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THE TERRORS OF HELL

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“So it will be at the end of the age; the angels shall come forth, and take out the wicked from among the righteous, and will cast them into the furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”—Matthew 13:49-50

THE doctrine of hell is one of the most neglected doctrines in all of Scripture. When hell is mentioned today, it is generally ridiculed, as if the whole idea of hell were so old-fashioned that only the naive and ignorant would really believe that such a place actually exists. This is not hard to understand. Natural men hate the idea of being held accountable for their lives to a holy God, because they love sin and do not wish to part with it. The carnal mind throws up objection after objection to the idea of hell because it does not want to face the reality of it. Men live their lives thinking that maybe if they ignore a difficulty long enough, it will go away. Even conservative religious leaders are now attacking hell. Let men do what they will, the frivolous objections of the foolish will not do away with hell.

Amid the clamor to annihilate hell, those who believe the Bible to be true must stand and speak. Your consideration of the terrors of hell may be one of the most important things you can do in this life. “Then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head” (Eze 33:4). Please, I implore you, invest the time it takes to read this booklet to the end.

Why should we be so concerned about hell? Why should we spend time reading about hell? There are several reasons why it is profitable to do so:

- 1) Hearing about the terrors of hell may shock your conscience and awaken you out of your false security.
- 2) Hearing about hell helps to deter men from committing sin. Both the godly and the ungodly are persuaded not to sin as much when they are regularly reminded of the terrors of hell.
- 3) Hearing about the terrors of hell may help to awaken those among us who may think they are saved because they believe in Christ or the facts of the Gospel—but who are not really saved and are on their way to hell, but don’t know it.
- 4) Preaching the doctrine of hell is profitable to both the godly and the ungodly alike, as will be demonstrated.

Why aren’t people fearful of hell? There seems to be a real lack of fear today of the reality of hell. This applies to both those who are in the church and those who are in the world. People are not afraid of hell. Why? You would not be afraid of a lion when it is only painted in a picture upon a wall. Why is this? Because it is only a picture. You know that it is not real. But if you were left alone in a jungle and came face to face with a real lion that growled ferociously at you, you would be terrified. The consciences of men are much like the man who only views the painted lion. We hear of hell in the Bible. We know that the Lord Jesus spoke of hell. In fact, Christ spoke more of hell than anyone else in the Scriptures.

Why do men not believe hell is real? Because they do not hear enough about it. We don’t study what the Scriptures say about hell. It is not just what we hear that makes up what we believe, it is also what we *don’t* hear that helps to form our belief system. Only the Spirit of God can present the terrors of hell to our hearts in such a way as to see them alive before us. The doctrine of hell has been used by God more often to the conversion of sinners than any other doctrine in the Scriptures. Pray now that as you read this booklet, the Holy Spirit will set hell before you as real indeed.

The Necessity of Hell

Most who scoff at hell today probably do so for several reasons. Primary among them is a desire to pursue their own paths of sin without having their consciences troubled about the consequences of their actions. They do not want to hear that what they are doing is wrong. They do not want to hear that their sin will be punished. I can hear someone say, “But isn’t eternal torment in hell inconsistent with a merciful and loving God? How could a good God punish people in hell for-

ever?” A misunderstanding of the character of God and the nature of sin can easily lead to such questions. Why is hell necessary? Let us examine several reasons for the necessity of hell.

1) The Great Evil in Sin and the Holiness of God

The difficulty most people have in understanding the necessity of hell is related to an incomplete and inadequate understanding of both how awful sin is and how glorious God is. We do not see what a great evil is in the least sin, nor do we understand God’s holiness, His justice, and His wrath. If we saw sin as the greatest evil in the world and realized that every sin is a rejection of God’s rule over us—a sneering at Him, a shaking of our fist in His face, and a hurling of dung at Him—we would begin to understand a small bit of what our sin is like to God. Every time we sin, we set either ourselves, or a pet lust, up in our hearts as a rival god. Sin rejects the Creator as God and sets up the creature in His place.

If we could comprehend God’s holiness and what it means to be holy, pure, perfect, upright, and untainted by the least sin, we would have a better idea of why God hates sin so much. Absolute holiness cannot tolerate the least sin, “Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity” (Hab 1:13). If we could understand the glorious holiness and purity of God and also the abominable nature of sin more, then we would have no problem with the absolute necessity of hell.

“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” (Jer 17:9). The human heart is sick. The human heart is wicked. The human heart is deceitful. The corruption in the heart causes us to be deceived about the awfulness of sin as well as many other things.

2) God’s Infinite Nature

In understanding what our sin is really like, we must view it through the eyes of God. God is an infinite, eternal Being. Every act of sin is committed against an infinite, holy God. In every act of sin we dethrone God and set ourselves above God. In every sin this question is the issue, “Whose will shall be done, God’s will or man’s? Now, man by sin sets his own will above the Lord’s, and so kicks God as filth under his feet.”¹ A single act of sin committed against a holy, *infinite* God deserves *infinite* punishment. It is an infinite evil to offend an infinite God even once.

3) Divine Justice

Even one sin against God calls for God to vindicate His name and His justice by punishing it as fully as it deserves. God can and will vindicate His justice. He promises to do so in Romans 12:19, where it says: “Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord.” One of the greatest preachers that ever lived, Jonathan Edwards, wrote, “The glory of God is the greatest good; it is that which is the chief end of creation; it is of greater importance than anything else. But this is one way wherein God will glorify Himself, as in the eternal destruction of ungodly men He will glorify His justice. Therein He will appear as a just governor of the world. The vindictive justice of God will appear strict, exact, awful, and terrible, and therefore glorious.”²

A Description of Hell

Hell is a furnace of unquenchable fire, a place of everlasting punishment, where its victims are tormented in both their bodies and their minds in accordance with their sinful natures, their actual sins committed, and the amount of spiritual light given to them that they rejected. Hell is a place from which God’s mercy and goodness have been withdrawn, where God’s wrath is revealed as a terrifying, consuming fire, and men live with unfulfilled lusts and desires in torment forever and ever.

In Matthew 13:47-50, the Lord Jesus tells a parable relating to the Judgment. In verses 49-50, the Lord describes the fate of the wicked: “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.”

In examining these words of the Lord Jesus, we should first notice that hell is described as being a furnace of fire. Nebuchadnezzar’s furnace was heated seven times hotter than normal and is described as a “burning fiery furnace” (Dan 3:23). John the Baptist spoke of “unquenchable fire,” and Revelation describes hell as “a lake of fire burning with brimstone” (Rev 19:20). Can we really imagine the horror of which these words speak? Imagine every part of your body on fire at the same time, so that every fiber of your being felt the intense torment of being burned. How long could you endure such punishment? Christ tells us that “there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.” The lost will wail and gnash their teeth from having to endure the most intense pain and suffering they have ever felt as the flames consume them and constantly burn every part of their bodies. And there will be no relief.

Jonathan Edwards describes in graphic language what the fires of hell will be like: “Some of you have seen buildings on fire; imagine therefore with yourselves, what a poor hand you would make at fighting with the flames, if you were in the midst of so great and fierce a fire. You have often seen a spider or some other noisome insect, when thrown into the midst

¹ Thomas Shepard (1605-1649), *The Works of Thomas Shepard*, Volume 1, (New York: AMS Press, 1967) p. 94.

² Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758), *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, Volume 2, (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1974) p. 87.

of a fierce fire, and have observed how immediately it yields to the force of the flames. There is no long struggle, no fighting against the fire, no strength exerted to oppose the heat, or to fly from it; but it immediately stretches forth and yields; and the fire takes possession of it, and at once it becomes full of fire. Here is a little image of what you will be in hell, except you repent and fly to Christ. To encourage yourselves that you will set yourselves to bear hell-torments as well as you can, is just as if a worm that is about to be thrown into a glowing furnace, should swell and fortify itself, and prepare itself to fight the flames.”³

Hell is also described as a place of darkness. The Lord tells us of the guest without wedding clothes who was cast “into outer darkness” (Mat 22:13). Jude writes of those in hell for “whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever” (Jude 13). Christopher Love says in his work *Hell's Terrors*: “darkness is terrible, and men are more apt to fear in the dark than light: hell is therefore set forth in so terrible an expression, to make the hearts of men tremble; not only darkness, but the blackness of darkness.”⁴

Hell is compared to Tophet in Isaiah 30:33. Tophet was the place where the idolatrous Jews sacrificed their children to the heathen god Molech by casting them into the fire. Day and night shrieks and howls were heard in that place, as day and night shrieks, howls, and wailing are heard in hell.

Isaiah speaks of “the breath of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone” setting hell ablaze (Isa 30:33). There is good evidence from the Scriptures that God Himself will be the fire in hell. Hebrews 12:29 says, “our God is a consuming fire.” The ungodly on earth ignorantly dance for joy when they hear pastors speak about the love and mercy of God, but they will be the beneficiaries of neither unless they repent. To them God will be an all consuming fire. Hebrews 10:30-31 warns: “For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense [repay].” And again, “The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful [terrifying] thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” It is a fearful thing, it is a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God!

You shall not escape hell, sinner. God will be your hell and His wrath will consume you and be poured upon you as long as He exists. “Who knoweth the power of thine anger?” (Psa 90:11). It is because God Himself will be the fire in hell that words cannot possibly express the terrors of the damned in hell. “There is no reason to suspect that possibly ministers set forth this matter beyond what it really is, that possibly it is not so dreadful and terrible as it is pretended, and that ministers strain the description of it beyond just bounds...We have rather reason to suppose that after we have said our utmost, all that we have said or thought is but a faint shadow of reality.”⁵

In Luke 16:19-26, Christ tells us of two men. One of them was rich (he has traditionally been called Dives); the other man was poor (his name was Lazarus). Both men died. The poor man was carried by angels to heaven and the rich man went to hell. The rich man did not go to hell because he was rich, nor did the poor man go to heaven simply because he was poor. The Lord shows us through this contrast that our circumstances may change drastically when we pass from time into eternity. We are not to be fooled that just because God may not have dealt harshly with us here, that He will not do so after death. The eternal abiding place of both men resulted from the condition of their hearts before God while they were on earth. Lazarus was a true follower of God; Dives was not. We want to carefully note what the Scriptures tell us about Dives and his condition, for from that we may learn much about hell.

Verses 23-24 indicate to us that Dives is “in torments.” What does it mean to be “in torments”? This torment refers to both torment in body and torment in soul as well. As we have seen, men’s bodies will be tormented in a furnace of fire. Every part of the body will feel the pain of that fire. Men with severe stomach pains can be in great agony from that alone, but this pain will be far greater. Death from cancer is sometimes said to cause extreme pain in the body, but the pain of hell will be far worse. If your body were afflicted with many different and painful diseases all at the same time, you still would not begin to approach the pain of the damned in hell.

Men’s consciences shall be in torment in hell as well. Conscience is the worm that will not die, which the Scriptures speak of (Mar 9:48; Isa 66:24). Dives is told to “remember...in thy lifetime.” Men will be tormented with extreme pain, but they will also be tormented by their own memories. They will remember hearing of hell and scoffing at it. They will remember being warned and told to repent, or told that accepting the blessings of heaven without submitting to Christ as Lord falls short of salvation—but they took no heed to those warnings. They will be tormented by seeing at a distance the glories of heaven (as Dives was able to do), and knowing that for all eternity they will be damned. They will be tormented by unfulfilled desires and unfulfilled lusts (Dives is not able to receive even a drop of water to cool his tongue). They will be tormented by the knowledge that they will never escape from hell (Dives is told that “neither can [you] pass to us”). They will be tormented by the cries, shrieks, and curses of the damned around them. The most extreme torments a man can experience on earth will be like flea bites compared to the torments of hell.

Jonathan Edwards speaks of men unable to find even a moment of relief in hell in his sermon on *The Future Punishment of the Wicked*: “Nor will they ever be able to find anything to relieve them in hell. They will never find any resting place there; any secret corner, which will be cooler than the rest, where they may have a little respite, a small abatement of the extremity of their torment. They never will be able to find any cooling stream or fountain, in any part of that world of

³ Ibid, p. 82.

⁴ Christopher Love (1618-1651), *Hell's Terrors*, (London: T. M., 1653) p. 19.

⁵ Jonathan Edwards, *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, Volume 2, (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1974) p. 884.

torment; no, nor so much as a drop of water to cool their tongues. They will find no company to give them any comfort, or do them the least good. They will find no place, where they can remain, and rest, and take breath for one minute: for they will be tormented with fire and brimstone, and they will have no rest day nor night forever and ever.”⁶

The Eternity of Hell

The most terrifying aspect of all about hell is its length or duration. Hell is eternal. Hell will last forever. Can you comprehend eternity? No mathematical equation or formula can explain it. Your mind cannot conceive of eternity, but it is none the less real. This aspect of hell alone should cause men to cry out in repentance. It is not surprising that skeptics of all ages have attacked the eternal nature of hell, substituting doctrines like the annihilation of the wicked in its place. Let us look at the Scriptures to verify the eternal nature of hell and to try and understand eternity better. Then we will explore why hell must be eternal.

“And the devil that 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” (Rev 20:10). This verse clearly gives us the duration of hell. Hell is forever and ever. How could a stronger, more certain expression be used? If the Spirit of God wanted to communicate the eternal nature of hell to men, what could communicate it better than the expression “for ever and ever?” The Scripture has no higher expression that is used to denote eternity than “for ever and ever,” for it is the very phrase used to tell us of the eternal existence of God Himself, as in Revelation 4:9: “to him that [sits] on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever.” Does anyone doubt that God will live to all eternity? How then can you doubt that hell will not last to all eternity, when the same expression is used for both?

“We can conceive but little of the matter; but to help your conception, imagine yourself to be cast into a fiery oven, or a great furnace, where your pain would be as much greater than that occasioned by accidentally touching a coal of fire, as the heat is greater. Imagine also that your body were to lie there for a quarter of an hour, full of fire, and all the while full of quick sense; what horror would you feel at the entrance of such a furnace! And how long would that quarter of an hour seem to you! And after you had endured it for one minute, how overbearing would it be to you to think that you had to endure the other fourteen! But what would be the effect on your soul, if you knew you must lie there—enduring that torment to the full—for twenty-four hours...for a whole year...for a thousand years! Oh, then, how would your hearts sink, if you knew, that you must bear it forever and ever! That there would be no end! That after millions of millions of ages, your torment would be no nearer to an end, and that you never, never should be delivered! But your torment in hell will be immensely greater than this illustration represents.”⁷

Christ, describing the great Day of Judgment, tells of the separation of the wicked and the righteous using these words: “And these shall go away into *everlasting* punishment: but the righteous into life *eternal*” (Mat 25:46). Is there anyone who would deny that heaven exists eternally? Will the lives of the blessed in heaven be brought to an end one day? Of course not. But the same Greek word is used here in this verse to speak of the eternal life of the righteous and the everlasting punishment of the wicked. Hell will last as long as heaven does.

In hell there will be different degrees of torment appointed to men, as indicated by a number of Scriptures. Luke 12:47-48 says: “And that servant, which 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.” Christ says in Matthew 11:24: “But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.” The verses in Matthew indicate that the people in Capernaum will receive a greater punishment on Judgment Day than those who had lived in Sodom. The verses in Luke speak of a differentiation in judgment based on the amount of light received: some will receive many stripes and others will receive few.

Those who commit greater sins than others or more sins than others will receive greater punishment in hell (Joh 19:11). Religious hypocrites, those who profess Christianity but are not real Christians, will be punished more severely than others (Mat 23:14-15). The Lord said of Judas Iscariot, “it had been good for that man if he had not been born” (Mat 26:24). How could any of these things be said to be true if annihilation were what awaited men after death? The presence of different degrees of punishment only makes sense in light of the ability to sensibly feel the torment. Could it be said that it would have been better for Judas if he had never been born if annihilation was all that awaited him? Annihilation is like no punishment at all.

Each time the unbeliever sins, he is adding to his torment in hell. The person who sins twice as much as another with similar light will receive twice as much punishment. Every day that sinners continue to live and breathe here on earth without repenting, they are adding to their torments in hell. Romans 2:5 tells us: “But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God.” The Lord Jesus encouraged the righteous to lay up treasures in heaven rather than on earth. The wicked are increasing their future wrath and torment in hell every day by their continued sinning. They add to their punishment daily. In hell, men will wish that they had never been born!

⁶ Ibid, p.80.

⁷ Ibid, p. 81.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon said: “In hell there is no hope. They have not even the hope of dying—the hope of being annihilated. They are forever—forever—forever lost! On every chain in hell, there is written “forever.” In the fires there, blaze out the words, “forever.” Above their heads, they read, “forever.” Their eyes are galled and their hearts are pained with the thought that it is “forever.” Oh, if I could tell you tonight that hell would one day be burned out, and that those who were lost might be saved, there would be a jubilee in hell at the very thought of it. But it cannot be—it is “forever” they are cast into the outer darkness.”⁸

Christopher Love uses an illustration to try and help us understand what eternity means: “Suppose all the mountains of the earth were mountains of sand, and many more mountains still added thereto, till they reached up to heaven, and a little bird should once in every thousand years take one [grain of] sand of this mountain, there would be an innumerable company of years pass over before that mass of sand would be consumed and taken away, and yet this time would have an end—and it would be happy for man, if hell were no longer than this time. But this is man’s misery in hell: he shall be in no more hope of coming out after he hath been there millions of years, then he was when he was first cast in there, for his torments shall be to eternity, without end, because the God that damns him is eternal.”⁹

Earlier we looked at the necessity of hell or why there must be a place like hell. Now we will look at why hell must not only exist, but *why* it must exist eternally. Why is it necessary that hell be eternal? There are several answers to this which we shall explore briefly.

The first reason we will look at is the one mentioned by Christopher Love in the passage just quoted. The God who damns men is an eternal God. “Ultimately the eternality of hell is based upon the nature of God.”¹⁰ Is God’s Word eternal? Is God’s nature eternal? The Scripture tells us: “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever” (Heb 13:8). “His righteousness endureth for ever” (Psa 111:3). “The Word of the Lord endureth [abides] for ever” (1Pe 1:25). If God’s Word is eternal, if God’s righteousness is eternal, if God Himself is eternal, then why shouldn’t His wrath be eternal as well? As eternally existent, all of God’s attributes are eternal and immutable; therefore hell, as an expression of God’s wrath, must be eternal.

Hell must be eternal because God’s justice could never be satisfied by the punishment of sinners no matter how long it lasts. Christ makes this clear when He speaks about settling with your accuser before you get to court, otherwise you shall be cast into prison and, “I tell thee, thou shalt not depart thence, till thou hast paid the very last mite” (Luk 12:59). Man can do nothing to pay for his sins. No amount of punishment in hell, no matter how long, can ever atone for sins. It is impossible; therefore, hell must be eternal.

Thirdly, hell must be eternal because the Scriptures tell us that the worm which gnaws the conscience of men in hell never dies. “For their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched” (Isa 66:24). If the worm never dies, then those being tormented by the worm shall never die.

Lastly, hell will be eternal because men continue to sin in hell. They increase and compound their guilt there. Hell is a place where tormented men curse God, curse themselves, and scream and wail with blasphemous language at their fellow men around them. Wicked men will increase each other’s torments as they accuse, blame, and condemn one another. Men will not repent in hell because the character of sinners does not change. They remain sinners. Men will sin to eternity; therefore, God will punish them eternally.

Application to Believers and Unbelievers

The Old Testament prophets warn us repeatedly of the dangers of hell: “Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire?” (Isa 33:14). “Who can stand before his indignation? and who can abide in the fierceness of his anger? his fury is poured out like fire” (Nah 1:6). Sinner, are you so arrogant as to think you can bear the wrath of God poured out in full measure upon you? You may think that hell is not so hot and that you will be able to bear it quite well. If you believe that, you are more than a fool. The terrors of hell cause the devils to tremble, and are you so foolish as to be unmoved by them or make light of them?

Do not think that simply because you go to church, or believe in God, or believe intellectually in the truths of Christianity, that you will escape hell. The majority of those who regularly attend churches every week, all over the world, will go to hell. Thomas Shepard, pastor and founder of Harvard University, wrote: “Formal professors and carnal gospellers have a thing like faith, and like sorrow, and like true repentance, and like good desires, but yet they be but pictures; they deceive others and themselves too...most of them that live in the church shall perish.”¹¹

You who profess to be Christians, but pray little and do not read your Bible much: how shall you escape the damnation of hell? You who are not especially bothered by little sins or troubled by the vain and filthy thoughts which you have: are you ready to go to hell? You who think the kingdom of God consists in a verbal profession of Christ or intellectually believing that Jesus died for your sins, but who are not concerned with living a holy, godly life, and give little or no thought to

⁸ Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892), *The New Park Street Pulpit*, Volume 1, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1990) p. 308.

⁹ Christopher Love, *Hell’s Terrors*, (London: T. M., 1653) pp. 54-55.

¹⁰ John Gerstner, *Heaven and Hell*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1991) p. 77.

¹¹ Thomas Shepard, *The Works of Thomas Shepard*, Volume 1, (New York: AMS Press, 1967) p. 58.

God during the week: are you prepared to endure the torments of hell, day and night, forever and ever? You had better be, because if these things are true of you, you are headed straight for hell, unless you repent!

Do not delude yourself! Christianity does not consist in words, or pious statements, or mere intellectual belief, but in a new heart and a new life dedicated to not sinning and to living for the glory of God. If your heart and life have not been changed by God, you are still in your sins. If you are living in known disobedience to the word of God and are unconcerned about it, you have no right to assume you are going to heaven: you are on your way to hell!

Repent of all your sins and turn to Jesus Christ and surrender to Him as Lord. Listen to the words of Christ: "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" (Mat 18:9). "Nothing short of the complete denying of self, the abandoning of the dearest idol, the forsaking of the most cherished sinful course—figuratively represented under the cutting off of a right hand and the plucking out of a right eye—is what He claims from every one who would have true communion with Him."¹² But remember, the difficulty involved in forsaking all for Christ, is nothing compared to spending eternity in hell.

I do not believe anyone can be scared into heaven, but I do believe they can be scared away from hell, so that they might begin to seek God with all their hearts, and to beg Christ to have mercy on them. Men stand on the brink of the pit of hell and are ready to fall headlong into it, and yet they are completely unaware they are in any danger. If hearing about hell can cause otherwise senseless men to consider eternal truths, then preaching about hell is valuable indeed. It is better to view hell now, while you are living, and be terrified by it, than to have to endure hell forever when you die.

I would not have you to be more afraid of hell than of sin. Sin is your real enemy. Sin is worse than hell because sin gave birth to hell. Would you be willing to go to hell for all eternity for the enjoyment of a little pleasure and lust here on earth? Flee from sin! Flee *from* living for self and self-pleasing *to* Jesus Christ. When you die it will be too late. All opportunity to repent ends at death.¹³

This doctrine is useful to the godly as well as the ungodly. The doctrine of hell should stir up within the righteous a fear of God. A godly fear is useful in many ways. The one who has a fear of God in his heart has a greater respect for the commandments of God. He who truly fears God will not fear men and would rather displease men than God (Isa 8:12-13). This doctrine should increase your faithfulness and joy in Christ that you have been delivered from the torments of hell, and should likewise increase your love for Christ Who endured the wrath of God upon the Cross for you.

The doctrine of hell should stir up within you a fear of sin. It should cause us to fear even little sins, and be careful to confess and forsake sins of the heart and thought-life also. Let the doctrine of hell keep you from the practice of sin.

The doctrine of hell should help the godly to be patient under all outward, temporary afflictions which come to them. No matter how great your afflictions are in this world, they are far less than the torments of hell, from which the Lord has freed the godly. You may have to undergo lesser torments while on earth, but remember they are only temporary and you have been freed from the greatest of all torments so you may rejoice even in a time of affliction.

This doctrine is useful to motivate you to tell others of the message of Christ. Eryl Davies wrote in his book *The Wrath of God*: "The eternity of hell's sufferings should make us the more zealous and eager to tell people of the only One who is able to rescue them. Do we shrink from declaring these solemn truths? Does the thought of hell displease us? Remember that God will be glorified even through the eternal sufferings of unbelievers in hell. His injured majesty will be vindicated...What is supreme in the purpose of God in the election and reprobation of men is His own glory, and hell also will glorify the justice, power, and wrath of God throughout eternity. In the meantime it is our responsibility to pray and work for the salvation of sinners before such awful punishment overtakes them."¹⁴

I cannot leave without one final word to those who think they are converted, but are not; and also, to those who know themselves to be unconverted. Can you conceive of eternity? Stop now and try to imagine being tormented unceasingly, forever, without end. Does this not terrify you? Never a chance for a moment's rest. Never a drop of water to cool your parched throat. Think again of how long eternity is. Try to imagine it: day and night, forever and ever burned with fire like a spider in a furnace of flames. Shrieking, howling, wailing, cursing the day you were born, and being cursed by the devils and damned souls around you eternally. Remembering, forever remembering, how you were warned on earth and how you ignored those warnings, self-satisfied and self-deceived that all was well with your soul.

Job's wife told him to curse God and die. Unless you repent and flee to Jesus Christ, Who is your only hope, you shall curse God eternally and be tormented by Him in His presence in the awful fullness of His wrath—and you shall never die. You shall never die. You shall never die! Eternity is forever! ❧

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¹² A. W. Pink (1886-1952), *Studies in the Scriptures*,
January 1932 p. 18.

¹³ Someone has said, "Eternity will keep you where death finds you!"

¹⁴ Eryl Davies, *The Wrath of God*, (Mid Glamorgan, Wales:
Evangelical Press of Wales, 1984) p. 59.