true, and they are true, then you can see the vital importance of that question: Where will you spend eternity? For we are all going to spend eternity somewhere. According to the Bible there are only two places to which we may go after the judgment, one of them is heaven and the other is hell. Jesus offers us eternal life and the devil offers us *eternal punishment*, if we follow him. It is up to us to choose which we will take.

In the New Testament where Jesus speaks of *everlasting fire* and *everlasting punishment*, He uses identically the same word that He uses in speaking of everlasting or eternal life. In fact, the Greek word, *aionios*, is used in both of these passages that we have used from Matthew's Gospel, and it is identically the same word that is used in speaking of *eternal life* or *everlasting life*. It is also the same word that is used in Romans 16:26, where it speaks of the commandment

ETERNAL PUNISHMENT

of the *everlasting* (aionios) *God*. Now, if God is going to live forever and if eternal life will never come to an end, then the punishment of the wicked will *never come to an end*. To teach otherwise is to deny the plain teaching of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and to make him a liar. This is not some theory of mine or of some other man, but it is the clear declaration of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. You will either have to repudiate the Bible or accept this teaching, for Jesus Christ taught it and He ought to know what He is talking about. When He spoke of the Father's house and the many mansions that are there He said, "If it were *not so I would have told you*." In other words, I would not deceive you. I would not lead you to believe anything that was not true, and I would disabuse your mind of any erroneous idea along this line. If that was true about heaven then it is certainly true about hell. Jesus is the truth. He cannot lie. Other men may be deceived or may teach error, but Jesus came to teach the truth and to lead us into all truth. No one will ever go wrong in following His teaching and leadership. You may accept the puny reasoning of some mere man, but as for me I will stick by the plain teaching of Jesus Christ. I believe He knew more about this subject than any no-hellite in this world today. His word is final. When He says *everlasting fire*, then I accept that as final. When He says it is *everlasting punishment*, then that is enough for me. You may quibble and question, but the matter is settled for me.

JESUS BELIEVED IN

WHAT JESUS TAUGHT ABOUT ETERNAL PUNISHMENT

Now, I am well aware of the fact that this is not a popular truth. In fact, there are multitudes of people that have denied the whole thing and turned their back upon it. Many of our preachers and leaders have ceased to believe in and preach this great Bible doctrine. If they discuss it at all they are either evasive in their attitude or openly repudiate the teaching of Christ. However, I am here to say that we have just as much authority to believe in eternal punishment as to believe in eternal life. We have just as much authority to believe in hell as we have to believe in heaven. The only person that this world has ever known, that could speak with final authority on the future life is Jesus Christ. When we repudiate His teaching on this subject then one person's guess is just about as good as another's. Jesus has spoken in such clear terms that no one can possibly miss the meaning of His words.

Some people contend that this teaching of eternal punishment and hell rest upon a few isolated passages that are not at all clear. This is not true. Jesus never spoke in more positive terms or used stronger language than He did in speaking of eternal punishment and hell. In fact, Jesus had a great deal more to say about hell and eternal punishment than He did about heaven. The truth of the matter is, Jesus spoke of hell and eternal punishment fifty-six (56) times in the four Gospels. I would like for you to consider some of the things that Jesus said on this subject, and then

ETERNAL PUNISHMENT

see if you think this teaching rests upon a few vague, isolated passages. I give a few of His strongest statements here

Matthew 18:8, 9: "Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee; it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into *everlasting* (aionios-age-lasting) *fire*. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into *hell fire*."

Matthew 25:41: "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into *everlasting fire*, prepared for the devil and his angels."

Matthew 25:46: "And these shall go away into *everlasting punishment*, but the righteous into life eternal." (The same word that is translated in one place as *everlasting* is translated in the other as *eternal*. If one is never ending then the other is also.)

Matthew 5:29: "And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be *cast into hell*."

Matthew 10:28: "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body *in hell*. (This passage taken alone might seem to indicate that the body and soul were to be annihilated. However, the same Christ has spoken in other places and said it was *everlasting fire* and *everlasting punishment*, and so it must mean eternal destruction.)

JESUS BELIEVED IN

Mark 3:29: "But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of *eternal damnation.*"

Mark 9:43: "And if thy hand offend thee cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into *hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched.* (44) Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. (45) And if thy foot offend thee cut it off; it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be *cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.*" (Some people try to argue that hell is just the grave, but that is not what Jesus is talking about here. He is emphatic in declaring that this is something that never comes to an end, and there is real suffering here, or language does not mean anything.)

Matthew 22:13: "Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be *weeping and gnashing of teeth.* For many are called, but few are chosen."

Luke 12:5: "But I will forewarn you whom he shall fear: fear him, which after he hath killed *hath power to cast into hell;* yea, I say unto you, fear him."

Matthew 13:41, 42: "The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend and them which do iniquity; And shall cast them *into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.*"

Luke 16:23: "And in hell he lifted up his eyes

ETERNAL PUNISHMENT

being in torment and seeth Abraham afar off and Lazarus in his bosom."

Luke 12:25: But Abraham said, "Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things, but now he is comforted, and *thou art tormented.*"

Matthew 8:12: "But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into *outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*"

Matthew 25:30: "And cast ye the unprofitable servant into *outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*"

Luke 13:27, 28: "But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. *There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth,* when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you *yourselves thrust out.*"

Luke 16:27, 28: "Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house; For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, *lest they also come into this place of torment.*" (Many people will not now accept what Jesus teaches on this subject, but according to His words, the people in hell are convinced and would like to do something to get us to believe, *before it is too late.*)

Now these statements give to us the gist of what Jesus taught about hell and eternal punishment. These are plain statements that anyone can understand. There is nothing vague and uncertain about them. There are many other passages found all through the

JESUS BELIEVED IN

Bible on this subject, but we have confined ourselves to what Jesus said on this subject. This is not what we say about it. This is not the fine spun theory of some mere man, but this is the clear declaration of the Son of God. He knew what He was talking about. He came forth from God to teach us these things. He came just as much to teach us about hell and eternal punishment as He did to tell us about a place of many mansions. It is pure folly and presumption to reject this clear, plain teaching and try to substitute our own puny reasons, or to accept the false ideas of some man. Personally I take my stand with Jesus on this subject. I accept what He has to say on this subject. He is the final source of authority for me.

Since we do have these clear statements from the Son of God, it might be well for us to sum up just what He does teach on the subject. Briefly summed up He teaches this

(1) Hell is a *place*. It is as much a place as heaven is a place.

(2) Hell was prepared for the devil and his angels. (I will have more to say about this later on in this message.)

(3) It is a place of *everlasting* (or eternal) *fire*.

(4) It is a place of everlasting (or eternal) punishment.

(5) It is a place of *torment*, where the *worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched*. It is a place of weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth.

(6) It is a place *of* conscious existence where all of the faculties are still at work. The rich man could *see*. He could *feel*. He could *thirst*. He could *remem-*

ETERNAL PUNISHMENT

ber. He had not forgotten his brothers or his former life.

(7) Hell is the final *abode* of the wicked. There is a great gulf fixed between it and heaven so that souls in heaven can never go there, and *those in hell can never go to heaven.*

These truths are clearly taught by the Lord Jesus Christ. Did He know what He was talking about? We are hearing a lot of talk about getting back to Jesus, but if we are really going to get back to Jesus, we will have to come back to this truth about hell and eternal punishment. If we are going to accept what He says about His Father's house and the many mansions, then we will have to accept what He has to say about hell and eternal punishment. Some people seem to be willing to accept what Jesus says if it suits their own ideas and fits in with their preconceived conceptions, but if not, then they want to reject it and explain it away. Some people like to talk about what Jesus said about God as our loving Father, but they balk at what He says about the wrath of God. They like to talk about the compassion of Jesus, but they seem to want to forget about the wrath of Christ. We need to see that Jesus was revealing God just as much when He drove the money changers out of the temple as when He stood with outstretched arms and invited men to come to God. He was just as much the Son of God when He stood with blazing eyes and whip-cord in His hands, as when He cried out and said, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." If we do not accept all of His teachings then we have a warped and twisted conception of God. As Paul says, "Behold

JESUS BELIEVED IN

therefore the *goodness* and *severity* of *God*." Paul not only said, "The love of Christ constraineth me," but he also said, "Knowing therefore the *terror of the Lord*, we persuade men." In this age of laxness and shallow thinking and teaching we need to think some on the wrath of God. We need to come to see that He not only loves the sinner, but He also hates sin. There was a time when some of the old preachers, like Jonathan Edwards and other men, may have placed too much stress on the wrath of God, judgment, and hell, but certainly we are in no danger of that today. We have swung to the other extreme and have given people the idea that God is a soft, sentimental God. We have given sinners the impression that they can treat God any way they please and live as they like and God will accept them on just any kind of terms. This is a false idea and needs to be corrected. There is a hell to shun just as surely as there is a heaven to gain. Just as surely as Jesus taught us about eternal life He also taught us about eternal punishment. It is hard for me to understand how it is that people will accept His teaching on eternal life and refuse to accept what He said on eternal punishment. If He was right about one, then He was right about the other. Others may quibble and question if they please, but for me it is settled forever. *Jesus knew what He was talking about*. You may refuse to believe what he says, but the time will come when you will find out differently.

IS THIS TEACHING REASONABLE?

There are a great many people who seem to think it would be a reflection on God, if there should be such

ETERNAL PUNISHMENT

a place as the place called hell and such a thing as eternal punishment. They seem to feel that God would be cruel, unmerciful and unworthy of our love if He should permit a soul to be eternally lost, and suffer the torments of eternal damnation. When I hear people talk like that I can't help but smile and think what a pity it is they did not live in the times of Jesus. They could have been such a help to Him if they had only lived then. They could have saved Him from this terrible error and could have given Him a right conception of God. Jesus is the very one that taught us about the love of God and taught us to think of God as our loving heavenly Father, and yet He is the very one that told us about a place of everlasting fire and everlasting punishment. He is the very one that told us about that place where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched. He is the very one that told us that men would be cast into outer darkness and there would be weeping and gnashing of teeth. He did not seem to think that this teaching was inconsistent with His teaching about God's love. Seemingly He had no trouble in reconciling these two ideas. He seemed to feel that they were perfectly compatible. He taught about hell and eternal punishment without any apology and without any embarrassment. He seemed to feel that they went together. It is rather strange that some people seem to feel that they have a better understanding of God than His only begotten Son. Surely Jesus knew more about this than we do. If He could accept this teaching and teach about God as He did, then we ought not to have any trouble.

The trouble is that men have tried to substitute

JESUS BELIEVED IN

their own ideas in the place of the clear teaching of Jesus Christ. If they will just lay aside their own warped, puny opinions, and quit following some self appointed teacher, and come back to Christ and His teaching they will have this question settled once and forever.

One reason why many people find it hard to believe this truth is because they have not thought the question through, and have not taken all of the facts into consideration. If they will come to find out just what the Bible teaches, and why it teaches as it does, then they will find no trouble in accepting this teaching.

Some people say that it would be an injustice on the part of God to create such a place as the place called hell. I have spent about twenty-five years in study on this subject, and when you take all things into consideration, I have come to the conclusion that God would be unjust if He did not have such a place as this. I am convinced that hell is just as necessary in the economy of this universe as a penitentiary is for any government in this world today. I want to remind you of the fact that Jesus says hell and eternal fire *was prepared for the devil and his angels*. It was not prepared for men and women. It is true that men and women will go there, but hell was not prepared for them. They will go there as intruders, and will go there against God's will and contrary to His plan. *Hell was prepared for the devil and the fallen angels*.

Now according to the teaching of the Bible the devil, or Satan, was once an angel of light. He at that time was known as Lucifer, the Son of the Morning. He was a bright shining creature and occupied a very

ETERNAL PUNISHMENT

high place in the heavenly realm. However, he was not satisfied. He became ambitious and wanted to take the place of God and wanted to overthrow God. He rebelled against the government of God and stirred up a revolution among the angelic hosts. The Bible indicates that he drew with him in his rebellion many of the angelic creatures. There was a terrific conflict that took place in the heavenly realm. Satan was defeated and frustrated in his plan of overthrowing the government of God. However, Satan and the angels that fell with him were not destroyed in the sense of annihilation. They could not be destroyed in that sense and never can be. They are spirit beings and you cannot annihilate spirits. You can no more destroy spirits than you can destroy God. Jesus emphatically says, *they can never die*.

Now, while Satan has been overthrown and cannot be destroyed he has not given up in his effort to defeat and overthrow God. He is the arch enemy of God. He is an anarchist, a rebel, and an outlaw. He is deadset against God and everything God is trying to do in this universe. He hates what God loves and loves what God hates. He is back of all the sin and rebellion there is in the universe today. We talk a great deal about Hitler and other such men, and wonder why God does not do something about them. He is going to do something about Hitler and all the other sinners in this world, and we all recognize that He ought to do something about them. If God allows Hitler and such men to go on forever then He would, indeed, be unjust. He would not be the kind of God this world ought to have. If sin was never punished then this world would be in

JESUS BELIEVED IN

favor of sin and against right. Our better judgment tells us that there is going to be a time of judgment and retribution. However, in thinking about Hitler and such men as he, we need to see that Hitler and his like are amateurs in comparison with the devil. Satan is back of Hitler and such men. They are merely pawns in his hand.

Satan disrupted the peace and tranquility of heaven. As soon as he was cast out into the earth he set about trying to defeat God's plan for man. He led man into disobedience and has engineered all the sin and wickedness from that day to this. He is back of all sin, all war, all rebellion, and discord. He has been a disturber and a rebel ever since he fell. He will never change in his nature and his attitude. Now, my friend, you can readily see that if God did not have some place where Satan, the angels that fell with him, and all the folk that insist on following him instead of following Christ, could be shut up, then God would indeed be unjust. It would be unfair to every saint that has lived if God permitted sin and rebellion to remain at large forever. Sometimes people think it is unfair for Him to let sin and rebellion run as long as He does. Many have wondered why He has not already laid bare His arm in judgment, and stopped this bloody war, but *suppose He never did anything about it?* Suppose that sin and rebellion went on throughout eternity. Can't you see how unjust it would be on the part of God if He did not do something about sin? I thank God that I believe my heavenly Father is going to do something about it. I am glad that my Christ taught that the time is coming when sin shall be judged

ETERNAL PUNISHMENT

and everyone shall be rewarded for the sins they have committed. I am glad there is coming a time when Satan, sin and all rebellion shall be cast into hell, and peace and tranquility shall reign. In other words, hell is the penitentiary for the universe. It is the place where all sin and rebellion shall be cast. It is where those who refuse to accept the will and government of God will be banished forever. It would be unfair if God did not have such a place where sin could be banished.

If the Governor of your State should issue a decree that on next Saturday morning at 10 o'clock all the criminals in your penal institutions were to be released regardless of what crime they may have committed, and regardless of their present attitude toward society, then immediately there would arise a great wave of protest from the decent citizens of your State. The capital of your State would be flooded with protests from the decent people of your country. They would say that it is not right and fair to turn those criminals loose upon decent citizens. They would contend that their lives and property were being put in jeopardy by such an act, and they would have a right to say that. Every intelligent person recognizes that we need places where such people can be shut up. The same is true with reference to hell. We need such a place, for there are law breakers in the spirit world just as surely as in the physical world.

In our nation we have it fixed so that people may come to our country from other lands. They may come here and live and enjoy our liberty. They may share with us in the benefits of our government. At the

JESUS BELIEVED IN

proper time, if they so desire, they may go through the proper procedure, take the oath of allegiance and become naturalized citizens of the United States. However, if such a person comes to our land and continues to live here but refuses to abide by our laws, and insists on trying to overthrow our form of government, then that person may be arrested and deported as an undesirable alien. That same principle is true in the spiritual world. God permits us to live under His righteous rule and enjoy the blessings and benefits that come to those that live under His merciful and just laws. At any time we desire we may go through the proper procedure and become naturalized citizens of the kingdom of God. We may take the oath of allegiance and accept His law for our life and we may live forever at peace with Him and receive the blessings of His kingdom. However, if a person insists in going on in their rebellion and sin, then the time will come when they will be arrested by the angels and they will be deported from the kingdom of God, and will be sent away forever. That is exactly what Jesus says in Matthew 13:41, 42: "The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom *all things that offend, and them which do iniquity*; And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth."

Every sensible and fair-minded person admits that it is nothing but right that people should be deported from our land if they refuse to become citizens and insist on breaking our laws. If that is fair in our government then it is just as fair in the case of God and His kingdom.

ETERNAL PUNISHMENT

There are certain States that have provision in their laws that if a person has committed so many crimes and been tried and found guilty, then if they commit another crime they are to be sentenced to the penitentiary for life as habitual criminals. They show by their many crimes that they are incurable. The same thing is true in the government of this universe. God will permit you to go so far and live in sin so long, but if you persist in sin and refuse to repent, then the time will come when God will have you brought before His judgment bar and you will be banished forever as an incurable sinner. A certain course of action persisted in finally settles destiny and there is no use to try any more to change that character. This is recognized by man and God. The time will come when your character will be fixed through eternity. "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still; and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still." Revelation 22:11.

People say that they cannot believe that a loving heavenly Father will send people to hell to suffer throughout eternity, for a few sins committed in this brief period of time called life. In fact, this is the main argument that is offered against the Bible teaching on eternal punishment. I want to say that this argument falls down at two points. In the first place *God does not send any soul to hell*. If a person ever goes to hell it will be in spite of the fact that God has done His best to keep that soul from being lost. If the Bible is clear and plain in its teaching at any point it is on this point. God has declared that He does not take

JESUS BELIEVED IN

pleasure in the death of the wicked. He has put Himself on record that He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. The Bible is clear and positive in its teaching that *whosoever will* may be saved. Jesus Christ has paid the price for the redemption of every soul. He has made provision for the salvation of all mankind. The Holy Ghost has been sent into the world to convict of sin and woo all men to God. The church has been established to preach the gospel and win all men to God. If a person is eternally lost it will be in spite of God's love, in spite of the fact that Jesus has died to save that soul, in spite of the wooing of the Holy Ghost, and in spite of the effort of the church to win men for God.

In fact, one of the things that will make hell hot for lost souls is the consciousness that they were lost in spite of the fact that God had done everything He could to save them. The consciousness that Jesus has died for them, and that the Holy Ghost tried to win them for Christ will burn like fire in their souls throughout eternity. Every sermon they ever heard, every prayer that was ever offered for them, the pleadings of their loved ones, will haunt them throughout eternity and will make their lot in hell that much worse. The memory of all these things will go with them and be a part of the torment that they will have to endure. There will always be the realization that they could have been saved, and that they should have been saved, and the only reason they are not saved is the fact that they loved sin and would not give it up. Throughout the endless ages of eternity there will ring through the corridors of their soul the awful fact that

ETERNAL PUNISHMENT

it might have been different. When they stand at the judgment bar of God and receive their sentence they will have to say, Amen, to their own condemnation, and admit that they and they alone are to blame. It might have been otherwise. They would not let God save them.

The second error of this argument is this: men are not lost alone because of the sins they have committed. They are lost because of what they are and not alone because of what they do. Men commit the sins they do because of what they are. Sin is more than an act. It is, first of all, an attitude toward God. The act springs out of the attitude. Men are not lost just because of their sins, but they sin because they are lost. Sin is first of all rebellion against God. That is why a sinner can never live in peace with God. He has to lay down his arms of rebellion and submit and surrender his stubborn will to God. Sin is lawlessness. It is the same thing that caused Satan to rebel against God.

I have had many people say to me, "Brother Church, you don't think God would permit a soul to be eternally lost just because he got drunk, do you? You don't think He would permit a soul to be lost just because he cursed a few times, or because he stole a few things, or just because he committed a few sins like that, do you?" No, I will be perfectly honest with you, I don't think He would permit a soul to be eternally lost just because he committed a few sins like these. I think the punishment would be all out of proportion to the offense. It would be like sending a man to the penitentiary for life for stealing a pocket knife. However, we need to come to see that men are not lost just because

JESUS BELIEVED IN

they get drunk, but men get drunk because they are lost. Sometime ago a man said to me, "I got drunk and backslid." I said, "You did not do any such thing. You backslid and then got drunk. You never would have gotten drunk if you had not backslid first. Christians don't get drunk. You have to backslide before you get drunk." Men curse because they are lost. Men lie and steal and do these other things because they are lost, and the reason they are lost is because they *love sin* and don't want to give it up. Jesus makes this truth very clear and plain in John 3:19: "*And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.*" Here Jesus says men are condemned and lost because they love sin and will not give it up. They are not lost just because of what they do, but they are lost because of what they are. They do the things they do because they love sin.

Jesus also says in the very next verse that they love sin so much that they will not come to the light, lest their deeds should be reprov'd. They love darkness and sin and therefore they refuse to come to the light. We see this manifested on every hand. Sometime ago a little woman said to me, "I never go to revival meetings. They make me nervous." That is true of many people. There are many people that will not go to a revival because they are living in sin and don't want to give it up. They are afraid if they come to where the truth is being preached and where the Spirit of God is at work, they will get under conviction and get saved. They don't want to be saved. They want to go on doing the same things they have always

ETERNAL PUNISHMENT

done. Therefore, they run from the light and from people who would help them get saved. It will surprise you at how many excuses people will find to stay away from a revival. It is surprising at how busy people get during a revival. So many people get sick or busy during a revival. They are hunting for an excuse to stay away from a revival meeting. They are afraid to come near a good red-hot revival for fear they might get religion.

Husbands will shun revivals and hunt all kinds of excuses to stay away. I have had a number of instances in my own experience where some little wife would come to me with tears in her eyes and tell me that her husband was a sinner, and she had done everything she could to win him for Christ. I have had them invite me to come to their home for a meal, with the hope I could do something to help win their husband for Christ. However, in many instances when I did go the husband would not show up. Sometimes they would call up and say they had some business matter to look after and could not get there. The little wife would tell me that he was sorry that he could not be there. He would tell her that he was so sorry, that he did want to be there so much, but I knew it was not true. He had deliberately planned and schemed not to be there. He did not want to be there. He was scared that he would have to be there. He was afraid the preacher might get hold of him and try to win him for Christ. He did not want to be won for Christ. He loved sin and did not want to give it up. He was not going to take any chances on being caught and won for Christ.

JESUS BELIEVED IN

I have even gone to homes out on the farm and the unsaved husband or son would not show up at meal time, and then after dinner I have started to walk out toward the barn and have seen a big strapping man or boy run around the barn and hide. I have actually seen them run like something was after them! What were they running from? They were running from God. They were running from light. They were running from salvation. They were scared they might get religion. They did not want to get saved. They loved sin and a sinful crowd and did not want to give them up. Men will do that and then they have the brass to look back over their shoulders, as they run from God, and say to the God that loves them, and is doing everything He can to save them, "It is not fair for you to let me be lost ! If you let me be lost then you will be cruel and unjust!" And yet all the time God is doing everything He can to save them and they are doing their dead level best to be lost. Listen, my dear reader, there is not a sinner in this world today that could not have been saved if he wanted to be saved bad enough. If he had put forth half as much effort in trying to find God as he has put forth in trying to run from God, he would be saved right now. If he would just lay down his arms of rebellion, turn his back on sin, and look up in the face of God and ask for salvation he could be saved right now. He is lost because he loves sin and will not give it up. If he continues to hold on to sin and run from God then the time will come when God will turn him loose and let him go forever. He will give him darkness and sin forever because that is what he loves.

ETERNAL PUNISHMENT

OUR ATTITUDE AND CHOICE WILL DETERMINE OUR
ETERNAL DESTINY

According to the teaching of Jesus there are two places prepared for people to go to after death. One of them is heaven and the other is hell. Both of these places are *prepared places*. Hell was prepared for the devil and his angels. It is the place where all sin, rebellion, and discord will be forever banished from the presence of God. In fact, Jesus used the word *Gehenna*, many times in speaking of this place. Gehenna was a deep valley just outside of Jerusalem where all the filth and refuse was dumped. There was fire burning there all the time. This fire fed upon the filth and refuse that was dumped into this valley. They did not have to haul the fire and put it there. The fire was burning all the time, for it fed upon the refuse. What a striking picture that gives us of hell! All the sin and filth of the universe will be dumped in hell and it will feed upon itself throughout eternity.

Those who go to this awful place will go there because they refused to be saved. God tried to save them, but He could not for they loved darkness rather than light. God will not force anyone to go to heaven if they don't want to. We are free moral agents and have the power of choice and God will not violate our free-will. He will not force us to go to heaven if we love darkness and insist on holding on to darkness and sin. It is our privilege to choose which we will have forever. No sin can enter heaven. If we love sin and hate light and holiness then there is no other place for us to go, but to hell. Heaven would not be heaven to

JESUS BELIEVED IN

us, even if we could go there, if we hated light and holiness. The soul that loves sin and darkness would never enjoy heaven if they could get there.

Not long ago I tried to preach a sermon on holiness, and after the service a lady came up and said to me, "Mr. Church, I hate holiness. I can't endure to hear such preaching." Her statement did not unduly excite me, for I have met a great many people that did not seem to love this glorious truth so much. I just said to her, "Sister, I hope you don't go to heaven feeling that way." She became very angry and said, "What do you mean? Do you mean to insinuate that I am not fit to go to heaven?" I said, "I am not insinuating anything, but I will say that I don't think you would enjoy heaven in your present state of heart and mind. If one little sermon like this can so arouse and stir your anger, then what would you do if you had to spend eternity in the presence of the *holy* God? What would you do if you had to spend eternity listening to the angelic hosts as they shout, 'Holy, Holy, Holy,' is the Lord God of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory?" What would you do if you had to spend eternity in the presence of the holy Christ, who suffered without the gates that He might *sanctify* the people with His own blood, and loved the church and gave Himself for it that He might *sanctify* it? What would you do if you had to spend eternity with the *holy* saints and martyrs of all the past ages, and realize that while you hated holiness, they had died rather than bring reproach upon it? You spent your time living in worldliness and sin, and hated the very things they loved and

ETERNAL PUNISHMENT

died for. Heaven would not be heaven to you; it would be hell."

You know, friends, the Negroes are right when they sing, "Everybody talking about heaven ain't going there." There are a lot of people that can get sentimental in singing or talking about heaven, but there will have to come a radical change in their nature before they are fit to go to heaven. Many of them cannot stand just a little bit of gospel light down here, but suppose they should have to spend eternity in the whitelight of God. You know the Bible says, "Without holiness no man shall see the Lord." It is my firm conviction that without holiness no man will *want to see the Lord*. Sin separates men from God. It makes men dread the presence of God. When Adam sinned he went and hid himself. He did not want to meet God. Men have been running from God ever since, if they have sin in their hearts and lives. That is why the Bible teaches that men have to be born again if they want to enter the kingdom of God. We have to have our hearts and lives changed before we are ready for heaven. This is a truth that a great many people need to see. We need to see that men and women are going to the place they are best fitted for.

There are two very striking and revealing passages in the Acts of the Apostles. One is that statement where it says, "Judas by transgression fell that he might go to *his own place*." It does not say that he went to hell. It says *he went to his own place*. It does not say that he went to heaven, but we know that he did not go there. If he could have gone there it would not have been heaven to him. It would have been hell

JESUS BELIEVED IN

for him to have to go to heaven and spend eternity with the Christ that he had betrayed with a kiss, and sold for thirty pieces of silver. Just one look from Jesus sent Peter out into the night to weep bitterly over his denial of Christ, but think of having to spend eternity in the presence of this Christ and have Him look at you, when you knew you had betrayed Him and sold Him to His foes.

The other passage is that one where it tells of Peter and John being released by the Jews, and it says, "And being let go they went to *their own company*." Now, where do you suppose they went? Don't you imagine they went down to the saloon and got them some beer and wine, and then after they had tanked up they went into the back room and gambled until the late hours of the night? Then finally on their way home they stopped at some dance and spent several hours there? No, my friends, we know they did not do any such thing. They would never have thought of doing such a thing as that. There are many people that would do these things that I have suggested, but Peter and John would not. They hated those things and would run from them. The truth of the matter is, there was a place there in Jerusalem where the saints met for prayer and fellowship, and just as soon as Peter and John were let go, they went straight to that place of prayer. They went there because they wanted to go there. That was their company. That was the kind of atmosphere they liked to breathe.

That same thing will be true of us when our spirits leave these bodies of ours. They will go to their own place. They will seek their own company. I don't be-

ETERNAL PUNISHMENT

lieve God is going to have to have an angel stand at the gates of heaven, with a club, to keep people out of heaven. This idea that so many people have about Peter standing at the gate and letting some in and refusing to let others in, is not scriptural at all. My Bible says the gates are *never shut*. God does not have to shut the gates to keep the saints in, and He will not have to shut the gates to keep the sinners out. They would not go in, in a million years. In fact, they have refused throughout their whole life to accept the invitation to go in. If they would not accept salvation in this age when they have the Holy Spirit, the Holy Scriptures, the influence of holy men, and all other means which God has employed to bring men into His kingdom, then certainly they would not go in when all of these things are removed. No, they have already made their choice and have become set in their attitudes. They have loved darkness and sin, and have run from the light so long that they will not change now. The gulf will be too wide to cross. It is not a gulf that God has dug. It is the gulf we have dug by our sin and rebellion. Many are digging it daily by their choices. This truth is being illustrated on every hand. You don't have to wait until eternity to see how men's choices decide their company. It is being illustrated on every hand today. You can take two men and let them move into your community. One of them may come from New York and the other may come from California. You may not know a thing in the world about them, but if you will just watch them for a short while you will find out what they really are. If one of them is a sinner he will find the sinful crowd.

JESUS BELIEVED IN

If the other is a Christian he will find the Christian people of his community. If one of them loves darkness, drunkenness, gambling, and such like he will find the crowd that does those things. If the other loves light, prayer and the worship of God he will find the crowd that suits him. That same thing will be true in eternity. Each soul will go to the place for which it is fitted. We will find our own company. If we have loved light, holiness and fellowship with Christ, then we will go to heaven to spend eternity with God. If we have loved darkness, sin, and have followed the devil and given our allegiance to him, then we will go to spend eternity with Satan. God has given us the privilege to choose, and our choice will determine our destiny. To blame God for our own choice is the sheerest of folly. He wants us to be saved. He is doing His best to get us to be saved, but He can't save us against our will. Our choice will be final one of these days. "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy let him be filthy still."

JESUS GIVES US A GLIMPSE BEYOND THE GRAVE TO TEACH AND WARN US

In this great passage in Luke 16:19-31, Jesus lifts the veil that hangs between this world and the spirit world, so that we might know what to expect after death. He does this so that we will be forewarned and not make the wrong choice. This lesson was not given to satisfy our morbid curiosity, but rather that we might have light and truth on the future state. This is not the idle dream of some visionary person. It is the actual record that came from the lips of the Son of

ETERNAL PUNISHMENT

God. It is not vain speculation. It is light and truth given by the Son of God for our instruction and profit. To ignore it or try and explain it away is to reject part of the light and truth that Jesus came to give to the world. It is just as much a part of His teaching as the parable of the prodigal son. May God help us to see this fact. Some people only want to accept that which is pleasing to them. They have a tendency to ignore or explain away that which does not fit in with their prejudices and preconceived ideas. However, this is a dangerous thing to do. It would be better to bring our views in line with the teachings of Jesus. After all it is by His word that we are going to be judged. If we have the light and then reject it we will be condemned by the light. Christ has given it to us to teach us the way.

Some people try to explain this passage of Scripture away by saying that it is nothing but a parable. Now if it was a parable that would not take away the point of its teaching, for Jesus used parables to teach truth. He does not use parables just to entertain people. When Jesus did use a parable it was always true to the facts that it was used to teach. So, if this was a parable then the truth meant to be taught by it would be the same.

However, I am convinced in my own mind that it is not a parable. There is nothing about it that would indicate that it is a parable. When Jesus spoke by parable, in other places, the context clearly states or indicates that a parable is being used. There is nothing here that would even suggest that it is a parable. In fact, everything about it would indicate otherwise.

JESUS BELIEVED IN

Jesus does not say, "Let us suppose there were two men." He says, "*There was a certain rich man. There was a certain beggar,*" and then He even goes so far as to give us the name of the beggar. As Bud Robinson once said, "There, my brother, you have his name and his post-office address." That is true. Jesus is here talking about two real characters in life. They lived just as we are living today. They died just as we will die some day, and after death they found themselves in a state of conscious existence, just as we will some day find ourselves. Jesus is telling us about the state of those two men so that we will know what to expect after death.

In this passage there are several very vital truths brought out. These truths are worthy of our serious consideration. Whatever our opinions may be about this passage I am sure that anyone can see that Jesus meant to teach these things:

This passage teaches that death does not end all for us.

This passage teaches us that there is a state of conscious existence beyond the grave.

This passage teaches that Christian people will be in a state of rest and happiness. It also teaches that the lost will be in a state of suffering or torment. These things are clear and plain. No one can miss this in the teaching of Jesus.

The record says that the rich man was in *torments*. The rich man himself testified that he was being *tormented* in this flame. Abraham admits that the rich man is in *torment*. Certainly Jesus meant to teach that this man was being *tormented* in the after life.

ETERNAL PUNISHMENT

Whatever else this passage may teach it certainly does teach that there will be *torment* for lost people after death.

If this were the only passage in the Bible on the subject, then we might be able to explain this teaching away, but this is not the only passage on the subject. There are numbers of others that teach the same thing. In all the utterances of Jesus on this subject, He was very clear and emphatic in His teaching, that there will be suffering or torment for lost souls. He speaks of everlasting fire, everlasting punishment, weeping and gnashing of teeth. He tells us that the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched. Now, this is His *language* and His *teaching*. It is just as much a part of His teaching as anything He ever said about God, eternal life, or any other subject that He ever mentioned. To reject this teaching is to mutilate His teaching and it means we will be plunged into darkness. We will have a one-sided conception of eternity and the future state of men and women. My dear reader, I wish I could get you to see this fact. I am not trying to win an argument. I am not just trying to prove that I am right and someone else is wrong. I am not trying to uphold the creed of some sect or denomination. I am trying to get you to see what Jesus the Son of God taught about hell and eternal punishment. It is worth your while to *listen to what He says* on the subject. Whether you agree with me in my theology is of minor importance in comparison to knowing the *truth* on this subject. His word will stand when the world is on fire. May God help us to accept His word on this subject! Many times I have had people come to me and ask

JESUS BELIEVED IN

me if I think this fire is literal fire, like we have in our furnaces and stoves. I am frank to confess that I do not know. The only thing that I know is that Jesus says it is eternal fire and that it will never be quenched. It is not my business to change His words and say that He does not know. I will take my stand with Him and declare that there is a place of eternal fire, where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched. *I could not preach less than this and preach the truth.*

I will say this, I have found by observation and experience that there is more than one kind of fire. I have found that there is a fire that can burn in men's minds and hearts, and the longer it burns the hotter it gets. It does not have to be replenished from the outside, but furnishes its own fuel. There is the fire of a guilty conscience that can burn and burn for years and the longer it burns the hotter it gets. Many people can testify to that fact. In fact, many people do testify to it each year. The Federal Government at Washington receives a number of letters each year with sums of money enclosed in them. They come from people who have taken something that did not belong to them, and their conscience would not let them rest until they did something about it. Sometime ago I read in the newspaper about a wealthy woman in New York City that ran off with the family chauffeur. They carried a large sum of money with them and intended to live together and have a good time the rest of their days. However, it was only a few months until they were found dead in each other's arms. They had rented a room in a cheap hotel in New York City and had com-

ETERNAL PUNISHMENT

mitted suicide. On a table by their bed they left a note with this message on it: "George and I thought we could go against the laws of God and man and live as we pleased, but we found ourselves in hell. We are going to end it all in this way." The trouble is they did not end it all. They did not get out of hell. They just got in so deep they will never get out. However, they found out by sad experience that it is not safe to trifle with your conscience.

No doubt you have either read or heard of the Scarlet Letter, that striking story that was told of the minister who seduced a fine girl in his congregation and stole her virtue. Finally, the people of his church learned that she was an expectant mother. They called her before the church for trial. She refused to reveal to them who the father of the child was. She was expelled from the church and was forced to wear a scarlet letter "A" on her garments to show to the world that she was guilty of adultery. No one suspected that the pastor of the church was just as guilty as she. He went on about his business and the people thought he was a great saint. In fact, they often talked about his piety. However, that minister had to meet that girl every day on the streets, and he had to stand and look at her accusing eyes on Sunday, as she sat and looked up at him. He had to live with the consciousness that he had sinned against God and that beautiful girl. Finally he could stand it no longer. One day he collapsed in the pulpit. When they rushed to him and pulled aside his clothing to minister to him, to the amazement of all they found a scarlet letter "A" in the skin on his chest. He had a fire in his own

JESUS BELIEVED IN

breast that had burned and burned and burned until it had burned clear through to the outside.

I don't know whether there will be any other kind of fire in hell or not, but I do know that if there is only the fire of conscience to burn, and burn, and burn, then that will be hell enough for many people. To have to live forever with a guilty conscience would be enough hell for many people. God would not have to send any coals of fire to hell to make it hot for them. They have their own hell within their own breast.

Some years ago a man came back from Texas to North Carolina and walked into the sheriff's office and confessed to murder. He told them that twenty years before he had killed a man in a quarrel, and then had fled to Texas and had been there ever since. He told them where they could find the man's grave. No one knew about this crime. In fact, the people had thought these two men had left the country together. After this man had made his confession and was being tried for his crime a young man went up to him and said, "You are the biggest fool in forty-eight states. No one knew about this crime but you, and you had kept the secret for twenty years. You could have kept it the rest of your life and lived as a free man." The old man looked at the young fellow and said, "Son, I am not as big a fool as you think. You have never had to live with a guilty conscience. I have been in hell for twenty years now, and I wanted to get out and have a little peace before I die. I had rather be in jail and have peace than to be free to roam the world with hell in my breast. I have never had a minute's peace since I killed that man, until I came back and con-

ETERNAL PUNISHMENT

fessed. You have no idea the hell I have lived in." None of us can realize what kind of hell he had passed through unless we have had somewhat the same experience. Just think of having an eternity of that and no chance of ever getting relief and peace. That would be hell enough for anyone, if there was nothing else but the fire of conscience.

However, there are other kinds of fire and they can burn just as hot and last just as long as the fire of conscience. The fire of *remorse* can burn in the human breast until it will almost dethrone your reason and drive you to suicide. In fact, many people have committed suicide just on account of the fire of remorse. Others have become mentally unbalanced in worrying over something they have done and could not rectify. The fire of remorse is one of the greatest fires known to man.

I remember sometime ago I was holding a meeting for a brother minister, and one day he asked me to go out into the country with him to make a call. As we drove out to the home the pastor told me about the man we were to call upon. He was a fine citizen and a loyal member of the church. A few days before the revival started he had accidentally run over a tramp and killed him. It was purely accidental and no charges were brought against the man. However, the pastor said to me, "We are very uneasy about him. It is preying on his mind until we are afraid he is going to break under it." I shall never forget the experience I had in that home. The wife met us at the door and her eyes were red from weeping. She was twisting a handkerchief in her hands. The man's mother

JESUS BELIEVED IN

was an invalid, seated in a wheel chair. As we sat there she wrung her hands and wept. She said, "Poor William, we are so uneasy about him. We are afraid he is going to crack under this." Finally we went up to the bedroom to see the man, and found him cringing and hiding under the covers like a scared animal. He would peep out from under the cover at us and whimper and cry like a frightened puppy. He said, "O, if I could just forget it and go to sleep. If I could just slip off into sleep for one night I believe I would get over it, but I can't sleep. Every time I close my eyes I can see him there in the road dead, with the blood oozing out of his mouth, nose and ears. I can see his eyes rolled back in his head! Just to think that I snuffed out a life and did not give him a chance to pray and get right with God! They tell he he was drunk, and no doubt he died and went to hell, and I am to blame for it. I believe it is going to drive me crazy."

As we left that home and drove back to the city, I turned to the pastor and said, "If an innocent man can suffer like that over a thing he could not help, what do you suppose hell will be like for the sinner?" Reader, can you image the anguish of a soul in outer darkness with nothing to do but think and remember all of his sins, and then realize the awful consequences of that sinful life? Can you imagine what that would be like to a father, who had lived in sin and been instrumental in his children being lost and damned forever? Can you imagine what hell will be like for a man like Hitler to have to spend eternity thinking over his sins and the consequences of his sinful, selfish life?

ETERNAL PUNISHMENT

If there was not a literal coal of fire in a million miles of him he would still have hell enough in his own breast to burn, and burn, and burn throughout the endless aeons of eternity. That would be hell enough. God would not have to lift his finger to add to that man's punishment. He has hell in his own soul. This is the kind of fire that can never be quenched. It will never go out.

Another kind of fire that does not need to be replenished is the fire of memory. Psychologists tell us that we never forget anything. It makes an indelible impression on the memory that never can be erased. You remember that Abraham said to the rich man in hell, "*Son, remember.*" He was doing just that very thing. He remembered Lazarus and his poverty. He remembered his five brethren. I imagine that was one of the things that was causing him torment. No doubt he was remembering them and his influence upon them. He at least was concerned about them and did not want them to come to that place. May I say that incidentally this man tells us why he was in hell. He was not there because he was rich. He was not there because he had failed to feed Lazarus. He said, "Perhaps if Lazarus goes back and testifies to them, they *will repent*, and not come to this place of torment." He implies that if they would repent they would not come to hell. *If he had repented* he would not have gone there. He was lost not because he was rich, but rather because he would not repent of his sins. He was like a lot of people today. He loved sin and would not give it up, and that is why he was in hell. But now he is remembering, and he does not want his five broth-

JESUS BELIEVED IN

ers to make the same fatal mistake he had made. I trust that God will use this message to save some one from making the same mistake. If you will repent of your sins and get right with God you will not go to that place.

One of the worst forms of insanity that a person can have is that kind where you get something on your mind and can't get rid of it. A person may be perfectly normal on every other point but they have something on their mind they can't throw off, and they worry about it, on and on, and on. I have had to deal with a number of such cases. I have tried to reassure them and get them to think about something else, but they would come right back to that one thing. It haunted them day and night until they became insane.

Some years ago I visited an insane asylum where they had over twenty-one hundred cases. Everywhere you went you saw people thinking and thinking. Some would be walking the floor thinking. Some would be sitting in chairs thinking. Some would be gazing out the window thinking. We went into a shop where some of the patients were working. Some of them were doing the most childish things. I said to the man who was showing us around, "What is the idea of this? These people are wasting their time doing those silly things." He turned to me and assured me that they were not wasting their time. In fact he said that was the best thing in the world for them. He told me that if they could get the patient's mind off of himself, and get him to think of something else, then there was hope for him. However, he said there were some cases that could not be helped, because they could not think of

ETERNAL PUNISHMENT

anything else but the thing that had driven them crazy. We went into what he called their worst ward and saw their worst cases. He took me into a long room where they had twenty-one bathtubs and each tub had a man in it. They were suspended on canvas and covered with canvas. There was a hole cut in the canvas just large enough for the face to stick out. Cold water was being sprayed over those patients. I asked him why they did that, and he told me these were their worst cases. He said, "They get to thinking and worrying. Their fever runs up and we have to do something to quiet them down. We put them in these tubs and let the water spray over them to cool them off and quiet them down." Then he took a thermometer out of his pocket and put it in the mouth of one of these men. We stood there and talked and he explained the treatment to us. Finally he took the thermometer out of the man's mouth and said, "Look, that man's temperature is 102 right now, and he has been in that tub for nearly two hours." I walked down that long row of tubs and looked at those poor wretches and my heart went out in pity to them. One poor fellow twisted his head around and followed me with his eyes. Finally, as I stood in the door to go, he raised up as far as he could, and with a wild look in his eye, he screamed, "I did, Mister! I did! I sure did! God knows I wish I hadn't, but I did!" I don't know what that poor wretch had done, or what he thought he had done, but whatever it was, was burning like fire in his mind, his soul, and even in his body.

As the pastor and I walked out and got in the car I turned to him and said, "I think I have a new concep-

JESUS BELIEVED IN

tion now of what hell is going to be like." Can you imagine a soul that has lived in selfishness and sin, that has gone on in sin in spite of God, the church, and mother's prayers, and then that soul being cast out into eternal darkness with nothing to do but think, think, think, think, and think forever? Memory at work, conscience at work, remorse gnawing at his soul, with no ray of light to break upon his vision and no prospects of ever being delivered. My friends, that would be hell so hot that God would never even have to look that way in order to make a soul suffer, until there would be weeping and gnashing of teeth. May God help us and deliver us from such a fate as that.

There is coming a time when all the sinners in the universe will be cast out into outer darkness and they will have to spend eternity together. All sin, discord, hate, lust, greed, jealousy, fear, suspicion and everything that is not right will be cast into one place. Can you imagine what that will be like? Would you want to spend eternity in such a place? To a person who loved light, peace, and harmony and such like, it would be hell to have to live with sin and discord forever.

Just the idea of darkness would be enough to make me want to keep away from such a place as that. I love light. There is something about darkness that depresses me. If it is too dense and I have to stay there too long it makes me feel like I am going to smother, and I catch myself about to scream for help. Can you imagine a soul that was created for light, and fellowship; a soul that liked laughter and song, and then for that soul to be cast into the outer darkness of eternal despair? If there was not one single spark of fire,

ETERNAL PUNISHMENT

then that would be too much hell for me.

I have merely made some suggestions as to what kind of fire this could be. I am not saying that this is the only fire in hell. However, the human mind is not able to picture the state and suffering of a lost soul. The best that Jesus could do was to tell us it was eternal fire, everlasting punishment, a place where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched. It is so awful that it makes me shudder to think of one single soul going there. I would even hate to think of Hitler having to go there. However, according to the teaching of Jesus Christ there will be people that will go there. God help us to do our best to keep them from going there.

I remember when I was a small boy, Dr. Plato T. Durham, one of the most eloquent and powerful preachers I ever heard, came to our church and preached on the crucifixion of Christ. I shall never forget that sermon. It made a lasting impression on my mind. I remember how he pictured Jesus in the garden sweating blood as He prayed. I remember how he pictured Him in Pilate's judgment hall with the spittle and blood on His face. I remember how he told of the scourging, until I hated the man that cut his back like that. I felt that I would like to scratch their eyes out. I remember how he pictured Him as He carried the cross out through the gates and then staggered and fell under the load. I remember how he pictured them stretching Jesus out on the cross and driving the nails through His hands and feet. I shall never forget how he described how those men lifted that cross and let it drop with a dull thud into that hole. It seemed that

JESUS BELIEVED IN

I could almost see the flesh as it tore under the impact of that jar. I remember how he pictured Him there on the cross as the hours dragged by and finally He dropped His head and gave up the ghost. I heaved a sigh of relief when He finally died.

When Doctor Durham had reached the climax of that great sermon, then he stopped and pointed down at me, as I sat on the front seat, and said, "People, if that one lost soul was this little boy, then Jesus would have endured all of that to save that little boy from hell." I was dumbfounded at that statement. I could not believe such a thing. I felt so little and unworthy that I could not believe that Jesus would have endured such suffering for a poor unworthy creature like me.

However, since I have grown up, and have studied my Bible and found out what Jesus taught about hell and eternal punishment, and since I have come to have some conception of what it will be like for a soul to be lost, then I have come to appreciate what Doctor Durham was talking about. I really believe that if there was only one lost soul in all the universe, and that soul was the worst sinner that lives today, Jesus would endure all the agonies He did endure just to save that one lost soul from hell. My friends, you will never be able to fully appreciate Calvary unless you see it against the black background of sin and the future that awaits the lost soul. God help us to see it! Jesus paid an awful price to save us from hell, but it was worth it, for to be eternally lost is an awful thing.

I am determined that by the help of the Holy Spirit I am going to do all I can to keep men from going there. I trust that God will give me a greater compassion for

ETERNAL PUNISHMENT

lost men until I will be able to snatch them as brands from the eternal burning.

O, may God use this message to wake up some church people until they will be aroused and stirred out of their indifference and unconcern! My dear reader, do you really believe what the Bible says? "The wicked shall be turned into hell and all the nations that forget God." If you do believe this surely you will arise and do something to keep people from being lost!

May the Holy Spirit use this feeble message to awaken and arouse some sinner and cause him to turn from his sins and seek the Lord! Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die! Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead and Christ shall give thee life! Seek ye the Lord, while He may be found. Call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord our God and He will abundantly pardon! Now is the accepted time! Today is the day of salvation! If you will hear what the Spirit saith unto thee, Harden not your heart as in the day of provocation! Look to Jesus and be saved! The fountain is open! The waters are being troubled! This is the time to get in! You have no assurance of tomorrow, but you do have now! Let me beg you just now turn to the Lord! Repent of your sins! Plead the merits of Christ's blood! Put your trust in Him and be saved just now! God will hear your prayers and save you just now! Only believe!

PLEASE RETURN TO MAIN MENU