

A VISION OF HELL

by Greg Gordon

RIGHT now if we could put a microphone into hell we would hear a resounded message “send!” When a soul realises that he cannot be freed from such torment his immediate plea is for his family, friends and neighbours to be warned of such a place.

In Luke 16 we see the story of the rich man and Lazarus and when the rich man is in eternal torment he cries out: “I beg you, father, that you send him to my father’s house – for I have five brothers – in order that he may warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.”

This is the cry of the damned “send!” Are we numb to this cry from hell, dear Christian? Right now you can hear it, millions of damned souls crying out “Send someone, tell someone, you have your entire life before you.”

We need a vision of hell among our modern day, lazy, undisciplined Christianity. We have a “cloud of witnesses” who have gone before us and were fully convinced of this truth and warned men of the judgement to come.

Hear the words of Christ: “Then He shall say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from me, you cursed ones, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels!’” Oh doesn’t that shake your soul, or are you deafened by selfishness? Deafened by worldliness? Deafened by materialism? Will you not today hear the cry from hell?

Thomas Boston 300 years ago wrote of the misery of the damned: “They shall never more taste of His goodness and bounty, nor have the least glimpse of hope from Him. They will see His heart to be absolutely alienated from them, and that it cannot be favourable towards them; that they are the party against whom the Lord will have indignation forever. They shall be deprived of the glorious presence and enjoyment of God – they shall have no part in the beatific vision; nor see anything in God towards them but one wave of wrath rolling after another!



This will bring upon them overwhelming floods of sorrow for evermore.”

J.C. Ryle a non-conformist from the 18th century writes on hell: “The punishment of hell shall be most severe. There is no pain like that of burning. Put your finger in the candle for a moment if you doubt this, and try. Fire is the most destructive and devouring of all elements. Look into the mouth of a blast furnace, and think what it would be to be there. Fire is of all elements most opposed to life. Creatures can live in air, and earth, and water; but nothing can live in fire. Yet fire is the portion to which the Christ-less and unbelieving will come. They will be ‘cast into the lake of fire.’

“The punishment of hell will be eternal. Millions of ages will pass away, and the fire will never burn low and become dim. The fuel of that fire will never waste away and be consumed. It is ‘unquenchable fire.’ Oh, reader, these are the sad and painful things to speak of. I have no pleasure in dwelling on them. I could rather say with the apostle Paul, ‘I have great sorrow.’ But they are things written for our learning, and it is good to consider them. They are part of that Scripture which is all profitable, and they ought to be heard. Painful as the subject of hell is, it is one about which I dare not, cannot, and must not be silent.”

What a fearful thought of an eternal hell! Millions and millions of years but

never relief or rest. Perpetual ongoing torment, unceasing, never ending, eternity, eternity, eternity in hell!

Charles Spurgeon spoke much on hell, being faithful to warn the masses: “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 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.”

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 1 000 years take one grain of sand of this mountain, there would be an innumerable company of years pass 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 has 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.”

Dear reader if you feel lacking in this vision of hell cry out to God for it, plead for it, Oh we need this burden again, tears over the truth of hell.

Leonard Ravenhill spoke of this burden-less condition: “You can tell how bankrupt a preacher is when he prays in the pulpit, ‘Lord bless us today, amen.’ Forget it! A parrot could do better in some churches. I believe, to quote Whitefield, if I am going to preach on heaven I should live there a week before I preach. If I am going to preach on hell I should get soaked in hell for a week. Bring the atmosphere of heaven, bring the atmosphere of hell! When we do that, the house of God will not be empty.”

Before his conversion John Bunyan, the famous Baptist preacher, attempted suicide and was given a vision of hell which he recounts from the perspective of one of its inhabitants: “Our miseries in this infernal dungeon are of two sorts; what we have lost, and what we undergo. And these I will name.

“First, what we have lost. Here we have lost the company of saints and angels, and in their place have nothing but tormenting devils. Here we have lost heaven, too. The seat of blessedness. There is a deep gulf between us and heaven, so that we are shut out from there forever. Those everlasting gates that let the blessed into happiness are now forever shut against us here.

“To make our wretchedness far yet more wretched, we have lost the hope of ever being in a better state, which renders our condition truly hopeless. The most miserable man upon earth still has hope. And therefore, it is a common proverb there that were it not for hope, the heart would break. Well may our hearts break then since we are both without hope and help. This is what we have lost; which, but to think on, is enough to fear and rend and gnaw upon our miserable souls forever.

“Yet, oh, that this were all! But we have a sense of pain as well as loss. And having showed you what we have lost, I am trying to show you what we undergo. And first, we undergo a variety of torments. We are tormented here a

thousand, nay, ten thousand different ways. They that are most afflicted upon earth have seldom any more than one malady at a time. But should they have the plague, the gout, the stone, and fever at the same time, how miserable would they think themselves? Yet all those are but like the biting of a flea compared to those intolerable, pungent pains that we endure.

“Here we have all the loathed variety of hell to grapple with. Here is a fire that is unquenchable to burn us with; a lake of burning brimstone ever choking us; eternal chains to tie us; here is utter darkness to affright us, and a worm of conscience that gnaws upon us everlastingly. And any one of these is worse to bear than all the torments mankind ever felt on earth.

TORMENTING THE SOUL

“But as our torments here are various, so are they universal, too, afflicting each part of the body, tormenting the powers of the soul, which renders what we suffer most insufferable. In those illnesses you men are seized with on earth, though some parts are afflicted, other parts are free. Although your body may be out of order, your head may yet be well; and though your head be ill, your vitals may be free; or though your vitals be affected, your arms and legs may still be clear. But here it is different: each member of the soul and body is at once tormented.

“The eye is here tormented with the sight of the devils who appear in all the horrid shapes and black appearances that sin can give them. The ear is continually tormented with the loud yellings and continual outcries of the damned. The nostrils smothered with sulphurous flames; the tongue with burning blisters; and the whole body rolled in flames of liquid fire. And all the powers and faculties of our souls are here tormented.

“The imagination, with the thoughts of the present pain; the memory lost with reflecting on what a heaven we have lost, and of those opportunities we had of being saved. Our minds are here tormented with considering how vainly we have spent our precious time, and how we have abused it.

“Our understanding is tormented in the thoughts of our past pleasures, present pains, and future sorrows, which are to last for ever. And our consciences are tormented with a continual gnawing worm.

“Another thing that makes our misery awful is the extremity of our torments. The fire that burns us is so violent that all the water in the sea can never quench it. The pains we suffer here are so extreme that it is impossible they should be known by anyone other than those that feel them.

“Another part of our misery is the ceaselessness of our torments. As various, as universal, and as extremely violent as they are, they are continual, too. Nor have we the least rest from them. If there were any relaxation, it might be some alleviation. But this makes our condition so deplorable that there is no easing of our torments, but what we suffer now we must forever suffer.

“The society or company we have here is another element in our misery. Tormenting devils and tormented souls are all our company; and dreadful shrieks and howlings, under the fierceness of our pain, and fearful oaths, is all our conversation. And here the torments of our fellow sufferers are so far from lessening our misery that they increase our pain.

“The place in which we suffer is another thing that increases our sufferings. It is the abstract of all misery, a prison, a dungeon, a bottomless pit, a lake of fire and brimstone, a furnace of fire that burns to eternity, the blackness of darkness for ever; and lastly, hell itself. And such a wretched place as this must needs increase our wretchedness.

“The cruelty of our tormentors is another thing that adds to our torments. Our tormentors are devils in whom there is no pity; but being tormented themselves, do yet take pleasure in tormenting us.

“All those particulars that I have reckoned up are very grievous; but that which makes them much more grievous is that they shall ever be so; and all our most intolerable sufferings shall last to all eternity. ‘Depart from Me ye cursed into everlasting fires’ is that which is perpetually sounding in my ears. Oh, that I could reverse that fatal sentence! Oh, that there was but a bare possibility of doing it! Thus have I showed you the miserable situation we are in, and shall be in forever.”

Through the prophet Jeremiah God said to the hell-bound nation of Moab “I will weep for you.” Can we share God’s tears for those who are walking in the vanity of their minds and apart from God. Weep, Christian! 🐟