

The Reality of Hell

By Rolfe Barnard (1904-1969)

We find these striking words in Psalm 9:17, "The wicked shall be turned into Hell, and all the nations that forget God" And in Psalm 7:11, we find these words: "God is angry with the wicked every day." Despite everything we hear today, Hell, God's eternal penitentiary of the damned, is a terrible reality that men need to be faced with these days. I am aware of the fact that the popular "god" of the popular Christianity today is not the God of the Bible. Like a dead trunk, the popular "god" has no eyes to see, no ears to hear, and no arms to punish the ungodly. But the God of the Bible had fire in Sodom . He had a rod of iron for Samaria , for Tyre , for Jerusalem , and for Belshazzar. The God of the Bible dashed to pieces entire nations like a potter's vessel.

However, the modern "god" has no judgment in his hand; according to the popular gospel today, the modern "god" has sheathed the sword, and sits down as an indulgent weakling. His arm which used to visit vengeance upon impenitent sinners, now hangs nerveless and paralyzed--that is the popular "god" of today. I refuse to worship such a "god"--such a "god" is the creation of man's wishes, but not the true God of the Bible.

My friend, the true God is unchangeable. The Word of God says in Malachi 3:6, "For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." That is the Word that smites modern thought and popular infidelity on the cheek and one day will put an end to all unbelief. An old-time writer has said, "He Who heralded oceans over Alps and Andes, drowning a guilty world, He Who reduced Sodom to ashes, He Who destroyed Jericho with its inhabitants, He Who gave Jerusalem to the Roman armies -- He is the One Who says, 'I am Jehovah, I change not,' and what He has done before, He can and will do again."

It is a fact whether we are willing to face it or not -- it is settled in Heaven that the God of the Bible has both mercy and justice. At Mount Sinai of old He set forth His justice; at Calvary of old He hath showed Himself to be both just and merciful. A "god" who is all mercy and not also a God of justice is an idol of the evil imaginations of modern man. God pity the people who have such a "god." Such a "god" is not the God of the Bible--the God of the Bible is the unknown God of our day -- see Acts 17:23!

Justice and mercy are the pillars of God's throne, and the day you take away God's justice, and His punishment of sin, that's the day you have denied the true God, and made yourself a "god" out of the figment of your own imagination. But such a created "god" is not the God of the Bible, is not the God of redeemed people, nor the God of Calvary -- he is not the God of all Heaven and all earth! But the true

God of the Bible, the God of Calvary, the Maker of Heaven and Earth -- before that God all men must stand one day!

Oh, hear me this day: There is a Hell, be sure of that. Do not hide your face as an ostrich in the sand. Do not throw the Bible out the window, and Christ and the Gospel with it -- as if the modern mind has been able to undo God's revelation about Hell. Oh! hear me! There is a Hell! Listen to the words of the Lord Jesus in 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!"

You know, the Hebrew people took their idea of that awful place called Hell from Gehenna, which was a deep gorge on one side of Jerusalem . Here red-handed Manasseh of old passed his children to the fire to the idol god Moloch, while the thunder of drums drowned their dying screams. This place was the sewer of the city, the place where all kinds of filth and impurity were dumped to be consumed. These fires were kept constantly burning and stinking smoke always being over that horrid vale made it a picture of Hell.

Yes, there is a Hell. Isaiah 5:14 , "Therefore Hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp, and he that rejoiceth, shall descend into it." And Isaiah 14:9, "Hell from beneath is moved for thee to meet thee at thy coming..."

Universalism -- my, how it is growing today! -- arises to tell us that all alike, saint and sinner, will turn up in Heaven at last. There is a Hell. Revelation 21:8, "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." There is a Hell -- although today soft sentimentalism tells us that the murderer and the murdered, the seducer and the seduced, the hater and the hated, the thief and the victim, will all find Heaven at last. Though all of that is taught and believed by multitudes, there is a Hell! Although popular theology assures us today that Cain and Abel, David and Herod, Jezebel and Elijah, Judas and Peter, Nero and Paul, all come out at the same side of the Judgment Throne, there is still a Hell! Listen to Revelation 20:13-15, "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. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." What a strange Heaven we are to have after all, if we believe what we hear today. The hypocrites and whoremongers will be there, the drunkards and backbiters will be there, the blasphemers will be there -- all of them together with the saints of God in the undefiled home of God. Now if reason has not altogether left us, such thinking is blasphemous! Men and women, you need to ponder the truth that if sin is being rooted into your soul, you shall not throw it off as you do your clothes. Sin becomes a part of your being, and long after sun and

moon have passed away, sin that was not checked in this life will destroy or ruin you in the life to come.

I am saying to you that the hour calls us to hurry back to the Bible and find Truth to walk therein, whatever the cost. If we be called old fogies, so be it; if it be said of us that we are trying to scare men into Heaven -- I well know that we cannot scare men into Heaven, but the Truth is sometimes used by the Holy Ghost to induce men to seek a living faith, in a living relationship with the Christ of God.

I am not ashamed of trying to scare men unto God. If the Bible be true -- and it is - - there are things that men ought to fear. I don't want to go to Hell and I'm enough of a Christian, I hope, that I don't want anybody to go to Hell. I thank God the Gospel shows us that God does not want men to go to Hell. I thank God the Bible is true, that He prefers to show mercy instead of justice. I thank God the Scripture says in 1 Timothy 2:3-4, "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the Truth." I am preaching to you now in a generation that has heard so little of the terrible, terrible truth of Hell. We need to face the truth, and when we do, we shall find again that the God of all the earth has spoken, Psalm 9:17, "The wicked SHALL be turned into Hell, and all the nations that forget God." God cannot be changed, nor can He be bent to modern-day thinking. We need to read over and over again Mark 9:43-48. Three times in these verses our Lord when He was here in the body of His humiliation speaks of a worm that never dies and of a fire that never shall be quenched. Now, do you suppose our blessed Lord told a lie when He spoke of unquenchable fire?

In Luke 16:4-31, do you believe that God's Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, speaks a lie when He shows us the rich man lifting up his eyes in torment and begging that Lazarus may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool his tongue? The rich man said, in verse 24, "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." Do you believe the Lord Jesus was lying? Do you believe that he would frighten men with pictures of that which never existed? Oh, dear ones, our Lord either told the Truth or He is a deceiver. Let it be burned into our hearts again and again that if there is no Hell, there is no Heaven, for they stand or fall together. Listen to Matthew 25:46, "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." All that we know about either Heaven or Hell is found in the Holy Word of God -- and if Hell is a fable, so is Heaven. God help us, there is a Hell!

As you love your own soul, let no doubt rest in your mind. If there be no Hell, then Calvary and the shedding of the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ has no meaning -- His death was an awful mistake, made either by a monster God or a misguided Jesus. We cannot believe that. The Deity of Jesus Christ and the existence of Hell go together. If there is no Hell to be shunned, then Jesus is not

God. By the Holy Character of God, by the demands of a broken Law, by the Truth of God's Word, and by the death of God's Son, be warned: Flee from the wrath to come, my friend, is the prayer of this preacher.

Again, in the words of John the Baptist, Luke 3:7, "Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, 'O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come!'"

When our Lord speaks to you in such a way that you will flee from the wrath to come by fleeing in repentance and faith to Him whose hands and feet were pierced on Calvary's cross, then you can say the words that David said in Psalm 86:12-13,

"I will praise Thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify Thy name forevermore. For great is Thy mercy toward me: and Thou hast delivered my soul from the lowest Hell!"

Praise the Lord! Amen.

[From a tape recorded sermon of the late Evangelist Rolfe Barnard](#)