

ETERNAL PUNISHMENT

FOUR SERMONS

BY

Dr. C. D. Cole

FOREWORD

This is a four-part series of messages preached before the Berea Baptist Church in Plant City, Florida. They were originally published in August, 1937, by that Church's newsletter.

I have been richly blessed by the writings of Dr. C. D. Cole. He was a great doctrinal preacher, with the gift of putting his words into writings. This series of messages is just another example of how well he expounded the scriptures.

May the Lord bless His word as it is read by those who search these pages.

Al Gormley, Pastor
Bryan Station Baptist Church
Lexington, Kentucky

Table of Contents

PART I:	Introduction.....	1
PART II:	Death.....	9
PART III:	A Study of Words.....	16
PART IV:	The Bible's Proof.....	28

ETERNAL PUNISHMENT

By: C. D. Cole

PART I

INTRODUCTION

We have chosen to speak and write upon a very solemn theme. The flesh will not be entertained, but the spirit may be profited. Much grace is needed if we are to hear profitably; grace for both saint and sinner. The flesh, which profiteth nothing, will hinder both classes. The saint still has a fleshly nature, and the sinner has nothing but a fleshly nature.

Just as no criminal would enjoy a lecture on the time, place, and nature of the punishment to be meted out to him by the law he has violated, so no lost man will enjoy a sermon on the punishment he will receive for his violation of the law of God. If my preaching on this subject should meet with universal approval, I would be suspicious as to my position on it. It would be good evidence of my being in error.

When Pastor Russell was speaking to a large crowd, in denial of the truth on this theme, a thoroughly worldly man promised him a liberal donation because, as he said, it makes a man comfortable to feel that there is no hell. And when Robert Ingersoll was once inveighing against the doctrine of eternal punishment, a drunkard arose and said, "Make it mighty strong, Bob, for a lot of us fellows are depending on you." And there are people before me today, and some will doubtless read this message who would be glad to know that there is no eternal punishment for the lost. Any teaching on the subject that has the approval of the ungodly might well be regarded with suspicion.

This is widespread denial of the truth about eternal punishment. I expect there is more literature being circulated today against this truth than against any other truth of the Bible. You can hardly name a modern sect that does not either deny or eviscerate this doctrine. Besides such groups as Christian Science, Russellism, Seventh Day Adventism, and Christadelphians, there are many individuals in the evangelical denominations who boldly flout their declared faith in this doctrine. We allow that no truth should be rejected merely because heretics may hold it, but when such an imposing array of errorist is on one side of a question, there is certainly a need for serious reflection, and a challenge I Thessalonians 5:21, to **“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”**

We preach upon this subject, first of all, because it is a part of the once delivered faith. Whatever God has revealed is to be our study and proclamation. Then, a discussion of this truth will increase the gratitude of the saints for their glorious salvation. They will see that they have been saved from something as well as to something. Moreover, a sermon on this solemn subject may, under God, put fear into the hearts of sinners and cause them to flee the wrath to come. Job 36:18, **“Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke: then a great ransom cannot deliver thee.”** Hebrews 9:27, **“And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:”** Luke 13:3, **“...except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.”**

THE NATURE OF MAN

Man is a compound being of three elements: body, soul, and spirit, I Thessalonians 5:23. We can also think of man as a dual being when we wish to differentiate between that which is material and that which is immaterial. Our Lord divided man into two parts: Matthew

10:28, **“...fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”**

The soul, being the principle part of man, is often employed for the man himself. Genesis 2:7, **“And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; (Hebrew – lives) and man became a living soul.”** That is a living person, or a living man. Exodus 1:5, **“And all the souls that came out of the loins of Jacob were seventy souls:...”** (seventy persons) I Peter 3:20, **“...eight souls were saved by water.”** (eight persons) The word soul is even applied to a dead body. Numbers 6:6, **“...he shall come at no dead body.”** The word here for “body” in the Hebrew is “nephesh” or “soul”, and the clause, if literally translated, will be “And he shall not approach a dead soul,” that is, a dead person. The word “nephesh” (soul) is translated dead “body” eight times in our English Bible.

Man also has a spirit as a separate and distinct entity. We will argue this point later, as we only wish to affirm here and now that man has a spirit by virtue of his creation. Man lost no part of his being in the fall, but all the parts became depraved.

In the New Testament, the immaterial part of man is spoken of as the real person in distinction from the body as the house in which he lives. II Corinthians 5:1-2, **“...we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved,...For in this we groan,...”** The pronoun “we” so often occurring in the passage stands for the immaterial and invisible part of man that dwells for a while in the mortal body and then moves out to go to be with Christ. This certainly teaches conscious existence with the Lord after death.

That the soul or immaterial part of man continues in conscious existence after death is seen in the case of

the rich man and Lazarus. Luke 16:19-24, **“There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried; And in hell he 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.”** The rich man was in conscious suffering after the death of the body, and Lazarus was in conscious comfort. The rich man’s body was buried and the soul of Lazarus was taken into Abraham’s bosom by angels. Their experiences after death could not have been bodily experiences, therefore, they were possessed of another element that had conscious existence after death.

I do not call this a parable. Our Lord did not say, “Hear another parable,; neither does the Holy Spirit say that He was speaking in parables. The following extract from a well known writer is worthy of consideration:

“The rich man and Lazarus I am not free to regard as a parable, while having no controversy with those who so regard it. Not only is it not called a parable, but names are introduced, a thing without precedent in our Lord’s parables. I prefer to look at the rich man and Lazarus as actual characters, whose history in this world and beyond is solemnly traced by the Lord for the moral profit of men everywhere.”

What is said of the two men in this life is quite in keeping with actual occurrence, therefore, what is said of them in death and afterwards must also be true to facts. We grant that the physical torment is symbolical, but it is a symbolism of spiritual torment. Is the symbolism terrible? Then the truth intended to be taught is also terrible.

When Stephen was martyred, Acts 7:58-59, **“And cast him out of the city, and stoned him:...And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”**

Paul had some wonderful experiences on account of which he was given a thorn in the flesh to keep him humble. II Corinthians 12:7, **“And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh,...”** II Corinthians 12:2-4, **“...such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.”** This certainly teaches that a disembodied spirit can consciously exist and be intelligently active. Paul did not think a “disembodied spirit is a self-contradiction.”

Various senses of the word “DEATH”

Life and death are antonyms, and it is axiomatic that a man cannot be both dead and alive in the same sense at the same time. But one may be alive in one sense and dead in a different sense at the same time. This is obvious, Matthew 8:22, **“But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead.”** He meant for the spiritual dead to bury the physical dead. A man may be alive physically and dead spiritually at the

same time, as is true of all the unregenerate living. We believe there are four distinct senses in which the word death is used in the Bible.

Physical death. This is caused by the departure of the spirit from the body. James 2:26, **“For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.”** Acts 7:59, **“And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”**

Spiritual death. This is the condition of human nature as the result of the fall of man. It is a death to holiness, the depravity of nature. There is a human spirit in every man by which he understands the things of man. I Corinthians 2:11, **“For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God.** The born again man has the Holy Spirit by which he understands the things of God. Verse 12, **“Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.”** The human spirit is essential to life in the physical realm; the Holy Spirit is essential to life in the spiritual realm. The human spirit enables a man to be active in human affairs; the Holy Spirit enables a man to see and enter the kingdom of God.

Judicial death. This is God’s sentence of death upon all men. It is the death of condemnation as opposed to justification of life. Romans 5:18, **“Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness on one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.”** It is death in the sense of guilt. Romans 5:12,

“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:” John 5:24, **“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.”** Romans 6:23, **“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”** The antithesis of judicial death is justification of life. Romans 5:18 quoted above. Life and death in the judicial sense are generally overlooked by commentators. Romans 6:11, **“Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.”** The believer is dead to the guilt of sin and alive or justified before God. The unbeliever is dead in sin, that is, condemned before God. We have this aspect of life and death in I John 5:12, **“He that hath the Son hath life: and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.”** The present life in Christ is life in the sense of justification; freedom from the penalty of sin; deliverance from the wrath to come, and since this is unalterable, it is called everlasting life.

The second death. This is the execution of the judicial sentence against sin. It is described, Revelation 20:14-15, **“And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.”** This is the gehenna into which our Lord said both soul and body of the wicked would be cast. This is the final state of the lost. This is hell proper and follows the judgment of the great white throne. This is the place of unquenchable fire.

The Greek word “hades” should never be translated hell as the place of final punishment. Hades is

the intermediate state and is to be emptied into the lake of fire. Revelation 20:13-14, **“And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.”** Hades is the place of punishment between death and the judgment, after which both soul and body will enter the lake of fire. “...the Lord knows how to rescue godly men from temptation, and...how to keep the unrighteous under punishment for the day of judgment.” (II Peter 2:9, Weymouth)

PART II

DEATH

We wish to say a few more things about the nature of man, for this is vital in the discussion of eternal punishment. In our first message, we observed that man is a compound being, composed of matter and spirit. The human body is of material substance of the same earth from which the beasts have their bodies. Genesis 2:7,19. **“And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul...And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air;...”** This gives man kinship to the beast. Another thing that man and beast have in common is a soul. Before making personal investigation, we thought this was only a vagary of Pastor Russell. The average Christian will be shocked at the statement that the beast has a soul, but this is both scriptural and scientific. The Hebrew word for creature in Genesis 1:21,24 and many other places is “Nephesh” or “soul”, the same word used to describe man as a living soul in Genesis 2:7.

It is soul that distinguishes animal life from plant life. Life is a general term to denote anything capable of growth and propagation. There is animate life and inanimate life. Inanimate life is every form of life without soul. Animal life, or soul life, includes everything that is capable of conscious sensation. This includes the brute as well as man. It is the soul that gives to the body the physical senses, such as touch, sight, hearing, smell, and taste; and, these belong to beast as well as man.

F. W. Grant: "In the fact of being a living soul, he (man) does not differ from the beast, but he does in the way he becomes one."

This is also true of man's body.

Dr. C. I. Scofield: "In itself, nephesh, or soul, implies self-conscious life, as distinguished from plants, which have unconscious life. In the sense of self-conscious life, animals also have "soul."

God has a soul. Isaiah 42:1, "**Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth;...**" Matthew 12:18, "**Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased:...**"

What shall we reason from the foregoing facts? Some reason that there is no difference between man and beast because both have a soul. By the same law of reasoning, we could argue there is no difference between man and God, or between beast and God, because all have souls.

MAN AND BEAST DISTINGUISHED

The origin of the human soul is different from that of beast. Of the brute creation, Genesis 1:24, "**And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature (soul) after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.**" But of man it is said, Genesis 2:7, "**And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.**" Compare this verse with Genesis 1:11, 20, 24, 27. "**And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth:**

and it was so...And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven...(verse 24 quoted above) **So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."**

Man is made in the image of God. There is a link between man and God that does not exist between the beast and God. God is a spirit and to be in His image involves man as a spirit as well as a soul. Man has a spirit which the beast does not have. This makes man the offspring of God. Acts 17:28, **"For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring."** This explains why God is called the Father of spirits in Hebrews 12:9, **"Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?"**

The spirit in man distinguishes him from the beast in three particulars:

a. It makes him a moral being, capable of sinning, which is not true of the beast. The beast is only under the law of his nature, and natural retribution overtakes the cow when she eats too much, and the dog when he eats poison. But man as a moral being is under a moral law, which makes him accountable to God, and liable to positive and penal punishment. The laws of nature and human society inflict punishment in this life for their transgression, but penal punishment from God does not begin until after this life.

b. The spirit in man makes him a rational being, capable of reasoning. To man, God says in Isaiah 1:18, **"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet they shall be**

as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

c. The spirit of man makes him an endless being. He will have conscious and personal existence in all ages to come. He may lose his well-being, but never his being. There is this age and an age to come for human existence. Matthew 12:32, **"And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."** The spirit in man is what causes his soul to survive the death of the body.

PROOF THAT NATURAL MAN HAS A SPIRIT

I Corinthians 2:11, **"For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God."** This verse tells us that the spirit enables a man to understand the things of man, so to be without the spirit would preclude intercourse in human affairs.

II Corinthians 7:1, **"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."** This verse speaks about the filthiness of the spirit. This can only refer to the human spirit, which the natural and fallen man still has. It cannot mean that which is born of the Holy Spirit. The spirit of the natural man is depraved like the rest of his being.

Proverbs 20:27, **"The spirit of man is the candle of the LORD,..."** Now, a candle is to give light, and the spirit of man is the seat of his understanding; the light by which he reasons and understands; the light that constitutes every man a responsible being.

Zechariah 12:1, God “...formeth the spirit of man within him.” It is obvious from the context that this speaks of man in creation and not in regeneration.

The Sadducees were a party of Jews in our Lord's time who denied the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body. Acts 23:8-9, **“For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, neither angel, nor spirit: but the Pharisees confess both. And there arose a great cry: and the scribes that were of the Pharisees' part arose, and strove, saying, We find no evil in this man: but if a spirit or an angel hath spoken to him, let us not fight against God.”** Josephus tells us that the Sadducees believed that the soul died with the body. Paul once split the council by taking the side of the Pharisees.

Why is it said in Genesis 2:7 that man became a living soul rather than a living spirit? F. W. Grant thinks it was to “hide pride from man.” The angels are spirits, and they had already fallen; also the condemnation of the devil was for pride. “Thus he is called ‘Adam’ from adamah, the ground, as if to remind him of his origin; ‘Dust thou art.’ Yet he was assuredly something more than ‘dust.’ Here in the same way, his being a living soul reminds him of his kinship with the beasts; yet it does not show that he is not more. Among spiritual beings, this is, indeed, his real distinction; that he is a ‘living soul.’” (F. W. Grant)

It is not until after death that man's real distinction begins to manifest itself. It is then that he is called a “spirit.” After the resurrection, Luke 24:36-39, **“And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? And why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I**

myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.” Our Lord did not believe that “a disembodied spirit is a self-contradiction.”

I Peter 3:19, **“By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison;”** These were doubtless the disembodied spirits of lost men to whom Noah preached while they were in the body and were disobedient to the word of God. When Peter wrote they were absent from the body and in prison.

Hebrews 12:23, **“...and to the spirits of just men made perfect.”**

WHAT BECOMES OF A MAN WHEN HE DIES?

Death does not end human existence as it does with the beast. Man is a moral and responsible being, accountable to God the Creator and Lawgiver. At death, the constituent parts of man are separated until the resurrection, when they are again united, and come before God in judgment.

If physical death is punishment for sin, then redeemed saints are punished for their sins. And dogs, which cannot sin, are punished as severely as men who do sin.

Matthew 10:28, **“And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.”** If the soul dies when the body dies, then the above scripture is unintelligible. The man who kills the body would also kill the soul.

Some years ago, H. A. Ironside was holding meetings in the same city where a Seventh-Day Adventist was lecturing in a large tent. One day in passing the tent, he noticed a very imposing sign in large letters: TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS REWARD, “I will give \$10,000.00 United States Gold Coin to anyone who

will product a text from the Bible that speaks of an immortal soul.” Ironside went inside and contacted the preacher, saying, I have come to see you, Sir, about the sign outside. The man inquired if he had come to collect the reward, and Ironside told him that he was afraid he could not claim it on his terms. The man thought that Ironside was admitting that the Bible did not teach the immortality of the soul. Then Ironside asked, “Because the Bible nowhere speaks of an immortal soul, do you therefore believe that the soul of man is mortal?” Certainly,” the man answered; “undoubtedly if the Bible never speaks of an immortal soul, the soul must be mortal.” His attention was then called to the fact that just as the Bible does not mention an immortal soul, neither does it ever speak of a mortal soul. It was pointed out to him that, arguing from his standpoint, it was just as reasonable to say that the soul of man is not mortal, since the Bible never mentions a mortal soul. Ironside went on: “If I can produce a scripture that declares the soul is not killed when the body is killed, will you give me the \$10,000.00? For, I suppose, by an immortal soul, you mean a soul that lives when the body dies.” The man began to hedge and said it was a question of interpretation, but Ironside produced the passage: Matthew 10:28, “**...fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul:...**”

PART III

A STUDY OF WORDS

Those who oppose the truth of eternal punishment, in the sense of eternal, conscious suffering, make a show of wisdom, and confuse the average person by their use of scriptural words and phrases as they are found in the Hebrew and Greek, the original languages of the Bible. We will now take up some of these words and do our best, with all the help we can get from others, to give their meaning as employed in the word of God.

QEBER

This is a Hebrew word of the Old Testament, and is translated grave, thirty five times; sepulcher, twenty six times; and burying place, six times. It is translated by the word grave or its equivalent in every place, for the word presented no difficulties to the translators. It denotes the place to which the body goes after death. It is never used in connection with the soul.

SHEOL

This is also a Hebrew word of the Old Testament and is translated hell, thirty one times; pit, three times; and grave, thirty one times. What a pity the translators did not give us a uniform translation of sheol as they did Qeber! Sheol does not mean the grave, neither does it mean hell, as the place of final punishment. One example will suffice to show how ridiculous it is to make sheol mean the grave. Psalm 9:17, **“The wicked shall be turned into hell, (sheol) and all the nations that forget**

God.” If sheol means the grave, the clear implication is that only the wicked will be buried, the righteous to be left to rot on top of the ground.

Sheol of the Old Testament, and hades of the New Testament simply mean the place of departed spirits, and in the revised version, these words are brought into the text without being translated.

There were sensational headlines in the papers back in 1881, when the revised version first came from the press, to the effect that hell had been taken out of the Bible. But what the revisers did was to bring sheol and hades (words sometimes translated hell and sometimes grave) over into the English untranslated. The only hell they took out of the Bible was the hell that was never truly in the Bible. These words refer to the place of departed spirits. But in the place of departed spirits there are two departments: one a place for lost spirits and the other for the spirits of the saved. The Greek names for these departments were Tartarus (for the lost), and Paradise (for the saved).

A. J. Pollock, in his booklet on HADES AND ETERNAL PUNISHMENT, has some helpful words. We quote several lines from him:

“In giving Scripture on this important point, we shall find in every case; locality is connected with qeber, and never condition, and condition with sheol, and never locality. Qeber occurs in the plural twenty seven times. Sheol never occurs in the plural. The burial of five hundred bodies in a cemetery means many graves, but the entrance of five hundred disembodied souls into eternity means only one condition.

Qeber is referred to as the EXCLUSIVE Qeber, or grave, of an individual. Sheol is never spoken of as the EXCLUSIVE Sheol of any individual. To illustrate this we

adduce the following scriptures: “Qeber is spoken of an ‘my grave’ in Genesis 50:5, “**...my grave which I have digged...**”; ‘a grave’ in Numbers 19:16, “**...or a grave, shall be unclean seven days.**”; ‘grave of Abner’ in II Samuel 3:32, “**and wept at the grave of Abner;...**”; ‘his own grave’ in I Kings 13:30, “**And he laid his carcase in his own grave;...**”; ‘thy grave’ in II Chronicles 34:28, “**...and thou shalt be gathered to thy grave in peace,...**”; and ‘their graves’ in Jeremiah 8:1, “**...they shall bring out the bones...out of their graves:**” Sheol is thirty one times wrongly translated grave, but in each case without exception is translated ‘the grave.’ It is never translated ‘my grave,’ ‘a grave,’ or ‘his grave.’ Now if sheol had meant grave it would, like qeber, possess these variations, but it does not. The reason is very obvious. Sheol does not mean grave, it is wrongly translated thus.”

Sheol is never spoken of in relation to the body. It has to do only with the soul. Psalm 16:10, “**For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell;...**” (sheol) Qeber is never connected with the soul, but always with the body. Qeber (the grave) is for the body; sheol is for the soul.

Shoel for the wicked is associated with pain and sorrow. Deuteronomy 32:22, “**For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell,...**” (sheol) II Samuel 22:6, “**The sorrows of hell (sheol) compassed me about;...**” Psalm 116:3, “**The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell (sheol) gat hold upon me:...**” Qeber is never associated with pain and sorrow, for the body in the grave is unconscious, and cannot feel pain or sorrow. But the soul, a conscious entity, in the condition of sheol can experience such things.

When we turn to the New Testament, and follow the equivalents of qeber and sheol, we find exactly the same rules apply to them.

Qeber in the Hebrew is identical with mnemeion in the Greek New Testament. And sheol is identical with hades in the New Testament.

In the New Testament, mnemeion is the Greek for grave, and hades is the Greek for the place of departed souls. Hades is never connected with the body, and mnemeion is never connected with the soul. Mnemeion occurs in the Greek New Testament forty two times and is translated grave, eight times; sepulcher, twenty nine times; and tomb, five times. In short, it is translated grave or its equivalent every time.

The Septuagint is the name of the translation of the Old Testament from Hebrew into Greek, made by the Jews of Alexandria, and so called because it was said to be the work of seventy translators, employed by Ptolemy Philadelphus, King of Egypt, about 280 B.C. In this Greek translation, out of the sixty five times in which the word sheol occurs in the Hebrew, the Septuagint renders it hades sixty one times; thanatos, the Greek word for death, two times; and twice it is left untranslated. Not once do they translate it grave. That sheol of the Old Testament is the same as hades of the New Testament is settled by comparing the following Old Testament scripture with the New Testament quotation:

Psalm 16:10, **“For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; (sheol) neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.”**

Acts 2:27, **“Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, (hades) neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.”**

Christ's soul was in sheol or hades between His death and His resurrection. His body was in the grave, but it did not become corrupt. This condition of body in death was peculiar to Christ. Acts 13:36-37, **"For David, after he had served his own generation by the will of God, fell on sleep, and was laid unto his fathers, and saw corruption: But he, whom God raised again, saw no corruption."**

GEHENNA

This is a new word introduced by our Lord. Gehenna is translated hell nine times and hell-fire three times. It belongs almost exclusively to the vocabulary of our Saviour, being found only one time (James 3:6) where not employed by Him. Gehenna is the place of eternal punishment. It is not the grave, the place for dead bodies; nor is it hades, the place of departed souls. It is the place for both soul and body of the wicked after their resurrection.

Hades is temporary. Revelation 20:14, **"And death and hell (hades) were cast into the lake of fire..."**

Gehenna is eternal: Mark 9:43, **"And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched:"** Matthew 10:28, **"And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."** (Gehenna)

DESTROY – PERISH – CONSUME – BURN UP

Those who deny eternal torment as the lot of the wicked employ the above words to denote extinction of

being. When pressed they disavow belief in annihilation, but to all practical ends this is what they believe.

We affirm that the above words mean the destruction of well-being, and deny that they mean the loss of being. They describe the terrible suffering of people under judgment.

Hosea 13:9, **“O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help.”** Here is God addressing people who have destroyed themselves, but they are still conscious, and are told that their help is in God.

Job 19:10, **“He hath destroyed me on every side, and I am gone:...”** Here is a man whom God had destroyed telling about his destruction; no loss of conscious existence in this case.

Jeremiah 5:3, **“...thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction:...”** How could they refuse to receive correction if they had become extinct?

The Greek word *apollumi* is variously translated into the English by such words as destroy, perish, and lose. That this word does not mean annihilation or the loss of conscious existence is evident from several considerations. First. It is often applied to those who are physically alive. Paul says that if his gospel is hid it is hid to the lost (*apollumenois*). They were in existence. In John 3:16, *apollumi* is translated perish and is contrasted with everlasting life in Christ, which is judicial life with its antithesis in condemnation. *Apollumi* describes a terrible condition of being.

Another word in the Greek of similar import is *katakaio* translated burn in our English Bible. It is not the word which means to burn as a lamp, but it means to burn so as to hurt and injure. The wicked are likened to worthless chaff and tares, but the burning of these things is not the same as burning men with bodies and souls. Of

the burning of the wicked, Mark 9:46, **“Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.”** “Their worm” refers to something that does not die, and “the fire” speaks of divine fire that cannot be put out. (Men are sometimes called worms in the Bible.) Mark 9:49, **‘For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.’** The fire of Gehenna is a preservative; it preserves conscious being while it inflicts punishment.

EVERLASTING AND ETERNAL

Opponents of eternal punishment claim that the primary meaning of *aion* and *aionios* (Greek words) is not endlessness. But if they had to translate from the English back into the Greek they would be forced to use *aion* and *aionios* as the meaning of everlasting and eternal.

We are fortunate to have a scriptural definition of *aionios*. In II Corinthians 4:18, it is contrasted with temporal, and this is the meaning always, even when applied to things which, in their very nature, are finite and limited.

Mosheim, a man of unquestioned learning, says that *aion* properly signifies indefinite or eternal duration, as opposite to that which is finite or temporal.

Aionios is used in the Greek New Testament 68 times. It is used once in relation to God; once in relation to God’s power; twice in relation to the Lord; once in relation to the Holy Spirit; 42 times in relation to the life of God’s people; 14 times to express the duration of bliss; and seven times to express the duration of the punishment of the wicked. If *aionios* means eternal as opposed to temporal 61 times, then the seven times it refers to punishment, whatever be the nature of the punishment, it must likewise mean eternal or endless.

Andrew Fuller (1754-1815), in his letters to Mr. Vidler, a Universalist, says some things which we feel constrained to include in these notes:

“You appeal to the Scriptures, and contend that they nowhere teach the doctrine of endless punishment; yet you are aware that they appear to do so, and are obliged to have recourse to a method of weakening the force of terms in order to get rid of them. It has long been the practice of writers on your side of the question to ring changes on the words *aion* and *aionios*, pretty words, and could they be proved to be less expressive of endless duration than everlasting and eternal, might be to the purpose; but it not, the continual recurrence to them is a mere affectation of learning, serving to mislead the ignorant. Be this as it may, this is an exercise which hardly becomes you or me. I shall only observe upon it, that, by this method of proceeding, you may disprove almost anything you please. There are scarcely any terms, in any language, but what, through the poverty of language itself, or the inequality of the number of words to the number of ideas, are sometimes used in an improper or figurative sense. Thus if one attempts to prove the divinity of the Son of God, or even of the Father, from His being called *Jehovah* or *God*, you may reply that the name *Jehovah* is sometimes given to things; as to an altar, a city, and once to the church; therefore nothing can be concluded, from hence, in favour of the argument. Thus, also, if one goes about to prove the omniscience of God, from its being declared that His understanding is infinite, you might answer, the term “infinite” is sometimes used to express only a very great degree; as when the strength of Ethiopia and Egypt is said to have been infinite (Nahum 3:9). Again, if one endeavour to prove the endless existence of God from His being called the eternal God, or the everlasting God;

or the endless duration of the heavenly inheritance, from its being called eternal life, an inheritance incorruptible, and that fadeth not away; you might answer, these terms are sometimes used to signify only a limited duration; and that a thing, in common language, is said to be incorruptible, when it will continue a long time without any signs of decay."

"The question is, could stronger terms have been used, concerning the duration of future punishment, than are used? To object against the words everlasting or eternal as being too weak or indeterminate in their application for the purpose, is idle, unless others could be named which are stronger, or more determinate. What expressions could have been used that would have placed the subject beyond dispute? You ordinarily make use of the term endless to express our doctrine: it should seem, then, that if we read of endless punishment, or punishment without end, you would believe it. Yet the same objections might be made to this as to the words everlasting or eternal. It is common to say of a loquacious person, he is an endless talker: it might therefore, be pretended that the term endless is very indeterminate; that it often means no more than a long time; and, in some instances, not more than three or four hours, at the longest. Thus you see, or may see, that it is not in the power of language to stand before such methods of criticizing and reasoning as those on which you build your system."

It seems to us that opposition to eternal punishment is born of prejudice and sentimentality which sets aside the word of God. One writer bluntly says:

"If the Bible teaches 'everlasting punishment,' so much the worse for the Bible, because we cannot believe it: you may quote texts and have behind the texts the very finest scholarship to justify certain interpretations,

but it is no good. We are no longer the slaves of a book, nor blind devotees of a creed; we believe in love and evolution.”

Another writes:

“Of course God cannot be just if He arbitrarily and rigidly predestines millions to endless torment. Hence, if holding to the dogma of endless torment, one logically rejects predestination to save divine justice.”

The above quotation “lets the cat out of the bag,” and reveals the real ground of the opposition. God’s right to punish sin is denied. Men sit upon the bench and tell God what He can justly do with His enemies. Who fixes the penalty for sin, anyway, the criminal or the court? This reminds us that

“No thief e’er felt the halter draw
With good opinion of the law.”

Besides, we do not teach that God “arbitrarily and rigidly predestines” anybody to endless torment. Predestination is unto sonship for some, out of God’s mere good pleasure; others are left to receive the just deserts for their sins. The question resolves itself into this: is it right for God to punish His enemies? If so, who is to fix the penalty, God or man? Predestination is God’s positive purpose to save some; preterition is His positive purpose to leave others to their just condemnation and punishment.

Still another writes:

“If there is endless torment for the unsaved, the serpent in Eden told the truth, and God told a lie.

God said, 'thou shalt die': the serpent said, 'Ye shall not die. For God doth know that, in the day ye eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be like God, knowers of good and evil.' Now, if Adam and all his race are immortal, did Satan lie?

Satan spoke truly in saying, 'God doth know,' and 'Your eyes shall be opened.' they came to know good and evil. So, his lie was the promise, 'Ye shall BE like God.'

"So-called Orthodoxy leans on that lie of the Devil, 'Ye shall BE, for all eternity.' Satan said nothing about happiness or suffering. He promised our first parents only conscious existence, and in the 'Orthodox' hell the condemned would have that."

The last quotation is from Mr. Jonathan J. Robinson, Louisville, Kentucky, under the caption: "A DOCTRINE OF DEMONS."

We are not aware of ever having seen a more arbitrary and wicked handling of the word of God.

He says the devil "promised our first parents only conscious existence." Now it requires some tampering with the word of God to give any semblance of what Mr. Robinson says, but he was equal to the task. The truth the devil told was that they would become like God, knowing good and evil. This is confirmed by what God says in Genesis 3:22, "...**Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil:...**" But Mr. Robinson deliberately changes the promise (divinely recorded) to read: "Ye shall BE—like God," and interprets it to mean that the devil promised them eternal, conscious existence. What a travesty on the art of interpretation!

I repeat: the truth the devil promised was the knowledge of good and evil, and this is what God said they received for their disobedience. "...**Behold, the**

man is become as one of us, to know good and evil:...” But Mr. Robinson woefully confuses “knowledge of good and evil” with “conscious existence.” To be ignorant, then, would be to have no conscious existence. He makes God say in Genesis 3:22, “Behold, the man has conscious existence as one of us.”

Satan’s lie in the garden was, “Ye shall not surely die.” He told the truth when he said, Your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall become as God, knowing good and evil. They became competitors with God for supremacy. They got a taste of sovereignty. They themselves would determine what is good and evil. They would be independent of God, and do as they pleased.

PART IV

THE BIBLE'S PROOF

In this message we wish to examine and refute some of the claims made by those who deny eternal, conscious punishment.

I. The claim is made that physical death ends the conscious existence of the lost. We are cited, in proof of this, to the fact that the wicked are likened unto beasts. But the inference drawn is false. We refute this claim with scripture:

A. There is to be a resurrection of the wicked. Daniel 12:2, **"And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."** John 5:28-29, **"Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."** Acts 24:15, **"...there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust."** Revelation 20:13, **"And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works."**

If the wicked are to be resurrected, then death does not end all conscious existence as with the beasts. Men may live like beasts, but they can't die like beasts.

B. There is to be a day of judgment for the wicked dead. Acts 10:42, **"...it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead."** II Timothy

4:1, **"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;"** I Peter 4:5, **"Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead."** Revelation 20:12, **"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."** Romans 2:5, **"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;"** If there is to be a day of judgment for the lost, then physical death does not end all. Hebrews 9:27, **"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:"** Death cannot be the judgment, for it is after death that judgment comes.

C. The saints are likened to beasts as well as the wicked, and if this means no resurrection for the wicked, it would also mean no resurrection for the saints. The saints are likened to sheep just as the lost are likened to goats and dogs. David, the man after God's own heart, says of himself: Psalm 73:22, **"So foolish was I, and ignorant: I was as a beast before thee."** Jude 10 and II Peter 2:12 tell of men who sin against the light of nature and thus act like beasts. Jude 10, **"But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves."** II Peter 2:12, **"But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption;"** But the death of a saint is not like that of a

sheep, neither is the death of a lost man like that of a goat or dog.

D. If death ends conscious existence of the wicked, then there can be no degrees of punishment. But the Bible plainly teaches that it will be more tolerable for some in the day of judgment than for others, and that some will receive the greater damnation. Matthew 10:15, **“Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city.”** Luke 10:12, **“But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city.”** Mark 6:11, **“And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city.”** The fact is where there is no sensation there can be no punishment. Spurgeon says of annihilation, that it would be ended punishment instead of endless punishment.

Here is one trouble with opposers to eternal punishment: they have a contracted view of death as the penalty for sin; they can see nothing but physical death. If physical death is the penalty for sin, then the penalty is not universal, for many will not die; moreover the redeemed die as well as the lost. The penalty for sin is positive infliction of punishment and is called “the wrath to come.”

II. The claim is made that the wicked suffer for their sins in this life. To this we reply:

A. This voids all scripture about a day of judgment for the lost. If the wicked suffer the penalty for sin in this life there would be no meaning to a day of judgment for them.

B. The saints suffer more in this present life than do the wicked.

1. Generally speaking, they suffer more from poverty than do the lost. There is more of the wealth of this world in the hands of the ungodly than in the hands of the godly. David observed the prosperity of the wicked and was puzzled until he learned their end. Psalm 73:3,17, **'For I was envious at the foolish, when I saw the prosperity of the wicked...Until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their end.'**

2. The saints suffer more mental and heart anguish. They are sensitive to sin and groan to be delivered from every vestige of it. Read the diaries of such men as Bunyan, Fuller, and Edwards. Also Job 42:6, **"Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."** Romans 7:24, **"O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"** The saints are the real mourners in this world. Matthew 5:4, **"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted."**

3. The saints suffer more at the hands of society and civil rulers than do the lost. Let the blood of the millions of martyrs testify to this fact. The saints are the persecuted in this world. Ask the Christians of Russia! Christ warned His people of the hatred of the world. Paul's charge to Timothy, II Timothy 3:12, **"Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution."**

4. There is no redemption from the temporal effects of sin. The temporal effects of Adam's sin rest alike upon the believer and the unbeliever; they toil, they

sorrow, they contend with thorns and thistles, and return to dust. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law in its eternal effects.

5. There is a natural retribution that follows all men in this life; saint and sinner alike; and even the beast. This is expressed by the law of sowing and reaping, which applies to both saint and sinner. This is the law of cause and effect and operates naturally. Whoever violates the laws of health will suffer, be he saint or sinner. Whoever drinks poison will die however saintly he may be. Whoever puts his hands in the fire will get them burned. But this is not divine penology; this is not the positive infliction of punishment for the sin of violating a moral law. Eternal punishment is for sins against God, and is for the satisfaction of divine justice, and vindication of the divine honour. It is not fatherly and corrective, but judicial and penal.

Galatians 6:6-10, **“Let him that is taught in the word communicate unto him that teacheth in all good things. Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting. And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”** This applies to the saint, and speaks of sowing and reaping in the matter of money. There is the exhortation to support the one who teaches us the word of God. If he sows unto us spiritual things, he has the right to reap our carnal things. I Corinthians 9:11, **“If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal**

things?” The exhortation is enforced by a reminder of the principle of sowing and reaping. The Christian who spends his money for the gratification of the flesh will reap corruption; he will receive hurt instead of blessing. But the Christian who puts his money into the cause of Christ and makes himself a fellow-helper to the truth, is laying up treasure in heaven, and will reap eternal benefits. We can sow with our money to our eternal good. My dear reader, where are you sowing your money? Are you spending it on worldly pleasures and fleshly lusts? Then you will reap corruption; nothing good will come of it, but rather that which will disappoint and injure. Are you giving it to the support of a spiritual and scriptural ministry? Then you will get it back some day with interest.

Natural retribution falls more heavily in this life upon the immoral and highhanded sinners, such as thieves, drunkards, and murderers; but the penal punishment, following death and judgment may be worse for the moral than for the immoral. Christ said that it would be more tolerable for immoral Sodom in the day of judgment than for the highly privileged cities that were exposed to His ministry. The heathen in Africa are more immoral than unbelievers in a civilized and evangelized country, but they will not suffer as much in eternity as the man who goes to hell from a community blessed with gospel light. This is because it is more heinous to sin against gospel light than against natural light. There is no natural and temporal retribution for rejecting Christ. Many such are prosperous and respected among men.

III. The claim is made by some that immorality and everlasting life mean the same thing. Such people are called believers in conditional immortality. They say that immortality applies to the resurrection of the body and that nobody has immortality except believers in the

Christ. That is, nobody will be resurrected but the saints. Death is the end of the wicked. To this we answer:

A. It is true that the scriptures use immortality only with respect to the body of the saint. But it is also true with the use of the word mortal; it is used only of the body. The word immortality is not found in the Old Testament, and occurs only three times in the New Testament. In I Timothy 6:16, **“Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen.”** It is limited to God. I Corinthians 15:53-54, **“For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.”** This applies to the bodies of the people of God. There would be a contradiction if the word is used in the same sense in both references. God only hath immortality (deathlessness) in Himself and of Himself. His immortality is underived. He is immortal essentially and immutably. But men and angels have it bestowed on them. The angels are immortal in the sense that they never die. Luke 20:36, **“Neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection.”**

B. Immortality and everlasting life are not synonymous. They must not be confused, one with the other.

1. Everlasting life is the present possession of every believer; immortality will not be the believer's until

the resurrection of the body. Paul, while in possession of everlasting life, said, **“...this mortal shall have put on immortality,...”** Cross reference John 5:24 with I Corinthians 15:53-54.

2. Everlasting life is a state of being free from condemnation and penal punishment. It is deliverance from the wrath to come. It is the state of justification. The believer has passed out of death into life, and shall not come into condemnation, and this means eternal life. John 5:24, **“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.”** It means to exist forever under the favor and blessing of God. It means more than eternal existence; it is eternal existence under divine blessing.

3. The antithesis to everlasting life is expressed by the words perish, destroy, or wrath. In John 3:16, according to the context, perish means to remain under condemnation and punishment. It does not mean to pass out of conscious existence, but to remain under the curse of God. In John 3:36, everlasting life is opposed to the abiding wrath of God. Of course if everlasting life means everlasting existence, then the opposite would be everlasting loss of existence.

If the inquiry be made as to why death is left unmodified in such passages as Romans 6:23, while life is called everlasting, the reason is obvious when you once see that life in Christ is objective, judicial and irrevocable; while death as a present state of condemnation is not irrevocable. One may pass out of death into life. The sentence may be altered; condemnation of death may give place to justification of life. But justification is everlasting and ends in glorification. The sinner, through

faith in Christ, may pass out of death (condemnation) into life (justification), but the believer can never pass out of life into death.

3. Immortality is used of the body, but it means more than a mere resurrected body. The bodies of the wicked will be raised, but not in immortality. Immortality means more than the mere existence of the body; it has respect to the state of the body. Immortality will be a glorified and honourable estate, belonging to our bodies when fashioned like unto the glorious body of our Lord.

The bodies of the saints will be death-proof and corruption-proof, but the bodies of the wicked will be eternally corrupt and subject to the second death, which is defined as “the lake of fire.” The first death is the sentence of condemnation passed upon all men; the second death is the execution of the sentence.

The final state of all men is a fixed state, both as to character and conduct. After every man has been assigned to his proper place for eternity, it is then written:

“Let the dishonest man act dishonestly still;
let the filthy man make himself filthy still;
let the righteous practice righteousness still;
and let the holy keep himself holy still.”

Revelation 22:11

Weymouth's Translation

Oh, my dear reader, let me warn you, that the only alternative to faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is eternal, conscious existence for both soul and body in the lake of fire. Trust Him and receive everlasting life. **AND DO IT NOW – TOMORROW MAY BE TOO LATE!**

Printed by
Bryan Station Baptist Church
3175 Briar Hill Road
Lexington, Kentucky, 40516

Website: www.bryanstation.com
E-Mail: mail@bryanstation.com

4-22-2007

PUBLICATIONS: