

HELL!

what the Bible says about it...

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*"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall
make you free" (Jn. 8:32)*

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Scripture quotations are from the Authorised King James Version.

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1. How can we know about Hell?

“There was a certain rich man, who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, who 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 lift 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 who 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 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” (Lk. 16:19-31).

Hell, what a horrible thought!

If there is a place of eternal torment where damned souls cry in vain for water amid the flames they cannot escape forever, it is the most terrible and alarming fact in this universe! The very possibility that such a doom may await

the sinner is so shocking that no other question can compare with it in importance. How can today's feasting or hunger, clothing or nakedness, honour or infamy, pleasure or pain compare in importance with a million years of pain, torment of body, mind, and conscience? I beg the sinner to consider how worthwhile it is to know what God says about Hell.

And, fellow Christian, if one loved one of yours is in danger of the fire of Hell, how alarmed and anxious you ought to be! How earnest ought to be your entreaties, how fervent your prayers, how sleepless your efforts to save him from the **doom of lost souls!** Yes, if men are going to such a Hell that is so terrible, bonds of kinship and family ought not to be the limit of our prayers and efforts. If there is one man on this earth, even a total stranger, who may go to Hell, then every person who has any love for his fellow man, ought to have a consuming passion to rescue that poor soul! To saints and sinners alike the question of Hell becomes one of alarming importance. We ought to learn about Hell to escape it ourselves and to rescue others from it as well.

The Bible our only source of information about Hell

The only place to learn about Hell is in the Bible. Man's science knows nothing beyond death. Human experience does not reach beyond the grave. If men on earth are ever to know what is beyond this life, they must learn it from God. Heaven, Hell, rewards, punishments, happiness and sorrow beyond the grave are matters about which the Word of God is the only authority; so this book will show what the Bible says about Hell.

The Scripture which begins this booklet is what Jesus Himself said about Hell; and much more than this He said, as recorded in many places in the New Testament. Jesus Christ was the greatest preacher on Hell of all the Bible preachers. People often speak of the Lord Jesus as *the lowly Nazarene* or *the meek and lowly Jesus*. But actually,

though Jesus is the very essence of God's love made manifest in human form, His message of warning against the terrible consequences of sin was the plainest and sharpest in all the Bible.

Consider the following Scriptures, every one of them statements of the Lord Jesus about Hell:

- ☞ “But whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire” (Mt. 5:22).
- ☞ “And fear not those who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell” (Mt. 10:28).
- ☞ “As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth” (Mt. 13:40-42).
- ☞ “So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth” (Mt. 13:49-50).
- ☞ “Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?” (Mt. 23:33).
- ☞ “Then shall He say also unto those on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels” (Mt. 25:41).
- ☞ “And they shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal” (Mt. 25:46).
- ☞ “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: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life [lame],

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. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt” (Mk. 9:43-49).

The above Scriptures are all in the words of the Lord Jesus Himself. Jesus was a *Hell-fire preacher*. To Him, Hell was a fact, a horrible fact, but a necessary one. With holy indignation, He preached against sin and with solemn warning He urged men to flee from the wrath to come. Bible preachers, preachers who follow the Lord Jesus Christ, must preach about Hell.

But I call your attention again to the passage in Luke 16:19-31, quoted in the beginning of this chapter. Jesus uttered these words in the presence of men as solemn history. This is not a parable. The Bible does not call it a parable. It does not have the marks of a parable. Abraham, a historical character, is mentioned by name. Lazarus has his name given. These are not imaginary characters. No doubt the name of the lost man, too, would have been given, but the tender heart of the Saviour would not give offence to loved ones who may have heard the true account of the rich man who died and went to Hell because he did not repent.

If I do not believe this passage, I do not believe Jesus Christ. If this Scripture about Hell is not absolutely trustworthy, then I must reject the Bible as the Word of God and Jesus as the Son of God. If I could not believe what the Bible says about Hell, I could not believe what it says about Heaven, about God, about Christ, about salvation, or about right or wrong. If the Bible is proved inaccurate and unreliable on one point, then it is a human book, not divine; and the Christian religion is no better than any other man-made

religion. If the Bible is true, then I must believe what it says about Hell.

Jesus said more about Hell than did Moses, David, Isaiah, Paul, Peter, John or anybody else in the Bible. Jesus is an authority. We are compelled to take what He said. We dare not take away one word concerning the torments of a doomed soul in Hell. We cannot add one comforting fact to what Jesus said there. To tamper with this account means straight-out infidelity. If I prove any part of this teaching untrue, I have proved Jesus a human impostor, not the Son of God, and the Bible a human book, not the Word of God. If we are not to believe this story of the rich man in Hell, there is nothing we can believe about the Bible, and there is nothing left to the Christian religion. We must believe and we must take at face value what Jesus said about Hell. If we trifle at this point, we shall earn the curse of those who die unsaved, unwarned, and who go to this Hell.

Why the devil deceives people about Hell

From the garden of Eden until now the devil has been busy leading men to rebel against God and to sin. The best argument the devil can bring to get men to sin is to say that God does not punish sin. To Eve in the garden of Eden when God had said, "In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," the devil answered, "Ye shall not surely die." He made Israel believe in the days of Malachi, "It is vain to serve God," because they said, "They that work wickedness are set up; yea, they that tempt God are even delivered," and "Every one that doeth evil is good in the sight of the Lord, and He delighteth in them" (Mal. 3:14-15; 2:17).

It is the business of the devil to make men believe that sin will not be punished. If the devil can get men to believe that there is no Hell, or that Hell is the grave, or that Hell is only figurative, not a literal place, or that men in Hell will be burned up at once without much pain, or that they will have

another chance to be saved, or that, after all, God is too good to send folks to Hell; then the devil accomplishes his purpose, gets men to continue in sin, and so go to Hell. It is the devil's business to minimise or deny the Bible teaching on Hell.

After all, the modern ideas about Hell are just a part of the modernism which denies that man is inherently wicked, denies the deity of Christ, the blood atonement, and the inspiration of the Bible. Instead of direct creation of man, his fall in the garden of Eden, and the depraved hearts of all mankind which the Bible teaches, the modernist believes that man is a product of evolution and is getting better all the time. Instead of salvation by the blood of Christ, an atonement made by the Son of God for sinful men, the modernist teaches salvation by man's works and character. Instead of a Bible which is the verbally inspired Word of God picturing man as a great sinner doomed to an awful Hell, with salvation offered free by a great Saviour, the modernist follows traditions of men, theories of science and reason.

Hell is an unpopular subject. Dr. J.M. Dawson said in 1930 that "the old idea about Hell has faded out and pastors of cultured churches refuse to revive it." But a man of God who believes the Bible must preach the terrible truth, or he will be to blame for the ruin of those who lift their fruitless cries in a Hell of which they were not warned! A man who believes the Bible and seeks to please God must preach Hell.

2. Hell a literal place of torment

Those who encourage men to reject Christ sometimes say that Hell is only the grave. How foolish that is when you hear the rich man cry out in Hell, "I am tormented in this flame!" He was not simply in the grave! He wanted his brothers to repent, "lest they also come to this place of torment." Repenting would not have kept his brothers from the grave; it would keep them from Hell. Jesus spoke about Hell as a

place “where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched” (Mk. 9:48). We are told also that Hell is “a lake of fire burning with brimstone” (Rev. 19:20), and that:

“...the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whoever receiveth the mark of his name” (Rev. 14:11).

The Scriptures about Hell are so definite that any man who says Hell is the grave is either an ignoramus or a deliberate deceiver. If I had a mind to, I could talk very learnedly of *Sheol*, of *Hades*, of *Tartarus*, and of *Gehenna*. These are the Bible words in Hebrew and Greek for *Hell*. I could show that the Hebrew word *Sheol* and the Greek word *Hades*, the latter used in Luke 16:23 in the passage about the rich man in Hell – I could show that these two words might often be translated simply “the unseen state.” But Hell never means simply the grave, and the way the Lord Jesus used the word in this passage proves that certainly to Him *Hades* simply means what we mean by that old-fashioned word *Hell*, the place of the damned.

The rich man in Hell knew that he was not simply in some spiritual state, and he wanted his brothers warned “lest they also come into this **place** of torment.” Hell is literally a “place of torment” where the wicked are punished.

Hell is not a state; it is a place. Notice that throughout this book “Hell” is spelled with a capital letter, as names of other places are. If Chicago or America should begin with a capital letter, so should that city of the damned, that country of lost souls, Hell. Hell is a place!

No stops between death and Hell

Do not be deceived into thinking that a sinner will be given another chance to repent after death. The Scripture says:

“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 lift up his eyes, being in torments” (Lk. 16:22-23).

Lazarus died and immediately was carried by the angels to Paradise and found himself with the beloved ancestor, Abraham. There was no delay. There was no soul sleeping. There was no probation period for Lazarus. The Christian who dies goes immediately to the happy presence of God. When the thief on the cross died, he went with Jesus to Paradise according to the promise of Jesus in Luke 23:43.

My mother died when I was a six-year-old boy. She was conscious and happy to the last. She talked to us one by one about the Lord in Heaven, and then she smiled and said, “I can see Jesus and my baby now.” It is certain from the Bible that when a Christian dies, he goes without delay to be with God.

So with the sinner on the road to Hell. The rich man died, was buried, “and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments.” There is no evidence here of any delay in punishment. Notice that the torment of the rich man mentioned here took place during the lifetime of his brothers, not in the far distant future. When a lost man dies, he goes immediately to Hell and torment. That is the plain teaching of the Word of God.

Teaching about limbo or purgatory is unscriptural

The Roman Catholics have invented the doctrine that there is a purgatory, or limbo, an intermediate place between death and Hell. They say that after one suffers in purgatory for a time, he may then be allowed to go into Heaven. Catholic priests often teach their people that prayers, good deeds, or money paid to the priest will secure the release of loved ones in purgatory. This is a teaching founded on priestly covetousness, **without one verse of Scripture to back it up**. The Bible does not even mention limbo, purgatory nor any such place. Jesus never hinted that a man who died unsaved would ever have another chance. If you value

your soul, poor lost man, do not depend upon any mercy or hope or opportunity for salvation after death. “The rich man also died, and was buried; and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments.” That was not purgatory. That was Hell.

The rich man would have been glad to learn that there was hope of release, hope that he could be prayed out of Hell. If he could get out for good behaviour, as one does in the penitentiaries of our land, or if he could have paid his debt for sin and then passed on to Paradise with Abraham and Lazarus, that would have made the fire easier to bear. He may have had such hope. He thought one could pass between Heaven and Hell. He was told that “between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that those who would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.”

That great gulf between Hell and Paradise, or Heaven, is fixed, that is, it is permanent. **No one ever can pass from one to the other!** There is no limbo, no purgatory, no middle ground! Beyond this life there remains only an eternal Hell and an eternal Heaven, eternally separated!

Hell a place of unutterable suffering

The torment in Hell is evidently the principal point in this Scripture in Luke 16. Notice the words “being in torments” (v. 23), “I am tormented in this flame” (v. 24), and “thou art tormented” (v. 25). There is torment in Hell!

This is the only glance that God has ever given us into Hell and of the suffering there. How terrible it is! Here is a man, formerly rich, now poor. Before, he had all that his heart could desire; now he has nothing but torment. The beggar who lay at his gate full of sores on earth is now happy in Heaven. The rich man is tormented in Hell.

Conscious pain in Hell

This man in Hell is the same person that he was on earth. He has the same kind of mind. He recognised Lazarus. He

remembers his brothers. He remembers that he did not repent. He has the same bodily desires that he had on earth and longs for one drop of water to cool his tongue! He did not yet have his body in Hell, but he certainly retained bodily senses.

When the kind voice of Abraham answered from Heaven and said, "Son, remember," we can see that remembering will be one of the torments of Hell. Supposing that the rich man died and went to Hell during the lifetime of Jesus; then he has been "remembering" in Hell nearly 2000 years. He may remember every sin he committed. He may remember his base ingratitude to God. He may remember every opportunity he had to be saved and would not take. He may remember every sweet song, every mother's prayer, every wife's tear that urged him to seek the Lord. He may remember, now, one by one, the sins he was too busy to think of while he was clothed with purple and fine linen, faring sumptuously every day on this earth. Hell is a place where men are conscious, in possession of their faculties of mind, memory, and conscience.

There is no indication that this rich man in Hell loved God or wanted to do right any more now than when he died. He loved his brothers as he did on earth. His nature was not changed when he died. His soul did not sleep. There is conscious suffering in Hell.

Body and soul destroyed in Hell

The Hell where men are now is a Hell of lost souls where people are conscious and suffer while their bodies remain in the graves on earth. But at the final judgement of all the unsaved who ever lived in the world, we are told that "the sea gave up the dead who were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead who were in them" (Rev. 20:13). The bodies come from death to life so that men stand before God. Hell gives up the spirit dead while the earth gives up the physical dead, and the bodies and souls of lost men come together again. This is the time of which God speaks

when He says:

“...that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *those* in heaven, and *those* in earth, and *those* under the earth; and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:10-11).

Literal knees will bow and literal tongues will confess their sins, will be compelled to do so, before Christ and the assembled multitude. Then these people in literal bodies will be cast into the lake of fire. They will be tormented in body as well as mind. Jesus spoke of physical bodies in Hell when He said:

“And fear not those who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him who is able to destroy **both soul and body in hell**” (Mt. 10:28; emphasis added).

The devil has deceived people who do not know God's Word into believing that Hell is some indefinite, ghostly place where there might be discomfort but no actual personality, no conscious suffering, no physical torment. May God help us to see that these tortures await the doomed and damned and ruined souls who reject Christ and go to Hell!

Is there a literal fire in Hell?

We have already seen that Hell is a literal, physical place, where physical bodies will dwell. The question arises, is there literal fire in Hell? The answer of the rich man in Hell is, “I am tormented in this flame.” Again and again in the Bible we are told of the fire of Hell. Jesus often spoke of “hell fire, where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.” In Revelation 20:14-15, Hell is called “the lake of fire,” and there it is said that Hell (Hades, the spirit Hell) is to be “cast into the lake of fire,” the second death. If we believe the Word of God, then we must believe that when physical bodies leave the great white throne judgement, they must go into a place of fire.

3. Hell is eternal punishment

If a condemned soul after rejecting Christ on earth were to die and then be blotted out forever, simply cease to be, that would be a terrible punishment. When a sinner dies without Christ, it means that he misses all the glories of Heaven, the reign of Christ on earth, and eternal happiness in the presence of God. If Hell meant only to pass out of existence and miss the joy that God has prepared for those that love Him, that would be an eternal loss that no sinner could afford to risk.

Or if a sinner might stay in Hell for a little while, stay until his suffering passed beyond endurance, and then mercifully cease to be, cease to know, cease to feel, cease to suffer, and be no more, that would be a terrible Hell. Ten minutes of Hell would be so horrible that any man with any sense would dread it and want to miss it at any cost. But the awful fact is that the Hell spoken of in the Bible is an eternal Hell. I mean not only that the place itself is eternal but that men will be there forever, tormented forever. There is no other honest construction to be put upon the many, many Scriptures that talk about Hell.

The rich man is still in Hell, just as Lazarus is still in Heaven. Abraham said to the rich man, "Now he is comforted, and thou art tormented." The time element in the two cases is the same. Clearly the rich man is still in Hell.

Judgement before eternal damnation

God pledged Himself that every sinner shall come to judgement. He promised that dead bodies shall rise again:

"And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt" (Dan. 12:2).

Notice that lost people will be resurrected just as surely as the saved. The same thing is taught in John:

“Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in which all who are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; those who have done good, to the resurrection of life; and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation” (Jn. 5:28-29).

Lost people who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth to the resurrection of damnation! The rich man was buried, and in Hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments. As long as his body is in the grave, the rich man will stay in Hell. The millions in Hell cannot be brought out, cannot cease to be, for God has promised to bring them back to their bodies when the lost people who are in the graves hear the voice of Jesus and come forth!

Revelation 20 tells us when the resurrection of lost people from the grave will take place. Read these verses carefully and see that after the thousand years’ reign of Christ on earth is over, sinners shall come out of Hell; their bodies will be gathered from the sea and from the land; and in their bodies men shall stand before Christ to receive their eternal condemnation!

“And I saw a great white throne, and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead who were in them: and they were judged each one according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire” (Rev. 20:11-15).

The rich man, then, with all the other millions in Hell, must stay there, tormented in flames, remembering, remembering, until he faces Jesus on the great white judge-

ment throne. As long as you can find a skull in a museum, a skeleton in a doctor's office; as long as human bodies are yet decaying in the cemeteries; so long the souls of lost men are tormented in Hell, awaiting the resurrection of their bodies in the last great judgement day! Then the rich man's ashes will reassemble, and his soul will come out of Hell to face Jesus so that his knee can bow before Christ and his tongue can confess that Christ is Lord! At the very least, sinners cannot cease to suffer in Hell until that day.

Physical torment continues forever

If every sinner would have to suffer in Hell a few score years or hundreds of years or thousands of years until the great white throne judgement, that would be terrible enough, God knows! Every sinner could then come out of Hell, get his resurrection body, and appear before that awful court for sentence. If then he could drop into the lake of fire and his poor wicked personality be snuffed out in a moment's flame, that would be bad enough. But the Bible carefully teaches, with many scriptural statements, that sinners must live on in torment forever beyond the judgement in the lake of fire.

The terms used in the Bible about Hell and about the condemnation of lost people are not words of temporary meaning. They are words that indicate an eternity of suffering and shame. Daniel says that some shall awake "to shame and everlasting contempt" (Dan. 12:2). **Everlasting contempt!** Jesus warned against the "danger of **eternal** damnation" (Mk. 3:29). The future blessedness of a Christian and the doom of a lost man are often contrasted in the Bible, and the inference everywhere is that the one lasts as long as the other. To the one is promised *everlasting life*, and to the other *everlasting contempt*.

In Revelation 14, God gives us a vivid and fearful picture of the torment of the lost. These verses prove that people will remain in an eternal Hell of torment:

“The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: **and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night**, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name” (Rev. 14:10-11; emphasis added).

The smoke of their torment continues to rise day after day, forever and ever. If that were all, one might hope that after a sinner had been consumed with the fires of Hell and had ceased to be, the smoke should go on up and up and higher up forever. But the rest of the verse makes clear that sinners continue to suffer there forever, for it says: “And they have no rest day nor night.” This is the kind of Hell Jesus talked about when He said, “Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.” I do not know all that this Scripture means. I know that in this present world all the aches and pains of the body are caused by sin. The infections of germs, the plagues of parasites which infest the human body, the decay of cancer – all these are the result of sin. They could not have happened to a perfect Adam in the garden of Eden. It may well be that a thousand such unspeakable horrors of bodily suffering await the sinner in Hell beyond the resurrection of the unsaved dead and the last judgement day. Their suffering in the place of torment will be continuous.

Eternal torment of the Antichrist and the false prophet

As if given to prove this very point, the Bible tells us of two men, human beings like ourselves, who will be in the lake of fire with their physical bodies a thousand years. Then at the end of the thousand years, we find that they are still to be in Hell. In Revelation 19:11-21 we are told of the return of Christ in glory, and the battle of Armageddon. Verse 20 tells

us how the beast (the Antichrist) and the false prophet with him, who deceived humanity to worship the beast, will be cast alive into the lake of fire. Though John sees these events in Revelation as if past, it is clearly a prophecy of the future. Verse 20 reads:

“And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet who worked miracles before him, with which he deceived those who had received the mark of the beast, and those who had worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone” (Rev. 19:20).

The Hell into which these two men will be cast alive is a physical Hell, the lake of fire. They will be “both soul and body in hell” as Jesus said men would be (Mt. 10:28). Now read on through chapter 20 of Revelation. Read how that old serpent, the devil and Satan, is shackled a thousand years and shut up in a bottomless pit. Read how the saints will reign with Christ on the earth a thousand years. Read how when the thousand years are finished Satan shall be loosed for a little season and cause the last great rebellion against the kingdom of God.

Then read in Revelation 20:10 how the devil himself is seized at the end of the thousand years’ reign and cast into Hell. There we find that the beast and the false prophet, after a thousand years in the lake of fire, are still there. This verse says: “And the devil who deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, **where the beast and the false prophet are**, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”

Sinner, do not fool yourself, do not let Satan deceive you about this matter. As sure as the Bible is God’s Word, then just that sure there is an eternal Hell, a place of everlasting torment for the sinner who rejects Christ as his Saviour.

4. Will a loving God send a sinner to

Hell?

Infidels love to say that they, weak, sinful men would not send their children to a place like Hell, and that if God loves His children He would not condemn them to go to Hell. My answer is that unsaved sinners are not the children of God. No person is a child of God until he has been born again. Others are the children of wrath. Jesus said to the Pharisees, “Ye are of your father the devil” (Jn. 8:44). God’s children never go to Hell, but the children of the devil do.

How foolish to charge God with wrongdoing because men go to Hell. Hell is the result of men’s sins. Men go to Hell because they ought to, not because God hates them.

The wages of sin is death

Sin is a hateful subject to those who do not like the Bible teaching about Hell, but sin is the cause of Hell. The wages of sin is death. When God said to Adam in the garden of Eden, “In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die,” He had reference, not primarily to physical death, but to death of the soul. When Adam sinned, he began to die physically; but he immediately died spiritually. He became a lost soul. But for the mercy of God, he would have gone to Hell. The second death is caused, like the first death, by sin. Unless God changes all His laws in the next world, there will have to be a place where sin is punished.

Any man who cannot believe in Hell is not intelligent. He does not face the facts. He will not examine the evidence that God puts on every side of him. You who say you “cannot believe a loving God would send a sinner to Hell,” let me ask you some questions:

- ☞ Do you believe a loving God will allow sin to put a man in the hospital with a diseased body?
- ☞ Do you believe that God will allow sin to put a man in jail, with his liberty taken away for years or even for life?
- ☞ Do you believe that God does allow sinners to go to the electric chair to pay for murder? Whether you like it or

not, doesn't God allow that?

- ☞ Doesn't God allow sin to break homes, to bring disease and death and misery?
- ☞ Doesn't God allow sin to bring war with all its horrors to the nations that forget God, and death to millions? And if the same God is running things just the other side of the thin veil we call death, then you may be sure that in the next world the sinner will reap what he sows, and will get his honest wages. And every poor, wicked, Christ-rejecting, Hell-deserving sinner will come to the place of torment, reserved for those who will not repent, will not trust Christ, and will not be saved.

The man who does not believe in Hell is a wilful fool who does not want to believe what his eyes see.

“The wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23).

“Be sure your sin will find you out” (Num. 32:23).

“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatever a man soweth, that shall he also reap” (Gal. 6:7).

When you see the ruin wrought by man's sin, tell me, please, is God to blame for that? In this world, trouble, tragedy, heartache, ruin, death, are the fruits of sin. We may be sure that in the next world God's laws about sin have not changed. People go to Hell because they are sinners. The torments of Hell are the fruits of their sin. People go to Hell because they ought to go, because it is right. Hell is the place for sinners.

Punishment differs 'according to their works'

Some people are more wicked than others; so they deserve more punishment. Some had greater opportunities and have turned them down. They ought to be held more strictly accountable. The Bible teaches that they will be. Hell is hotter for some people than for others.

In Revelation 20:12 we are told that the unsaved dead will be judged according to their works: **“And the dead**

were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.” Judgement will be on the basis of what men deserve. People go to Hell because they deserve to go; some have a worse Hell because they deserve a worse Hell. They will be judged accurately according to God’s records of their works and punished in Hell accordingly.

This teaching that Hell will be more bearable for some than for others is found elsewhere in the Bible also. Jesus said that Sodom, Tyre, and Sidon would find it more tolerable in the judgement than Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, or other cities that rejected the gospel after much enlightenment (Lk. 10:10-15). The greater the enlightenment and opportunity which a sinner has, the greater his punishment will be if he rejects it:

“And that servant, who knew his lord’s will, and prepared not *himself*, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many *stripes*. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few *stripes*. For to whomever much is given, of him shall be much required; and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more” (Lk. 12:47-48).

Hell will certainly be hotter for some than for others. God always does right. We may be certain that a man who rejects Christ fifty years and with great enlightenment still resists God, will be punished more than a younger person. We may be certain that one who is reared in this enlightened land and hears the gospel all his life, and then dies without Christ, will find Hell more terrible than a heathen who had only the enlightenment of the law written in his heart, that is, his conscience, and the evidence of nature round about him that there is a God. Hell is the result of men’s sins. Greater sin makes a more terrible Hell for the sinner.

Sin continues in Hell

The torments of Hell seem to be so terrible! Would a short life of sin here earn an eternity of torment? Is God fair to keep a man forever in Hell for the sins of this life? That is an intelligent question, and there is an intelligent answer. The reason sinners must stay in Hell is because they are sinners still. Hell is not only a place of punishment for sin; it is a place where sin continues.

When the rich man lifted up his eyes in Hell, being in torments, he was still the same sinner, unchanged in character and heart. He uttered no word of sorrow for his sin. He asked Abraham for mercy, but he did not ask God for mercy. As a lost Jew, he revered the memory of Abraham, the founder of the Hebrew race, but he did not love God. He asked for water to cool his tongue, but he did not ask that his sins be forgiven. He knew that he was in Hell because he did not repent, and yet in Hell he still did not repent! He was a sinner on earth, and he remained the same in Hell.

There is every reason to believe that in Hell there will be an abandonment to wickedness such as is not possible on this earth. On earth there are many restraining influences, many holy and blessed impulses which will never affect any person in Hell. Here there are Christian people on every side to restrain the sinner, to warn him. There he will be forever in the presence of those who hate God.

In Hell he will never hear a gospel sermon or a sacred song. There the influence of respectability will be lacking and we may be sure that people in Hell will give themselves over to unbridled sin forever. It seems almost certain that their wicked hearts will grow more wicked. The most terrible thing about Hell is that it is a place of sinning as well as sinners. Sinners themselves continue to make Hell what it is.

No honour or virtue in Hell

Thousands of men go to Hell who in this world call themselves honest men. Remember that paying grocery bills

does not make one a Christian. Jesus said, “Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again” (Jn. 3:7). We may be sure that no man in Hell would remain an honest man very long when every motive for virtue and honesty is gone.

Thousands upon thousands of virtuous women, chaste wives and mothers it may be, will be in Hell. Human virtues are not enough to save the soul, “for there is no difference: for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” Christ is the only way of salvation. But we may well believe that virtuous women will not remain virtuous and chaste in Hell. Hell will be given over to the unsaved, and the leading spirits there are “dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie” (Rev. 22:15). When every restraining influence of respectability, and example, and the Holy Spirit, and good advice is gone, there will be no virtue in Hell, no honesty, no goodness.

Preachers have misrepresented Hell

There are preachers, among them good men, who picture sinners in Hell repenting, loving God, begging for forgiveness, and picture God as laughing and mocking at their torment. That is not the Bible teaching about the people in Hell, or about God. The rich man in Hell was sorry to reap what he had sown. He wanted mercy for his body, but he did not seek for forgiveness of his sins. On the other hand, Abraham, speaking for God in this case, did not laugh at the rich man’s torment nor mocked his cries. Instead, Abraham said with tender sadness, “Son, remember...”

When evil catches up with the sinner, then wisdom, even his own common-sense, laughs at the sinner’s calamity and mocks when his fear comes (Prov. 1:20-27). We may be sure that this is true about sinners in Hell. But God does not rejoice over their torment; and the reason sinners are left in Hell is that they have the same rebellion, the same wickedness, the same unbelief that they had here on earth,

intensified by the environment of Hell, unrestrained by a single godly influence.

Can you see why sinners who reject Christ, deliberately choose evil instead of good, and then when they go to Hell continue in sin; can you see why they should continue to be punished? Sinners in Hell make their own Hell. People go to Hell because they deserve it. They stay there for the same reason. Punishment continues because sin continues in Hell.

Sinners would be miserable in Heaven

Suppose sinners should go to Heaven or should come back to the glorified new earth where Christ and God the Father will reign forever with the saved. There all the millions of angels and the millions of the redeemed will be praising Christ; but these despise Christ, some of them crucified Him, and all of them turned Him down. "We will not have this man to reign over us," they said. In the heavenly world there would be no room for lust or drunkenness or covetousness or lies; all these wicked went to Hell because they loved such things. Sinners would be miserable in the presence of a God that they did not love, living according to rules which only the good would enjoy. Heaven would be a Hell to the sinner.

Sinners would ruin Heaven for others

In fact, sinners would make Heaven a Hell for everybody else. Sinners, let out of Hell, would covet the golden paving of the heavenly Jerusalem, the pearls which make her gates, and the precious stones which are the foundations of her walls. For their own greed they would destroy the Paradise of God if they could. Sinners, let out of Hell with their vile hearts still unchanged, would lust after the angels as did the men of Sodom. Remember that the men of Sodom are in Hell and that Sodom was destroyed for such sin. Such sinners would defile and taint Heaven. They would make the new Heaven and the new earth like the old one.

If there were no Hell...

Suppose one fine day I wake up in Heaven and all my loved ones are there. As I settle down to enjoy my wonderful mansion in Heaven, there comes a ring on the doorbell and I find the angel Gabriel waiting for me. "John, get your Bible. The Lord wants to send you out on an evangelistic tour," he tells me.

"Well," I say hesitantly, "I thought I would get to rest with my family now. I thought the fight was all over. But bless God, Jesus died for me and I will preach for Him a million years if He will let me." So I take my Bible and get ready to leave with the angel Gabriel.

Meantime he explains, "Well, all the sinners you know, are up in Heaven. God was too good to send any sinners to Hell so they are all here and they need preaching mighty bad." As I go out the front door with the angel Gabriel, with my Bible under my arm, ready for an evangelistic tour, Gabriel turns and warns me sharply, "Don't ever leave your door unlocked! Remember, every thief, every bum, every crook and burglar that ever lived on earth is in Heaven now. Lock your door!"

Rather startled, I turn and lock the door, and Gabriel continues, "And that reminds me, don't you have some lovely daughters?" "Boy, you ought to see my six girls with their long, lovely hair!" I say. "Well, don't let them out at night unescorted. They must be warned to keep themselves very carefully. Remember that Heaven is now a city of criminals. God was too good to send any sinner to Hell, and so all those wicked Sodomites who would have raped the angels are now in the streets of Heaven, and every lustful man who ever betrayed and seduced an innocent girl is here, so take good care of your girls!"

By this time my eyes are misty and I am feeling the keenest disappointment. This is not the kind of Heaven I was looking forward to! But bravely, taking my Bible, I start down the street. Here we are interrupted by a funeral pro-

cession; for if there are sinners in Heaven, there will be death. We find policemen on every corner because with all the unregenerate sinners who hate God and would not turn to Christ, of course Heaven would be filled with crime unless carefully policed. As we go down the street we pass a great jail, for where sinners are, there must be jails. Soon I hear the cry of a newsboy, "All about the war! Hitler's war in Heaven. Towns wiped out and now in flames. Thousands homeless. Millions under arms, and other millions dead." Oh yes, of course, if God were too good to send sinners to Hell, then Hitler would be in Heaven and with him would be war and murder and misery.

God in Heaven, is that possible? No! Thank God, that is not a true picture. I am sorry that sinners reject Christ, and sorry that they must go to Hell, but with all my soul I thank God that one day there will be a place where every wicked, Christ-rejecting sinner will be shut out, and those that love God can at long last have peace, sweet peace!

If God did not send sinners to Hell, then there could be no real Heaven for God or saints or angels. But there is a Heaven and so there must be a Hell, and the only way Heaven can be the place of joy and peace it is promised to be, is that there must be a Hell to confine sinners.

What does God say about that blessed home of the saints in eternity? In that heavenly place, we are told by the beloved John in Revelation 21 that:

"...God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things have passed away" (Rev. 21:4).

That could only be a world without sin. The lovely perfection of a redeemed earth, as told in Revelation 21 and 22, would not be possible if sinners were there! An earth cursed by sin must bring forth thorns and thistles; it would be infested with ravenous beasts and germs of decay and disease. There must be no sinners on the new earth. There

must be no sinner to contaminate the holiness of the presence of God and take the joy from the hearts of Christians in the presence of God.

Do you see why sinners must go somewhere else besides Heaven? There, thank God, we will be done with sin! If God should empty Hell into Heaven, there would be no more Heaven. That world, like this, would be a vale of tears. It would be a place of sin, suffering and broken hearts. Would you have Heaven a place of lies, deceit, envy, strife, hatred, covetousness, drunkenness, and lust? Then a good God must keep sinners out of Heaven.

It is the providence of a good God that one day those who hate God and love sin, those who will not be born again, those who follow darkness instead of light, rebels against the Father and haters of His Son, will be taken away and will no more tempt the children of God nor bring them grief and pain. Matthew says:

“The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and those who do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear” (Mt. 13:41-43).

It is the providence of a wise and good God that those who will not themselves enter into joy and peace everlasting, may be segregated in Hell. If they will not have a Saviour from sin, at least God must see that they do not make Hell for a whole universe by their sin.

5. Keeping people out of Hell

How profoundly moved a Christian ought to be when he thinks of Hell and the millions who go there! It is little wonder that the modern Christians got away from the burden and passion for the salvation of sinners. They have forgotten the Bible teaching on Hell. The preachers have explained away the torments of the damned! What a

compelling motive we have for prayer, for preaching, for soul winning when we learn that every human being who leaves this world without a definite change in heart, immediately lifts his eyes in Hell, tormented in flames!

The motive of saving sinners from Hell moved Paul, the apostle. He was so troubled because his kinsmen, the Jews, were in danger of Hell, that he could honestly say: "For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh" (Rom. 9:3). In Ephesus he warned everyone day and night with tears.

He realised the doom of a soul; it never left him! Day after day he toiled, working far into the night to teach people to repent. Paul did not have any different gospel from what we have; he just had a deeper concern for the salvation of sinners. With him it was a holy passion, practically the only concern of his life. To see sinners saved from Hell, it was almost worth to Paul being himself accursed from Christ.

May God grant that this book may print in the hearts of Christians a holy fear concerning Hell so that they will snatch their loved ones out of the fire itself!

Man's duty to man

Lay aside for a moment every consideration of duty to God. Forget, if you will, every command of God's Word to win souls. Even yet it remains that if you love your fellow man, you ought to win men to Christ and so save their souls from an eternal Hell. No excuses are good here.

You would not wait to be formally introduced to someone before you would put up a ladder to a burning building where they were held captive at an upper window. Good men would not leave to paid lifeguards the business of throwing a rope to the drowning. To leave this matter of saving souls to the preachers is not only heartless; it is inexorably wicked.

God pity us, we preachers ourselves are all too guilty! We are concerned too much with a hundred details to have tears and efforts for sinners!

How Jesus valued a soul

Jesus said:

“For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Mk. 8:36-37).

My soul is worth more than the world! And the soul of every poor sinner is worth to him just as much as mine is to me, worth more than the whole world. Sinner, everything is lost if your soul is lost. That is one way Jesus had of measuring the value of a soul.

But the best measure of how Jesus felt about this is that He died for sinners. If you ever doubt that there is a real, a terrible, a burning and eternal Hell, just go back and read again the story of Christ in the garden of Gethsemane, of Christ on Calvary's cross. If there is not a Hell, then the bloody sweat in the garden was wasted. If there is not a Hell, then the shame, the spitting, the plucking out of His beard, the crown of thorns, the cat-o'-nine-tails upon His back were worse than useless! If there were not an awful Hell to save sinners from, then the horrible death that Jesus died after hours of agony on the cross was not worth while.

Jesus knew the torments of Hell, and that is the only reason that makes His death for sinners logical and reasonable. Knowing the doom of condemned sinners, it is no wonder that Jesus interrupted His sleep to win Nicodemus, did without food to win the people of Samaria, yea, even stopped dying in His torment on the cross long enough to save the thief!

Dear Christian, if you have any kinship to the Saviour, if your heart is concerned about the things which move His heart, then I beg you, help keep sinners out of Hell!

How can you live with loved ones unsaved?

In a revival service at Shamrock, Texas, a young woman arose and with sobs and tears told how her husband was unsaved. “When I want other things, I go after them,” she

said, "and I have decided this morning that I want my husband saved more than anything else in the world." The next day I went to the home of the young couple for lunch. After the meal, "Miss Jessie," as she was commonly known, brought the Bible and said in the presence of her husband, "Brother Rice, Charles is not a Christian. I want you to read and pray with him now that he will be saved." We read the Scriptures and I prayed for the young man. I urged upon him his duty and his danger, but he did not trust the Lord.

As we arose from the table, the young husband prepared to take his wife to the store where she worked and to go to his own labour. But Miss Jessie said, "Charles, I am not going to work this afternoon. You tell Mr. Forbis that I will not be there." Puzzled, and very grave, the young man went to his job. As I departed, the wife said with tears, "Brother Rice, how could I stand behind a counter, measure goods, sell hose, ribbons or gloves, knowing that my husband is lost and may die at any moment and go to Hell? I must get hold of God today. My husband must be saved!"

That night when Charles came home, his wife called him to supper. There was only one plate on the table. Somewhat disturbed, the young husband asked no questions. When he wanted to rest in the evening, Miss Jessie said, "No, Charles, you must go with me to church." And he did.

That night I preached the best I could, but Charles did not come. Others were saved, the last pleading verse of the invitation was sung, but he did not come! We stood about afterwards and talked and prayed until finally all were gone home but a few. Big Jeff Mankins stood ready to pull the light switch in the tabernacle. The janitor was ready to lock the door. Miss Jessie stood in the centre of the floor weeping. When Charles suggested, "Honey, we had better go," she simply shook her head and sobbed the more. I saw him walk about here and yonder, distressed and troubled, until finally when I laid my hand on his arm, he burst into tears. I will never forget how he came up behind his young wife,

put his arms around her and said, “Jessie, I will settle it tonight!” She won her husband’s salvation because she put it first. She realised a little of the terrible danger and condemnation of a lost soul.

Millions of people go to Hell because fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, wives, husbands, neighbours, care little and do nothing about their welfare, their eternal destiny. May God lay this on your heart today. If there is someone you might keep out of Hell, do it today.

Rescue the perishing, care for the dying,
Snatch them in pity from sin and the grave;
Weep o’er the erring one, lift up the fallen,
Tell them of Jesus the mighty to save.

6. Who goes to Hell and how to miss it

Do many people go to Hell? Yes, Jesus teaches that there are far more people who die unsaved and go to Hell than there are Christians who go to Heaven:

“Enter ye in the strait gate: for wide *is* the gate and broad *is* the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be who go in thereat: because strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Mt. 7: 13-14).

The gate to Hell is wide and the road is broad. Many people follow the road to perdition! The gate to life is strait, that is, tight, and the way is narrow, and Jesus says there are few that find it! Most people, then, are going to Hell. One who reads this ought to be alarmed and make the more certain that he does not go unawares into Hell.

Surprised to wake up in Hell

We may be sure that most of the people in Hell did not expect to go there. Certainly the rich man did not. He thought Lazarus ought still to be his servant. He was startled to find himself in flames! Jesus told about some people who

expect to be saved but who will be condemned:

“Not everyone that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father who is in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name? And in Thy name have cast out devils? And in Thy name done many wonderful works? And then I will profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity” (Mt. 7:21-23).

Many places in the Bible tell where tares are mixed with wheat, where good fish are with bad, where lost people mix themselves with Christians and even deceive themselves. The Pharisee who went into the temple to pray (Lk. 18:9-14), thanking God that he was a better man than the publican, was doubtless surprised when he went to Hell. He thought he was good! Did he not fast two days a week. Was he not a leader in public prayer? Was he not a churchgoer? Was he not an honest man, paying all his debts? He even tithed all his income, as he reminded the Lord! Yet he was a lost sinner, and unless he repented before he died, he is now in Hell! It becomes very clear, then, from God’s Word, that multitudes go to Hell who did not expect to go there. Friends, I beg you, do not be deceived by Satan. Don’t face the terrible surprise of waking up in Hell.

Wicked and unregenerate hearts

Unsaved people are always wicked. Men are not willing to believe that, but the Bible constantly affirms that it is so. The wife may believe that her lost husband is “such a good man.” God alone sees his heart, and He says, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” (Jer. 17:9).

The fond father and mother in doting blindness may speak of their “dear innocent child.” Many a mother has talked to me about her wonderful child, saying, “Why, Brother Rice, he never did anything wrong in his life!” That is a direct contradiction of the Word of God which says that:

“There is **none** righteous, no not one” (Rom. 3:10).

“For **all** have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23).

“All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned **every one** to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all” (Is. 53:6).

The rich man deserved to go to Hell. He was a sinner. Outwardly he may have been moral, upright, intelligent, loveable. In his heart, where God alone could see, he was a deliberate, malicious, wilful, continual, unrepentant sinner against God.

Remember those were refined, educated, cultured, religious, praying men who condemned Christ to be crucified. They were “wolves in sheep’s clothing.” What Jesus said about them in Matthew 23 perfectly describes the heart of the best “moral man” who has not trusted Christ.

“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead *men’s* bones, and of all uncleanness. Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity” (Mt. 23:27-28).

Those who have not had a change of heart may appear to us moral or clean or good, but they are only so outwardly. God, who knows the hearts of all men, here pictures to us the unsaved heart. It was for this reason that Jesus said to Nicodemus:

“Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God” (Jn. 3:3).

So that there could be no misunderstanding, Jesus repeated twice more in the same conversation the requirement that all men must be born again to ever see the kingdom of God! Has the Holy Spirit regenerated your heart and can you indeed testify that everything has become new?

Lost men love darkness, hate light, choose sin, reject Christ

Jesus gave a very clear picture of why sinners must turn and believe in Christ or be forever condemned. He said:

“And this is the condemnation, that light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be re-proved” (Jn. 3:19-20).

The best proof of any man's wicked heart is the fact that he has not turned to Christ. The only honest reason any man could ever give for not coming to Jesus is that he loves his sin and will not come to Christ, **the Light**, lest his sin should be re-proved.

Men without God may be cultured, may be pleasant, may be courteous and refined; but they certainly are not good. They are bad by choice. The lost man's heart is wicked, deliberately wicked, wicked enough to hate Christ, the Light. Men reject Christ purposely, loving sin. Without being converted such wicked sinners must go to Hell.

Let me press on your heart another saying of Jesus concerning the wickedness of men. He says:

“No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (Mt. 6:24).

We are told here that the man who does not love Christ hates Him. The man who does not hold to Christ despises Him. Few men anywhere would admit that they hate Christ or that they despise Him; but God's Word here tells us that all men who are unsaved and therefore holding to Satan and serving him, are the bitter enemies of the Son of God, hating and despising Him! They have taken sides with those who have rejected God's Son.

By nature and by choice men are wicked, enemies of

God, children of wrath, headed towards Hell. Men, then, must repent, must turn to Christ for mercy and pardon and a new heart if they are to escape the fires of Hell.

'Moral' people go to Hell

Jesus did not say that the morals of the rich man were worse than others. All that is said about the rich man's life on earth is this: "There was a certain rich man, who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day" (Lk. 16:19).

That verse does not say that he was any more covetous than others. It is not said that he mistreated or refused to aid the beggar. The Scripture does not say that the rich man committed adultery, or murder, that he gambled, or drank, or swore. His trouble was inside. Like unsaved men, women, and children everywhere, he had a wicked heart. In his secret heart, he was against God.

Men by the thousands go to Hell who outwardly are moral and upright.

Be sure to remember, too, that the rich man did not go to Hell because he was rich. Hell has more poor men than rich men, we may be sure; and the Bible clearly teaches that Abraham, David, and many other rich people will be in Heaven.

In Hell because he did not repent

The rich man himself knew why he went to Hell. He pled that Abraham might send Lazarus to testify to his five brothers, "lest they also come into this place of torment." In the conversation he said, "If one went unto them from the dead, they will **repent**!" The rich man knew that if his brothers were to escape Hell, they must repent. He went to Hell because he did not repent.

What was true of this rich man and his brothers, is true of every man, for Jesus says twice, "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Lk. 13:3, 5).

It is repent or perish for every sinner in the world! Sinners, you must turn, or burn!

How shall I repent?

Repentance means to change your mind and heart; to turn from sin in the heart, towards the Lord Jesus. To repent includes trusting Christ. Trusting Christ includes repentance. You could not truly turn from sin in the heart without turning towards Christ, without trusting Him.

The rich man had a wicked heart, as does every person born in this world. He loved his sin and did not turn from it towards Christ. That is why he went to Hell. Everyone who reads this, then, may be sure that unless you have turned to Jesus Christ, trusting Him to change your heart and forgive your sins, you are condemned to Hell. Turn, turn today, before you find yourself where the rich man is, tormented in flames.

You need not be lost

My own heart has been deeply stirred and burdened as I have talked to you about Hell. But one blessed fact comes back to my mind again and again; nobody need go to Hell! The heart of God is concerned about sinners. He does not want a single soul to be lost:

“For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved” (Jn. 3:17).

“The Lord is... not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance (2 Pet. 3:9).

Sinner, you need not go to Hell; God wants you saved. Let us look again and find new meaning in that “little Gospel,” in John 3:16:

“For God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”