

3-1973

## **An Investigation of the Theological Motivational Factor for Mission Found in the Doctrine of Eternal Punishment**

Wesley D. Carmack

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/wes\\_theses](https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/wes_theses)

 Part of the [Christianity Commons](#)

---

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE THEOLOGICAL MOTIVATIONAL FACTOR FOR  
MISSION FOUND IN THE DOCTRINE OF ETERNAL PUNISHMENT

---

A Research Project  
Presented to  
the Faculty of  
Western Evangelical Seminary

---

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Divinity

---

by  
Wesley D. Carmack  
March 1973

PORTLAND CENTER LIBRARY  
GEORGE FOX UNIVERSITY  
PORTLAND, OR. 97223

TX  
8.5  
C287

APPROVED BY:

Major Professor \_\_\_\_\_

31297

4-10-77  
10-77  
5000  
0.7

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter		Page
I.	INTRODUCTION . . . . .	1
	STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM . . . . .	1
	JUSTIFICATION OF THE PROBLEM . . . . .	2
	DELIMITATIONS . . . . .	3
	DEFINITION OF TERMS . . . . .	3
	STATEMENT OF PROCEDURE . . . . .	4
	SUMMARY . . . . .	5
II.	THE DOCTRINE OF ETERNAL PUNISHMENT . . . . .	6
	WORD STUDIES . . . . .	6
	Hades ( <u>ᾍδης</u> ) . . . . .	6
	Gehenna ( <u>γεέννα</u> ) . . . . .	8
	Tartarus ( <u>τάρταρος</u> ) . . . . .	10
	THE NATURE OF ETERNAL PUNISHMENT . . . . .	10
	Suffering . . . . .	11
	Punishment . . . . .	13
	Destruction . . . . .	15
	Separation . . . . .	16
	Deserved Justice . . . . .	17
	Duration . . . . .	19
	SUMMARY . . . . .	20
III.	EVIDENCE OF MOTIVATION FROM THE DOCTRINE OF ETERNAL PUNISHMENT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT . . . .	21
	THE GODHEAD . . . . .	21



Chapter	Page
God the Father . . . . .	21
Jesus Christ . . . . .	23
OTHER NEW TESTAMENT EVIDENCE . . . . .	27
Paul . . . . .	27
Others . . . . .	30
SUMMARY . . . . .	31
IV. A SURVEY OF THE LITERATURE CONCERNING THE MOTIVATION IN THE DOCTRINE OF ETERNAL PUNISHMENT . . . . .	33
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	33
DOCTRINE OF UNIVERSALISM . . . . .	35
Love of God . . . . .	36
Christ . . . . .	38
Evangelism . . . . .	39
Hell . . . . .	42
Scripture . . . . .	44
General Considerations . . . . .	47
DOCTRINE OF ETERNAL PUNISHMENT . . . . .	50
Arguments Against Hell . . . . .	50
General Motivation from the Doctrine . . . . .	53
The Doctrine as Motivation for the Church . . . . .	58
The State of Sinners . . . . .	60
The Church's Mission . . . . .	61
Specific Motivation from the Doctrine . . . . .	65
SUMMARY . . . . .	67
V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY . . . . .	69
SUMMARY . . . . .	69

Chapter	Page
CONCLUSIONS . . . . .	71
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY . . . . .	71
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	73

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The emphasis of Christian preaching, teaching, and writing of recent decades has been primarily on the "love of God" and related topics. There have been other emphases, of course, but this theme has dominated Christian thinking for many years. This is in contrast to the preaching and writing of a number of years ago. In the generation just preceding this there was much more emphasis upon "hell-fire-and-brimstone" preaching than there is now. It is this area, "eternal punishment," which forms the nucleus of this study.

This is, however, not just a study of the Biblical doctrine of eternal punishment. It investigates a specific effect which this doctrine has upon a particular area of life, namely, the motivation toward missions. In the broad sense, this embraces home and foreign missions, and in that sense the term "mission" might be more accurate. The central idea of this paper is the motivation found in this doctrine toward accomplishing the perfect will of God in the world.

### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem under investigation is whether there is any discernable motivation for the propagation of faith in Christ from the idea of eternal punishment. Does the doctrine that sinners are going to hell motivate the Church to do anything for them? This problem

might be stated thus: "Does the idea of eternal punishment contribute any discernable motivation to the propagation of Christianity?"

#### JUSTIFICATION OF THE PROBLEM

If it is true, as James Packer has said, that "the Hell of the New Testament has no exit door,"<sup>1</sup> then there is great need for the Church to understand its responsibility to tell men of the danger which awaits all who are under the wrath of God. As stated above, the preaching of the doctrine of eternal punishment has diminished in recent years and in many quarters of the Church there has been an accompanying decline in understanding of, respect for, and motivation from this doctrine. It must be recognized that this is a doctrine of the Bible which needs to be preached like all other important doctrines.

There are also various influences and threats to the Church which could be combated by an understanding and preaching of the doctrine of eternal punishment. The major modern threats come from Universalism and from various sects which teach annihilationism. The thinking of the Church has also been influenced by materialism and a self-centeredness which deceives the Church into thinking that the "home church" should be well endowed before trying to do anything for the "missions churches." Only when the Church has the proper perspective of eternal punishment and the Church's responsibility to all who are without Christ will these influences and threats be understood and dealt with.

---

<sup>1</sup>James I. Packer, "Universalism and Evangelism," One Race, One Gospel, One Task, eds. C. F. H. Henry and S. Mooneyham (Minneapolis: World Wide Publications, 1967), p. 183.

With these considerations in mind there is ample justification for a study dealing with the question as to whether there is motivation in the doctrine of eternal punishment.

#### DELIMITATIONS

This study was limited to the impact of the concept of eternal punishment upon mission motivation. No other doctrines were considered in depth. Punishment and retribution by God in this life were not included in this study.

The scope of this study was in the theoretical aspects of this problem. The experiential facets of motivation to mission were not studied, though this could be an excellent supplemental study. Only limited reference was made to the motivation this doctrine has had from Biblical times until recent years. The study emphasized Biblical material and the literature of recent years, mainly since 1900.

This study emphasized the sense of motivation felt in the Church, though some reference was made to how this doctrine should motivate the sinner to come to Christ. This study did not include the motivation felt by the missionary, except the mention of one questionnaire which involved some missionaries. The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect which the doctrine of eternal punishment has upon the Church's motivation to perform missions.

#### DEFINITION OF TERMS

##### Motivation

The term, motivation, is not used in a technical, psychological sense. It is used to refer to the impelling force which made the



people in the Bible go out for the purpose of evangelism, the impetus behind the going for many missionaries since Biblical times. This was not broken down in the form of graphs and charts as one might for a scientific research. This term is used only in its ideological implications, i.e., the area of drive or incentive.

### Eternal Punishment

This phrase was used to refer to the eternal state of the wicked after God's judgment. This is usually referred to as "hell."

### Church

This term was used to refer to the universal, invisible body of Christ on earth, made up of all believers in Jesus Christ.

### Scriptures

The term, Scriptures, was used to refer in several places to the Holy Bible. The version used throughout this study was the New American Standard Bible published by Creation House, Inc., Carol Stream, Ill., 1960 edition.

## STATEMENT OF PROCEDURE

The method of procedure used for this study included both inductive and deductive study of the Scriptures and the survey of literature written in this area.

Chapter two was largely an inductive study to discover the meaning of eternal punishment as taught in the New Testament. There was reference made to commentaries and word study books which followed the inductive study of the Scriptures.

Chapter three was, for the most part, also an inductive study

of the Scriptures conducted to uncover any motivation evident in the lives of the New Testament characters which resulted from their view of eternal punishment. There was some use made of outside material here also.

Chapter four presented the literature written in recent years. This included much material written from the Universalist point of view, and material on the theory of missions and the theology of hell.

#### SUMMARY

This study centered around the problem of the motivation felt by the Christian community to perform the work of preaching the gospel to sinners. This motivation was investigated only as it related to the doctrine of eternal punishment. The need for this study was found in the influences active in the Church today which negate the doctrine of eternal punishment.

Other areas included in this chapter were a delimitation of the problem, several definitions of terms used in the study, and a statement of procedure.

## CHAPTER II

### THE DOCTRINE OF ETERNAL PUNISHMENT

The purpose of this chapter is to discover the concept which the New Testament writers held of eternal punishment. To accomplish this, the words used to refer to "eternal punishment" were studied along with some concepts related to the doctrine by implication. There are other words and ideas which could have been included, but these were deemed the more important ones for this study, especially since it would be impossible to present this entire doctrine in one chapter.

#### WORD STUDIES

##### Hades (ᾍδης)

This word is translated "hell" ten times in the New Testament. On four of these occasions, the word was used by Jesus. These are: Matt. 11:23; 16:18; Luke 10:15; and 16:23.

In the Septuagint            is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew "sheol." "The Old Testament idea of Hades made it equivalent to 'sheol,' a place of the dead. The Hebrew concept included both righteous and wicked."<sup>2</sup> In the Old Testament, "sheol" does not distinguish between the states of the righteous and the wicked; both go down to the grave (sheol). In the New Testament

---

<sup>2</sup> Joachim Jeremias, "ᾍδης," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, ed. Gerhard Kittel (1964), I, 149.



Godbey agrees that Hades includes both heaven and hell by citing Luke 16:19-31. Godbey says that both the rich man and Lazarus were in Hades: the rich man in torment and Lazarus at rest in Abraham's bosom.<sup>3</sup> Martin Rist holds much the same view concerning Rev. 1:18: "Hades . . . was not for John a place of punishment, but was the temporary abode in the lower world of the souls of the dead, both of good and evil, with the exception of the martyrs."<sup>4</sup> It seems that most of the New Testament usages of "ᾗδης" carried simply the meaning of the realm of the dead, with no distinction as to the righteous and unrighteous. Wiley states that "the Greek word Hades and its Hebrew complement, Sheol, signifies the hidden or unseen state, that is, the realm of the dead. It has no reference to punishment endured while in this hidden state."<sup>5</sup> There is, however, some connotation of fear and unhappiness connected with the word. As Wiley also says:

The word sometimes means indefinitely, the grave, or place or state of the dead; and at others, definitely, a place or state of the dead into which the element of misery, and punishment enters: but never a place or state of happiness, or good after death . . . in the New Testament . . . in every case except I Cor. 15:55, . . . hades is translated hell, and certainly always represents the invisible world as under the dominion of Satan, and as opposed to the kingdom of Christ.<sup>6</sup>

Hades, therefore, is the realm of the dead with no distinction made as to the destiny of the righteous or wicked being different. It

---

<sup>3</sup>W. B. Godbey, Commentary on the New Testament V (Cincinnati, Ohio: M. W. Knapp, 1898), p. 51.

<sup>4</sup>Martin Rist, exegesis on Revelation, The Interpreter's Bible, ed. Nolan B. Harmon (1957), XII, 377.

<sup>5</sup>H. Orton Wiley, Christian Theology II (Kansas City, Mo.: Beacon Hill Press, 1952), p. 202.

<sup>6</sup>Wiley, III, p. 225.

carries the idea of unhappiness and even punishment in the New Testament, however, for the New Testament writers usually translate it "hell." J. Jeremias points out this New Testament change of emphasis about Hades thus:

In virtue of the promise of Jesus His community knows that it is secure from the powers of Hades (Matt. 16:18) because by faith in Him it has access to the kingdom of God. In particular it knows that its dead are not in Hades, but in the presence of Jesus.<sup>7</sup>

That the New Testament pictures the concept of Hades as a place of punishment is seen in some of the sayings of Jesus and some of the writers of the New Testament. Rev. 20:14 indicates that Hades will be cast into the eternal lake of fire along with death. Christ warned Capernaum of its coming punishment in Hades because it would not respond to the miracles he performed in that city (Matt. 11:23, Luke 10:15). In Christ's parable about the rich man and Lazarus Christ said that the rich man was in torment in Hades (Luke 16:23).

It is clear, therefore, that while the Hebrew concept of "sheol" encompassed only the general idea of the realm of the dead with no reference to a distinction between the righteous and wicked, the corresponding New Testament concept of Hades also refers to the realm of the dead with the added implication that for the wicked Hades holds the prospect of punishment.

#### Gehenna (Γέεννα)

Most scholars agree that this word came into common usage out of the context of the Valley of Hinnom, southwest of Jerusalem. This valley was the site of Molech worship in the Old Testament and when

---

<sup>7</sup>Jeremias, loc. cit.



this child-sacrificing form of idolatry was abolished the valley became so despised by the people that they used it for a refuse dump. One writer holds that γέεννα as used by Christ meant only future punishment with no reference to the Valley of Hinnom.<sup>8</sup> Whatever the origin of the word, writers agree that Christ, in using the term, Gehenna, was not referring to the valley southwest of Jerusalem, but rather to the eternal punishment of the wicked.

This term is used twelve times in the New Testament, eleven of which are in the synoptic gospels. Arndt and Gingrich state, "in the Gospels it is the place of punishment in the next life, hell."<sup>9</sup> Christ taught that we should fear God, "who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."<sup>10</sup> Six of the twelve occurrences of Gehenna represent statements by Christ to the effect that it would be better to live and be lame than to be thrown into hell.<sup>11</sup>

The emphasis on Gehenna as an eternal state comes through the reference in Mark 9:43-48: "where (in γέεννα) their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched." This is a clear statement by Christ that Gehenna is not only a state of punishment but also of eternal duration. Jeremias points out the contrast between Hades and Gehenna:

Hades receives the ungodly only for the intervening period between death and resurrection, whereas Gehenna is

---

<sup>8</sup>Samuel C. Bartlett, Life and Death Eternal (Boston: American Tract Society, 1866), pp. 381-384.

<sup>9</sup>Wm. F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, A Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 152.

<sup>10</sup>Matt. 10:28. <sup>11</sup>Matt. 5:29, 30; 18:9; Mk. 9:43, 45, 47.

their place of punishment in the last judgment; the judgment of the former is thus provisional but the torment of the latter eternal.<sup>12</sup>

The important idea is that Christ did teach a concept of a literal, real place or state of torment where the wicked will be punished eternally for the wicked life they led on earth. These teachings coupled with other New Testament teachings on related words bring about a complete sense of the concept of eternal punishment.

### Tartarus (Τάρταρος)

One other term in the New Testament is translated "hell." Tartarus does not concern us so much in this study for it occurs only once (II Peter 2:4) and then only in reference to wicked angels.<sup>13</sup> It is never used to refer to punishment for men. It does serve to strengthen the concept of God's holiness and justice demanding punishment for sin.

## THE NATURE OF ETERNAL PUNISHMENT

This section deals with various facets of the nature of eternal punishment. This material was divided into six divisions which were complementary and gave a full picture of eternal punishment as taught in the New Testament. These sections on suffering, punishment, destruction, separation from God, deserved justice, and duration show the kind and intensity of God's necessary reaction to sin. Basic to all of this is the fifth area, deserved justice. This element of the

---

<sup>12</sup>Joachim Jeremias, "γέεννα," Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, ed. Gerhard Kittel (1964), I, 658.

<sup>13</sup>Ethelbert W. Bullinger, A Critical Lexicon and Concordance (London: Samuel Bagster and Sons, Ltd., 1969), p. 370.



Biblical message is not pleasant to study or to even think about, but it is as much a part of the Christian message as is the more emphasized and more pleasant doctrine of eternal life in heaven.

### Suffering

Probably one of the most well known ideas about eternal punishment is that of suffering. Suffering is not a concept which grew out of folk lore but one of the teachings of Christ concerning the destiny of the wicked.

Christ taught the idea of suffering in hell both directly and by implication. In Luke 16:23 Christ described the rich man in Hades and said that he was "in torment." Later in the parable Christ described an interchange between the rich man and Abraham. The rich man asked Abraham to send Lazarus to cool his tongue for he was tormented and in agony. Christ also taught, by implication, the concept of suffering in the parable about cutting off an offending right hand rather than having the entire body cast into hell (Matt. 5:29-30 and 18:9). That is, it is better to suffer in this life than to suffer eternally in hell for sin.

Matthew records many other parables given by Christ in which the concept of suffering is taught. In Matt. 13:41-50 Christ explained the parable of the tares in which he clearly showed that the destiny of all who are "stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness," and "the wicked" will be cast into "the furnace of fire; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Also in Matt. 22:13 Christ said that anyone not prepared for the wedding feast would be "cast . . . into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Also in the parable of the talents, the servant

who was not faithful with his talent was cast "into the outer darkness; in that place there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."<sup>14</sup>

In Matt. 8:11, 12 Christ gives an aside while talking about the faith of the Centurion. In this short quote Christ states that even the sons of believers (implying that they are not believers themselves) will be cast into outer darkness where there shall be "weeping and gnashing of teeth." In this scripture and the four given in the preceeding paragraph Christ held to a basic idea that suffering will be the state of the wicked and disobedient person. Christ does not make apologies for this. Rather it is a concept that pervades all of his preaching and teaching about the future state of those who do not respond to God.

Two final scriptures on suffering are found in Rev. 14:9-12. Here John writes that anyone who worships the beast, or even receives his mark on their forehead or hand, will drink the wine of God's wrath. This wrath will take the form of torment by fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and the Lamb. This torment is everlasting. There will be actual suffering, eternally, for the wicked. Then in Rev. 20:10 John relates that the beast, the false prophet, and the devil will be thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone where "they will be tormented day and night forever and ever."

Albert Barnes represents many scholars who believe the biblical terms used to describe eternal punishment, like fire, "worm does not die" (Mk. 9:48), brimstone, are symbolic. This

---

<sup>14</sup> Matt. 25:30.



does not decrease the awfulness and horror of eternal punishment, however, for the symbols used are only vehicles used to communicate a worse reality than human constructs can comprehend. As Barnes says:

It is not to be supposed that there will be any real worm in hell--perhaps no material fire. . . . It is a mere image of loathsome, dreadful, and eternal sufferings. In what that suffering will consist, it is probably beyond the power of any living mortal to imagine.<sup>15</sup>

This is probably the best interpretation of the concept of suffering involved in eternal punishment.

All of these scriptures about suffering cannot but lead to the conclusion that there will be suffering in hell. Christ taught it directly and by implication, and John saw it in his apocalyptic vision. There is no room in Christ's teachings for an annihilationist view nor for a universalist position. There will be a hell for the wicked and disobedient, and in that state they will suffer for sins committed.

### Punishment

The concept of punishment, like that of suffering, comes largely from the teachings of Christ. Christ gave a very clear picture of this area in a series of teachings. One of the most direct examples is Christ's description of the Judgment where the people were divided into two groups, those on the left and those on the right. The wicked on the left will be commanded to depart into eternal fire. After explaining to them why they are thus judged, Christ said "And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous

---

<sup>15</sup>Albert Barnes, Barnes' Notes on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Kregel Publications, 1962), p. 165.

into eternal life" (Matt. 25:46). Here Christ himself uses the word "punishment," indicating that those who receive this treatment deserve what they will receive because they lived in a certain way during this life.

In the account of Lazarus and the rich man the reason for the torment of the rich man is that he acted a certain way while he lived on the earth (Luke 16:25). The punishment is only the just result for a manner of life. The rich man could have changed all that by listening to the prophets while he yet lived.

In many other places there are statements which carry the idea of punishment for sin. Some of the more important are found in Romans, II Thessalonians, and Jude. In Romans 2:9 Paul states that "there will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek." The emphasis here is upon punishment for wrong actions. In II Thess. 1:8, 9: God here is shown to deal out "retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel. . . . And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction." Here again, eternal punishment is a just result for sin committed in this life. Then Jude 7 mentions the wicked angels being punished eternally because "they . . . indulged in gross immorality and went after strange flesh."

It is clear that punishment, the penalty for evil or sin, will be the final state of all who oppose God. This punishment will be eternal and will be the just result of sins committed, not emanating from a vindictive nature in God. God is only a judge in this case, awarding sin with the only payment He can give it--eternal punishment in hell.



## Destruction

A third important idea descriptive of eternal punishment is that of destruction. Christ gave a clear warning about this in Matt. 10:28: "And do not fear those who kill the body, but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." The emphasis here is upon the power of God, not necessarily the severity of his punishment.<sup>16</sup> It is noted, however, that Christ did mention hell in connection with this destruction. He could have told the disciples that they should fear the One who could destroy both body and soul. But Christ added the place for destruction (hell). Therefore, God is able to destroy man's soul in hell.

The converse of this idea is presented in several verses. John 10:28 promises that Christ's sheep will have eternal life and "they shall never perish." The word "perish" here is the same word used for destruction in Matt. 10:28, "ἀπόλλυμι." The emphasis here is not upon a punctiliar act of God in annihilating the soul, but a continuing punishment throughout eternity, an eternal death. The same concept is given in John 3:16. There John tells about Christ coming so the believers would not perish or be destroyed. By implication, then, the one who doesn't believe that Christ is the Son of God and does not appropriate salvation through faith, will perish--will be destroyed eternally.

Paul told the Philippians in 3:19 that the enemies of the cross of Christ had as their prospect "destruction." II Peter 3:7 teaches

---

<sup>16</sup>Sherman E. Johnson, exegesis on Matthew, The Interpreter's Bible, ed. Nolan B. Harmon (1957), VII, 371.

that there will be a day of judgment when the destruction of ungodly men will take place.

Christ's Revelation to John carries the same idea in many places. Rev. 17:8 shows the beast coming out of the abyss and going to destruction. This same concept is found in Rev. 20:14 but is applied to Hades and death: they will be thrown into the "second death, the lake of fire." The picture is completed in Rev. 21:8 when the "cowardly and unbelieving and abominable and murderers and immoral persons and sorcerers and idolaters and all liars" are also thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, which is the second death. From these references it is clear that destruction, perishing, the second death, are all an important part of the total concept of eternal punishment.

### Separation

One of the most awesome concepts connected with eternal punishment is that of separation from God. The reason for this awesomeness will be seen in the magnitude of the scriptures dealing with this area.

Again in the account of Lazarus and the rich man (Lk. 16:26) Abraham tells the rich man that between them is a great chasm. This chasm has one purpose--to separate those in Hades from the presence of God. Matt. 25:41, 46 sheds even more light on this idea. "Then He will also say to those on His left, Depart from Me, accursed ones. . . . And these will go away into eternal punishment." How utterly helpless and hopeless will be the feeling of those to whom these words are said. "Depart. . . . And these will go away." For these, eternity holds the spectre of aloneness, a complete rending from the soul of any influence of God, a total lack of any of the glory of God. Suddenly man is on his own, facing an eternity of regret,



knowing that all he had to do to avoid all this was to receive a Free Gift. No wonder it is called the second death. This separation from God makes the torment and suffering part of eternal punishment a logical and natural result.

Another strong scripture on this subject of separation is II Thess. 1:8, 9. Those who do not obey the gospel "will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power." Again, this is an awesome thought, to be totally alone for eternity, knowing that even if one cries out to God He cannot help that one.

Separation from God is a staggering thought. The Good News is that man needs never experience that separation. Rather, one can be in the presence of God, giving praise for the glory shared in His presence. This is one of the reasons that all men should be told the Good News about Jesus Christ. This is the motivation for mission.

### Deserved Justice

As was stated in introducing this section, the concept that eternal punishment is deserved underlies all the other teachings about this doctrine. It is important to realize that eternal punishment is the only result possible for a wicked, godless life.

When Christ was talking about judgment he told of the sentence, "Depart from Me, accursed ones, into eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. 25:41). Then he gave the reason for this judgment--they had not had compassion for people while they lived on the earth, therefore they did not have true compassion for Christ himself. Because of their lack of compassion, because of the way they lived, they are sentenced to eternal punishment (Matt.

25:46). God judged those people strictly on the basis of what they had done.

Retribution is defined as "deserved punishment for evil done."<sup>17</sup> Paul uses this word in II Thess. 1:8: ". . . dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus." These people are receiving what they have earned by their own wilful life style. They chose this path, now they must walk its complete course. Paul reinforces this idea in Romans 1:18-20 when he tells who will be the object of God's wrath. Then he says: "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse" (Rom. 1:20). Paul uses even stronger language in Romans 2:5: "But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God." Here it is evident that the full responsibility for the punishment experienced by godless men is their own. They are without excuse (Rom. 1:20; 2:1) and have stored up God's wrath for themselves (Rom. 2:5). God's judgment is righteous (Rom. 2:5).

One last very clear scripture on deserved punishment is Rev. 14:9-12. Those who choose to have the mark of the beast placed on their foreheads or on their hands also deliberately choose to drink the wine of God's wrath. There can be no compromise with the world. If one disobeys God, he chooses to accept full responsibility and punishment for his choice.

---

<sup>17</sup>Noah Webster, Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary, ed. Jean L. McKechnie (New York: Library Guild, Inc., 1965).



### Duration

The length of punishment for sin has been alluded to several times. However, a closer examination of several scriptures may aid in gleaning the exact message God wants man to hear.

Christ taught, in Matt. 25:41, 46, that punishment for sin is eternal. The people on God's left are told to "depart from me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire." They are then described as going away "into eternal punishment." In Mark 3:29 Christ warns that anyone who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit "never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin." Christ is very clear as to how long punishment for sin will be--everlasting.

At this same point of emphasis Paul said in II Thess. 1:9: "And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power." Eternal destruction awaits those who do not know God and who do not obey him.

Jude mentions in verse 7 of his letter the punishment of eternal fire. If the fire is eternal, it follows that the punishment is eternal.

John describes in Rev. 14:11 the punishment of those who receive the mark of the beast. He points out that the "smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever." Then in Rev. 20:10 John tells of the devil, the beast and the false prophet who will be "tormented day and night forever and ever."

The Bible is very clear, then, about the duration of the punishment for sin. It is eternal. The Bible never gives any hint that the punishment will ever decrease or cease. It is endless. This gives a vivid picture of the severity of sin and the seriousness with

which each individual and the Church as a corporate body must face the issues involved in presenting the gospel to every creature.

### SUMMARY

In this chapter the nature of the Biblical doctrine of eternal punishment has been investigated. Several words were cited, examining their importance in the verses in which they were found and portions of their etymology. Next the nature of eternal punishment was considered through the study of several facets of this doctrine which were found in a number of different scriptures. From these studies it was seen that Christ and the New Testament writers differed from the Old Testament writers in their concept of Hades. The New Testament writers and Jesus taught that Hades was a place of punishment.

It was also shown that Hades is the temporary abode of the wicked dead. Gehenna is the eternal abode of the wicked, into which death and Hades, along with the wicked, will be cast.

Another idea brought out through the study of several scriptures was that eternal punishment involves suffering, punishment for sin, eternal destruction of soul and body, separation from God, deserved justice, and the everlasting quality of punishment.

This review of the scriptures lays a foundation upon which the remainder of the study rests. It is important to understand these principles and their importance in order to understand the impact this doctrine had on the early church and on the implication of the Christian mission since the Savior commanded his disciples to go into all the world and to preach the Gospel to every creature (Mk. 16:15).

### CHAPTER III

#### EVIDENCE OF MOTIVATION FROM THE DOCTRINE OF ETERNAL PUNISHMENT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Having surveyed the Biblical doctrine of eternal punishment in chapter two, the purpose of this chapter was to investigate the writings of the New Testament to discover whether those writings reflect motivation for missions as stemming from this doctrine. The divisions of this chapter center around specific persons being studied. The first section dealt with the Person of God. Succeeding sections investigated Jesus, Paul, John and then presented evidence of a general nature also found in the New Testament.

#### NEW TESTAMENT CHARACTERS

##### God

Basic to any motivation seen elsewhere in this area of eternal punishment is why God acted to reconcile man to Himself. This is the central message of the Christian Faith. In order to understand the message of the New Testament one must see that God was motivated to send His Son because mankind was lost and destined for hell. John 3:16 records that in His love God saw the world in sin and lostness and sent His Son to remedy the problem. But the compassion which God felt toward mankind was prompted out of a perfect knowledge about where man was headed if he continued in sin. He sent His Son that all who believe He is the Son of God "should not perish." Christ came to give



insert for page 21

Introduction to Chapter III should read:

Having surveyed the Biblical doctrine of eternal punishment in chapter two, the purpose of this chapter was to investigate the writings of the New Testament to discover whether those writings reflect motivation for missions as stemming from this doctrine. This chapter first examined the motivation seen in God the Father and in Jesus Christ. The remainder of the chapter investigated Paul and other writers in the New Testament.



man an alternative to perdition; He came to give eternal life. God's love is the sending factor but man's state of lostness is the motivating factor in God's action.

It is God's desire that all men be saved and "come to the knowledge of the truth" (I Tim. 2:4). It is not God's desire that anyone should be sent to hell and punished eternally. "The Lord . . . is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance" (II Peter 3:9). God does not want to judge man, but rather to save him. John 3:17 completes the meaning of 3:16: "For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world; but that the world should be saved through Him." Here is seen the real nature of God. He is truly missionary in His spirit toward man. As the Department of Missionary Education of the Northern Baptist Convention put it: "When He (God) made the supreme effort for our salvation, He did not give something or send somebody else. He came Himself (in Christ). So God was the preeminent missionary."<sup>18</sup> He is first a loving God Who wants to share His glory and joy. His "missionary spirit" makes Him a Savior before He is a Judge. If man refuses salvation, however, God has no choice but to become man's judge, giving man the penalty which sin demands--death.

John 6:39, 40 adds strength to the thesis already presented. "And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that of all that He has given Me I lose nothing, but raise it up on the last day. For this is the will of My Father, that every one who beholds the Son, and

---

<sup>18</sup>Edited by the Department of Missionary Education of the Northern Baptist Convention, The Triumph of the Missionary Motive (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publishing Society, 1920), p. 4.

believes in Him, may have eternal life; and I myself will raise him up on the last day." It is clear from this passage that God is not vindictive. Rather He wants man to be saved. He does not want any individual to be lost. It is God's desire that every person enter into eternal life when Christ comes again as Judge rather than Savior. The same message is reflected in Matt. 18:14: "Thus it is not the will of your Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones perish." Christ said this in conclusion to the parable of the lost sheep. Through this statement it is clear that though the whole world were saved except for one man, God would still seek that one that he might be saved also. God does not desire that one person perish in hell.

The situation is summarized in Romans 5:8: "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." God's love is unmistakable. It is not deserved, it is not earned. While man was still unlovely, while he was a hater of God, God loved man enough to make the supreme sacrifice for him.

It is clear from the above scriptures that one of God's desires is man's salvation from eternal punishment. If man does not respond to God's gift of eternal life, God must become man's judge and give him eternal punishment--the only other option available.

### Christ

The largest body of evidence for motivation from the doctrine of eternal punishment is found in the life of Jesus Christ. In the first chapter of Matthew's gospel (v. 21) the angel told Joseph that Mary would bear a child and Joseph was to name him Jesus because "it is He who will save His people from their sins." It is clear that



Christ was coming to save man from sin and its result, eternal destruction.

Several of Christ's own words show clearly how Christ viewed His own mission on earth. John records Jesus as saying, "I have come as light into the world, that everyone who believes in Me may not remain in darkness" (Jn. 12:46). In Luke 19:10 Jesus said, "For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost." The lost item was man. Christ came that man could be preserved for eternal life, rather than suffering eternal punishment. John records another saying by Christ in John 12:47: "I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world." This is an important idea because it gives a true image of what Christ came to do. Christ would not have needed to come into the world if man were in no danger. But Christ knew what sort of danger man was in. He knew that if man continued on his sinful course he would end up in hell. Man needed help from God, and hence Christ came into the world to "save" man, to rescue him from eternal damnation. This is reinforced in John 8:24: "Unless you believe that I am He, you shall die in your sins." Something had to be done. In apparent agreement, Lewis writes, "the truth is that Jesus Christ came into the world to face the horror of Calvary because men were lost already."<sup>19</sup> This lost condition of man throws an interesting light on the popular conception of men who are innocent being sent to hell by God. Man is not innocent for as John wrote in John 3:18: "He who believes in Him is not judged. He who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only

---

<sup>19</sup>Norman Lewis, "Why Preach in Regions Beyond?" "Go Ye" Means You (Lincoln, Nebraska: Back to the Bible Publishers, 1962), p. 70.

begotten Son of God." The reason man would go to hell is clear: he brings it upon himself through unbelief. Cook holds this as true, citing scripture as evidence: "Jesus Christ, then, was a missionary, a 'sent one.'" He was sent with a purpose. And that purpose was the same as that of His missionaries today. It was to save those who were lost--those who were 'dead in trespasses and sins.'"<sup>20</sup> There is only one conclusion to which the honest person can come. That conclusion was stated by Paul in two statements in Romans. In Romans 3:23 Paul says: "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Then in Romans 6:23 Paul gives the final result of a sinful life: "For the wages of sin is death . . . ."

In two places a glimpse is given into the motivation which Christ felt during his last hours on earth. Matthew 26:39, 42 shows Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane saying: "If it is possible, let the cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as Thou wilt." It was God's will that Christ should go through this hour of suffering. In John 12:27 the complement of the Matthew passage is given: "Now My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, 'Father, save Me from this hour?' But for this purpose I came to this hour." It was necessary for Christ to endure the cross to change the course of man's life. It was for this reason that Christ entered the world. All his other acts were secondary to this one supreme act, his death on the cross. That act was necessary to enable man to escape from the prospect and reality of hell.

Several other passages of scripture complete the picture

---

<sup>20</sup>Harold R. Cook, Introduction to Christian Missions (Chicago: Moody Press, 1971), p. 28.



presented here. I Peter 3:18: "For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, in order that He might bring us to God." The importance of Christ's death is picked up in Hebrews 9:12 where Christ is shown to be the high priest who "through His own blood, . . . obtained eternal redemption." The use of the word redemption is no accident. This is exactly what man needed. Redemption carries the idea of buying back and "to deliver from sin and its penalties."<sup>21</sup> This indicates that man is lost and desperately in need of help. Without outside help there is no hope for him. But Christ stepped in and redeemed man, giving him an alternative to eternal punishment.

Added to the above scriptures should be I Timothy 1:15:

"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners . . . ." Paul also says that Christ is the one "who gave himself for our sins, that He might deliver us out of this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father" (Gal. 1:4). These scriptures leave no doubt about why Christ came into the world. He came to free man from the spectre of eternal punishment. I John 5:20 completes this picture: "And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding, in order that we might know Him who is true, and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life." It is important here to see that Christ has come so that we might have eternal life.

Christ's mission is clear. He came to earth to die so that by His death man might be redeemed from eternal death. Had Christ

---

<sup>21</sup>Webster's New World Dictionary (New York: The World Publishing Co., 1964).

not come, man would still be in a hopeless condition, headed for hell. As Ephesians 2:1 states: "You were dead in your trespasses and sins." This death is eternal unless one is made alive by the power available in the blood of Jesus Christ. All men are included in this sentence of death. Here the motivation of Christ to come into the world and redeem it by His death is clearly seen. He came, that man might live eternally rather than die eternally.

### Paul

Paul has much to say about God's wrath and the punishment which awaits man. Harry Buis says of Paul: "His very earnestness in pressing forward to preach the gospel can only be understood as resulting from a strong conviction regarding the serious alternatives which are involved."<sup>22</sup>

Paul is very clear in his hamartiology and theology. In Romans 5:12 he says: "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned." Because of this sin which entered the human race, Paul says, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them" (Rom. 1:18, 19).

Paul describes in several places punishment which all men will suffer unless they are redeemed by Christ's blood through faith. Romans 2:5-9 gives Paul's thought about the justice of God's judgment

---

<sup>22</sup>Harry Buis, The Doctrine of Eternal Punishment (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1957), p. 43.



on man:

But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his deeds: to those who by perseverance in doing good seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but to those who are selfishly ambitious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, wrath and indignation. There will be tribulation and distress for every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek.

Paul picks up the theme of God's judgment in II Cor. 5:10:

"For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deed in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad." Again in I Thess. 5:3 Paul says:

"While they are saying, 'Peace and safety!' then destruction will come upon them suddenly like birth pangs upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape." Paul refers to God's wrath many times,<sup>23</sup> each time emphasizing the urgency he feels that men avoid this wrath. One of the most graphic descriptions of hell in the New Testament is found in II Thess. 1:6-9. Paul states:

For after all it is only just for God to repay with affliction . . . dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. And these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.

Because of Paul's eschatological views, he feels a certain compulsion to preach the gospel to those who have not heard it. This is seen in Romans 1:14 where Paul confesses that he is "under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish." Why does Paul feel he is under obligation to these people? Because he knows that if they do not hear and accept the gospel the

---

<sup>23</sup>Rom. 1:18; 9:22; Eph. 5:6; Col. 3:6; I Thess. 2:16.

wrath of God will be their eternal portion. In Romans 15:20, 21 Paul indicates that he does not want to preach where the gospel has already been preached. He would rather go to those who have not received the gospel for "as it is written, 'They who had no news of Him shall see, and they who have not heard shall understand'" (Rom. 15:21).

Other statements written by Paul also show his motivation to take the gospel to men in sin. Rom. 10:13-15a says:

"Whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved." How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent?

In I Cor. 9:22b Paul says: "I have become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some." Paul felt it of utmost importance that somehow the gospel be taken to all men. The reason for his feeling of urgency was because he knew they would be separated from the glory of God's presence eternally if they did not respond to the gospel positively. The only way people in sin could respond positively to the gospel was for it to be preached to them. This placed a great deal of responsibility on his shoulders, evidenced by his many evangelistic travels and activities. Because Paul did not spare his energy in preaching the gospel to as many people as he could, he could say in Acts 20:26: "Therefore I testify to you this day, that I am innocent of the blood of all men."

From this evidence, then, it is clear that Paul felt a great deal of motivation arising from the doctrine of hell. No doubt there was motivation from other sources, but the note of urgency with which Paul preaches comes out of his understanding of the judgment and the eternal punishment which awaits all those who are not in Christ.



### Other Evidence

Beside the evidence given in the three preceeding sections there is further evidence which completes the picture of motivation found in the doctrine of eternal punishment. Three references are from Jesus' own words, but do not necessarily have to do with the motivation which he felt. Two other references, in Hebrews, give additional reasons for motivation being found in the doctrine of hell.

In John 5:28, 29 Jesus was talking to the Jewish leaders who were trying to find a way to kill Jesus. He said to these leaders: "An hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs shall hear His voice and shall come forth; those who did the good deeds, to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment." Christ is quite clear here that there will be two groups of people at the judgment--the righteous and the ones who do evil. He is also clear as to their destinies--the former to life and the latter to judgment.

When Christ appeared to the eleven disciples after his resurrection he said to them: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned" (Mk. 16:15, 16). The idea of judgment is also shown in the closing chapter of Christ's revelation to John. In Rev. 22:12 Jesus tells John: "Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done." In these three references, the motivation which Christ seemed to be indicating was a motivation which the Church should feel toward getting the gospel out to men who have never heard.

The writer to the Hebrews felt this same motivation. In

Heb. 10:28-31 he wrote:

Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge His people." It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

Also in Heb. 2:2, 3 the writer says: "For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation?" Here is a rhetorical question, carrying the meaning that one will not escape the wrath of God if he does not listen and respond to God's salvation.

#### SUMMARY

It was the purpose in this chapter to discover if there is any motivation from the doctrine of eternal punishment as reflected by New Testament writers.

By His supreme act of love, God exemplified the most compassionate motivation for mission. It was only in sending Jesus Christ, His only Son, to die for man's sin that the human race could be rescued from eternal punishment. It was not a pleasant thing to do, but He did it out of love, a love which did not want man to enter eternal punishment.

By His own words Christ indicated the great motivation He felt from the prospect of man's entering Hell. He came to save the lost, those who were already dead and hell-bound. God the Father and Christ



the Son understood the extent and horrible reality of eternal damnation better than man has ever been able to understand it. Consequently their motivation to mission was more urgent than the urgency which man feels. If man could understand eternal punishment as God understands it, man would be highly motivated to preach the gospel to all men, regardless of the cost.

Paul also reflects his motivation to mission from the fact that man is already under the judgment of God and must be rescued by the preaching of the gospel.

Finally, the Scripture states: "It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Heb. 10:31). This concept should drive the Church to its knees in prayer for a lost world. It should motivate individuals to commitment of time, money and careers for one purpose--the salvation of men's eternal souls.

From this evidence, it is clear that the doctrine of eternal damnation did motivate the New Testament characters. The New Testament is built on a solid foundation which includes this doctrine as one of the most important ideas which affect man.



## CHAPTER IV

### A SURVEY OF THE LITERATURE CONCERNING THE MOTIVATION IN THE DOCTRINE OF ETERNAL PUNISHMENT

#### INTRODUCTION

The debate concerning the doctrine of eternal punishment has raged since the time of Christ. There has been much written in the area of eternal punishment, but little of this material has related to this doctrine as a motivation for the mission activity of the Church. The purpose of this present chapter was to survey the major trends of thinking for and against this doctrine as motivation, with emphasis on the present debate. There is, however, mention made of some outstanding historical figures and their views in this area.

Harry Buis has written a very informative, comprehensive volume in the area of eternal punishment. He quotes Gibbon as having considered the doctrine of hell to be "one of the five most important reasons why the Gospel spread in such amazing fashion."<sup>24</sup> This is but one example of how some thinkers of the past felt about the doctrine of eternal punishment. It was outlined clearly in the New Testament by Christ and taught by the disciples and writers of the New Testament (see the preceding chapter). The orthodox position of the Church has been in favor of this doctrine. In recent years there has been

---

<sup>24</sup>Harry Buis, The Doctrine of Eternal Punishment (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1957), p. 53.

a trend against acceptance of this doctrine. Much of this departure from orthodox belief comes from people who consider themselves to be Christians, thus making the attack on this doctrine all the more dangerous from an orthodox point of view.

"The eighteenth century witnessed an increasing revolt against the orthodox position,"<sup>25</sup> says Buis. This was carried over into the nineteenth century as that century "witnessed an increasing rebellion against the doctrine of eternal punishment."<sup>26</sup> This movement did not stop in the last century. It is prevalent today, especially in the form of Universalism.

An outward symptom of this downgraded view of eternal punishment has been the decreased activity in missions by those who held this view. The primary reason for this was probably the depression in the 1930's. Harold Lindsell paints a clear picture of this period:

Under conditions which had prevailed in the early nineteenth century the results would have been discernible immediately. The theology of that day held that men without Christ are lost men and on their way to hell. This was a sufficient answer. To rescue lost men from the nearing flames of eternal torment justified the expenditure of one's money. But the twentieth century differed radically from the preceding one. No longer did the theology of many square with earlier beliefs, and there had been no real opportunity to demonstrate how men would react to the new theology under the stress of financial collapse.<sup>27</sup>

For those of firm belief in eternal punishment money was not as important as souls which were hell-bound. But when the solid foundation of this doctrine was weakened, it did not take much to make men cut off money for missions which they felt were meaningless.

---

<sup>25</sup>Buis, p. 87. <sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 93.

<sup>27</sup>Harold Lindsell, An Evangelical Theology of Missions (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Publishing House, 1970), p. 26.



The above discussion gives some idea of a brief history of the thinking concerning eternal punishment. At present there are two major camps of thought in relation to this doctrine. The Universalist camp denies wholly or in part the doctrine of eternal punishment, holding the theory that all men will ultimately be saved and reconciled to God. At the opposite end of the spectrum are those who hold that eternal punishment is a necessary doctrine because it is taught in the Scriptures. Between these two camps is a vast field where people can hold just about any view of this doctrine they desire. This chapter considers the Universalist view first then turns to a discussion of the writings of those who hold the doctrine of eternal punishment to be true.

#### DOCTRINE OF UNIVERSALISM

As was stated above, the uniting idea of those in Universalism, though they may hold varying views of other doctrines, is that all men will ultimately be brought to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Bernard Ramm cites two causes for the strength of Universalism in the current scene. The first is that the task of evangelism seems so hopeless at the present. The second is that the population of the world is exploding and the task is overwhelming.<sup>28</sup> These are two of the possible reasons why many people are turning to the idea that all men will ultimately be saved. It is a sort of defense mechanism to justify the gospel and the doctrine of the love of God, the doctrine which Universalists hold above all other doctrines.

---

<sup>28</sup>Bernard Ramm, "Will All Men Be Finally Saved?" Eternity, Vol. 15, No. 8 (August, 1964), p. 22.



## Love of God

One of the most important ideas in Universalism is the idea of the love of God, including the "all-consuming grace" of God which will ultimately triumph over all evil. Lindsell gives a summary of this idea: "The love of God could not permit non-Christian peoples without Christ to die and be doomed to a hell in which nobody believed."<sup>29</sup> Following are quotes from writings of several Universalists with commentary and quotes in answer to the Universalist views.

Ernest Cassara gives a clear statement on the Universalist view of the love of God:

The Universalist idea of God is that of a universal, impartial, immanent spirit whose nature is love. It is the largest thought the world has ever known; it is the most revolutionary doctrine ever proclaimed; it is the most expansive hope ever dreamed. This is the God of the modern man, and the God who is in modern man.<sup>30</sup>

The claim is that man has outgrown the concept of eternal retribution. That doctrine was left over from a barbaric culture which could not understand love without retribution. Man has now come of age and "understands" that God's real essence is love. Nels F. S. Ferré picks up this theme: "We can know, however, that the Christian end is God's total victory. Sovereign grace will and can accept no less."<sup>31</sup>

D. T. Niles agrees with this concept of God's love: "God's

---

<sup>29</sup>Lindsell, op. cit., p. 25.

<sup>30</sup>Ernest Cassara (ed.), Universalism in America (Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), p. 250.

<sup>31</sup>Nels F. S. Ferré, The Christian Understanding of God (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1951), p. 219.

purposes must find fulfillment since God is God and cannot fail."<sup>32</sup>

Ferre feels the doctrine of the Second Coming "denied the concept, as Jesus stated it, of God's being love, for all mankind would be extinguished or tormented forever except the few who would escape punishment through faith in the merits of Jesus."<sup>33</sup> It is evident from these statements by the Universalists that they are more concerned with vindicating their conception of the love of God than defending the Scriptural doctrines. In the earlier chapters of this study it was found that the doctrine of eternal punishment is taught as truth in the New Testament. Therefore either the Bible is wrong in stating that those who reject Jesus Christ will be eternally damned or the Universalists are wrong in their concept of God's love. Arthur Climenhaga writes:

Thus the new universalist bases his doctrine of eternal destiny on a development of the concept of God as a God of love. Equating divine love with human love, he patterns God after man. If man would not confine any human being, no matter how perverse, to eternal suffering, neither purportedly is God capable of such retribution.<sup>34</sup>

T. F. Torrance also rejects the Universalist view: "No doctrine that cuts the nerve of that urgency in the Gospel can be a doctrine of love, but only an abiding menace to the Gospel and to mankind."<sup>35</sup>

---

<sup>32</sup>D. T. Niles, Upon the Earth (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1962), p. 93.

<sup>33</sup>Nels F. S. Ferre, The Sun and the Umbrella (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1953), p. 33.

<sup>34</sup>Arthur Climenhaga, "Mission--and the Neo-Universalism," (unpublished paper presented to the Contemporary Theological Trends class, Western Evangelical Seminary, January, 1973), p. 5.

<sup>35</sup>T. F. Torrance, "Universalism or Election?" Scottish Journal of Theology, Vol. 2, No. 3 (September, 1949), p. 318.



Torrance's point is well taken and will be discussed more fully in relation to other facets of Universalist belief.

What does this view of the love of God do to the motivation of the Universalists in preaching redemption to men who are lost? After outlining the doctrine of God's sovereign love and its irresistible salvation of all men, Ferré says:

Can it wisely be preached (the doctrine of all men being saved)? Are we not dealing with sleeping pills for already overly complacent humanity? Does not this truth take the sharp edge off decision for eternity? . . . There can be no place for complacency. . . . Death may be a divine shock treatment in which many, being alone with the Alone, may repent and take a new direction. How far such an experience is possible we cannot know.<sup>36</sup>

Indeed, the doctrine that all men will be saved ultimately does take the sharp edge off the motivation for mission. Ferré's theory that death may be a shock treatment to bring men to God is only speculation and cannot be supported anywhere in Scripture. There is no real reason to go tell people of God's love if they will somehow be saved anyway. There is no justification for the expenditure of funds, time or lives if the Universalist is right.

### Christ

The Christology of Universalism should be examined here for a full understanding of Universalism. Ferré is most confused in his doctrine of Christ. He says: "To call Jesus God is to substitute an idol for Incarnation."<sup>37</sup> His view of Christ is that the Spirit of God came upon the man Jesus and was incarnated in him, but by

---

<sup>36</sup>Ferré, Christian Understanding of God, p. 221.

<sup>37</sup>Ferré, Sun and the Umbrella, p. 35.



no means was Jesus really God in human form.<sup>38</sup>

Ferre says many things, like many other Universalists, which sound almost like an evangelical talking. His conception of the incarnation is the basis for evangelism. He says: "The crucial question with reference to evangelism to the Hindus, as to the Jews, will ever be Incarnation in its conclusive sense."<sup>39</sup> It is difficult to understand how Ferre can find this vital connection between evangelism and the incarnation when his understanding of the incarnation is so warped, yet his view of the incarnation is typical of Universalism.

One of the major points of divergence between Universalism and Evangelical Christianity is here at the person and mission of Christ. If Christ was not God's incarnate Son, then the justification for missions and all of Christian doctrine rests on man's intellectualism--shaky ground indeed for doctrine as comprehensive as Christianity's. If, however, Christ was God's Son incarnate then there is strong foundation for evangelism.

### Evangelism

The doctrines set forth thus far bring us to the question of how Christianity should relate to other faiths and to people outside of the Christian community. Here again the Universalist takes a totally divergent view from orthodox Christianity.

Diverging from the orthodox view, Edward Farley is representative of Universalism when he writes concerning man:

I am assuming that all men in some sense are the objects of God's reconciling activity, and therefore at the point of

---

<sup>38</sup>Ibid., pp. 35-37. <sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 120.

ultimate destiny the distinction between believers and unbelievers, heaven and hell, is overcome by the victory of God.<sup>40</sup>

Ramm summarizes the same Universalist view thus:

The missionary does not bring Christ to India or Africa, for Christ is already there, being the universal Savior of all men. The missionary comes to announce the universal lordship of Christ and summons men to acknowledge it in their lives.<sup>41</sup>

These two views are typical of Universalism's pronouncements on the nature of man and the Church's relationship to the world. Climenhaga sums up Universalist belief by saying: "The mission of the church is to live in the world with the belief that all religions may be brought under the beneficent reconciliation of God through a sense of inter-religion harmony."<sup>42</sup> Basic to this view by the Universalists is their understanding of the Church's mission. Climenhaga says that the concept of the Church's mission in new Universalism

connotes once again a sense of the brotherhood of man under the fatherhood of God and then goes beyond to suggest that service becomes the act of reconciliation of the 'church in mission.' In this concept sin is asserted to be not an individual act which must be dealt with by the message of reconciliation in personal redemption but rather the corporate deed by which man is alienated from God.<sup>43</sup>

How does all this affect the Universalist's motivation for missions? The Universalist feels he is just as interested in missions as anyone else. There are problems, however, which the Universalist

---

<sup>40</sup>Edward Farley, "Dimensions of Death in the Life of Faith," Pittsburgh Perspective Vol. VI, No. 1 (March, 1965), p. 10.

<sup>41</sup>Ramm, op. cit., p. 23.

<sup>42</sup>Arthur M. Climenhaga, "The New Universalism," (unpublished paper presented to a Ministerial Conference sponsored jointly by Western Conservative Baptist Theological Seminary and Western Evangelical Seminary, March 29, 1965, in Portland, Oregon), p. 9.

<sup>43</sup>Climenhaga, "Mission--and the Neo-Universalism," p. 10.



either does not recognize or chooses to ignore. James I. Packer, in a paper delivered to the Berlin Congress on Evangelism, analyzes the Universalist motivation for evangelism thus:

A universalist of the type described, who acknowledges repentance and faith as the only way into eternal life, will not lack interest in evangelism, or doubt the necessity of preaching the Gospel and calling for response. But differences between him and an orthodox evangelical will become evident at three points. First, he will feel free to argue that in particular situations other ways of loving one's neighbor are more important than seeking to win him to Christ. Second, he cannot help intellectualizing the Gospel for his message is . . . "believe that the Lord Jesus Christ is your Savior already and show your thanks" . . . . Third, since he does not believe that a decision against Christ is really decisive of anything, his evangelism will lack the urgency which marks New Testament evangelism. He will not preach or pray in terms of the prospect of unbelievers being finally lost.<sup>44</sup>

From the above quote it is clear that without the proper perspective of Christ and his teachings on the new birth, the drive to preach the gospel is greatly decreased or erased totally.

The attitude that all men will be saved regardless of the Church's activity has a deadening effect of directing the Church's attention to other things than preaching the gospel. At the Berlin Congress Arthur Climenhaga presented a paper in which he stated:

It is here then that this particular meaning of the mission of the church comes to full universalistic syncretistic flower. There is no necessity to challenge men to flee to the Lord Jesus Christ from the city of destruction . . . . Thus the call to harvest fields is muffled, volunteers dwindle away, and the spirit of evangelism in the Great Commission is no longer one of urgency.<sup>45</sup>

---

<sup>44</sup>James I Packer, "Universalism and Evangelism," One Race, One Gospel, One Task, eds. C. F. H. Henry and S. Mooneyham (Minneapolis: World Wide Publications, 1967), p. 183.

<sup>45</sup>Arthur M. Climenhaga, "A Manifestation of the New Universalism," One Race, One Gospel, One Task, eds. C. F. H. Henry and S. Mooneyham (Minneapolis: World Wide Publications, 1967), p. 187.



Climenhaga also says in the same vein:

For those who believe in the ultimate salvation of all men, acts of "mission" will be performed in terms of the corporate situation rather than of the individual . . . .

No wonder that in the light of all this the call to the harvest fields in so many quarters is but a glimmering light . . . .<sup>46</sup>

It is evident from these quotations that Universalism saps the strength from the motivation of the Church. What can the Church do in the face of these current influences? The Church must return to an orthodox position on these important doctrines. Its position must be:

. . . to proclaim powerfully the fact of sin, divine wrath, judgment and hell, so as to pave the way for powerful proclamation of the grace of God through Jesus Christ that saves men from eternal punishment to everlasting life.<sup>47</sup>

### Hell

At the heart of this study is the doctrine of hell. To understand more fully why the Universalist argument for missions breaks down it is necessary to know what conception they have of the doctrine of hell.

Nels F. S. Ferré states his view of hell in clear terms which serve this study as an example of Universalist thinking: "Whether Jesus taught eternal hell or not is uncertain. To be sure, we must remember that Jesus was far from understood and that his message comes from some distance and with much dilution."<sup>48</sup> He continues: "The

---

<sup>46</sup>Climenhaga, "Mission and the Neo-Universalism," pp. 11, 12.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>48</sup>Ferré, Christian Understanding, p. 245.

justice of God is completely in the service of His love. It is re-  
clamatory for the sake of the sinner. And hell is itself an instrument  
of love . . . ."<sup>49</sup> Though Ferré accepted the possibility of the exis-  
tence of hell, he rejected totally the idea that hell could be eternal:

There may be many hells. There may be enough freedom even  
in the life of hell for man to keep rejecting God for a very  
long time. Hell may be not only unto the end of the age, but  
also unto the end of several ages. It cannot be eternal . . . .<sup>50</sup>

Ferré also says: "Eternal hell is naturally out of the question, both  
as subjustice and as sublove. No human judge has a right to inflict  
infinite punishment for finite transgression."<sup>51</sup>

The Universalist must postulate other lives or existences of  
some kind in which man can will to choose God's way instead of his own.  
This is necessary as it is evident that all men do not accept God's re-  
demption in this life. Ferré rejects hell as eternal because it is  
a logical impossibility for him and it is a violation of his concept  
of the infinite love of God. He has no authority except his own for  
holding this position, but hold it he will. When he comes to scrip-  
tures which clearly teach the doctrine of eternal punishment he either  
explains them away or makes a broad, sweeping criticism of "narrow,  
literalistic Biblicism."<sup>52</sup> When Ferré argues that no human judge has  
the right to inflict infinite punishment for finite transgression he  
fails to recognize two important points. It is not man who will judge  
sinners, but none other than Christ himself, as in Matthew 25:31-46.  
Second, Ferré does not understand the nature of sin and its violation  
of God's holiness. It is interesting that Ferré plays down the concept

---

<sup>49</sup>Ibid., p. 228. <sup>50</sup>Ibid., p. 230. <sup>51</sup>Ibid., pp. 227, 228.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid., p. 234.



of God's holiness, while asserting that God's love will ultimately overcome all opposition.

Two quotations will suffice to complete the answer to Universalism's view of hell. Subodh K. Sahu told the Berlin Congress:

God's holy law declares that the wages of sin is death. The prospect is extremely grim. The lost will die eternally in the next world . . . the punishment of eternal destruction and exclusion from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might will overtake them without exception.<sup>53</sup>

Bishop J. Weaver stands opposed to the Universalist doctrine of hell: "The scriptures nowhere inform us that any who die in sin ever can or will come to Christ and be saved after death."<sup>54</sup>

### Scripture

The foundation of any system of thought is found in what the system refers to as its final authority. Orthodox Christianity has consistently held that the inerrant Scriptures are the only true basis of doctrine. Here, as in the areas cited above, Universalism departs from orthodox faith.

Several scriptures which the Universalists use in defense of their position should be examined. First, John 12:32: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself." The emphasis of this particular verse is not upon the extent of Christ's redemption but upon the type of death "by which He was to die," (verse 33). Then in Ephesians 1:9, 10: "He made known to us the mystery of His

---

<sup>53</sup>Subodh K. Sahu, "The Way of the Lost," One Race, One Gospel One Task, eds. C. F. H. Henry and S. Mooneyham (Minneapolis: World Wide Publications, 1967), p. 52.

<sup>54</sup>Bishop J. Weaver, Universal Restoration (Dayton, Ohio: United Brethren Publishing House, 1878), p. 268.



will, . . . the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things upon the earth." The implication of "all things" here cannot be to men for as Paul says a few chapters later in Eph. 5:5: "For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God."

Romans 5:18 gives the picture of Christ reversing the effects of Adam's sin resulting in "justification of life to all men." The Universalists quote this verse to indicate that all men have been brought into the fold of God whether they realize it or not. The problem is that the Universalist does not cite the opposing verses which place this verse in proper perspective, such as Romans 8:9: "But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him." Another verse used to support Universalism is Phil. 2:9-11:

Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

The problem with the Universalist interpretation of this verse is that the verse does not say that every person would be saved and brought into heaven, but only that every person would recognize the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Even Satan had to recognize Christ's Lordship when Christ responded to the temptations with Scripture and finally Satan fled from Him.

Some specific scriptures which oppose Universalist doctrine must be cited. In Matthew 7:21-23, Christ's own words, Jesus said that though many will call Him "Lord, Lord," He will have to say to

them "I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness." Then in Matthew 25:31-46 Jesus describes the last judgment. This is not a parable, like the three parables which have just preceded this teaching. Rather this is the truth which the three parables were given to teach. The common element in all three parables, the unfaithful servants, the ten virgins, and the talents, was the finality of the judgment, the total hopelessness of those found wanting. This also is the emphasis of the judgment scene, as verses 41 and 46 use the terms respectively, "eternal fire" and "eternal punishment." One final scripture is John 3:18: "He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." This area, belief, is one which Universalists overlook. Given the presuppositions of the Universalists it is important to recognize that their motivation to missions has no basis and betrays many lost souls to an eternal punishment, all because they have anthropomorphized God's love.

Several quotations are needed at this point to clarify the scriptural point of view in relation to the Universalist position. Norman Lewis, in his sermon "The Church's Crime," says:

Thus text after text marches forward and gives its testimony. The evidence is conclusive. Sad, unutterably sad, is the condition of men who have never heard of Christ. They live in night. They die in darkness. Their eternity is the blackness of darkness forever. Christian, those warning texts should ring like alarm gongs in the bell tower of your heart.<sup>55</sup>

Leon Morris addressed the Berlin Congress in the area of what the New Testament has to say to Universalism. He said:

---

<sup>55</sup>Norman Lewis, "The Church's Crime," "Go Ye" Means You (Lincoln, Nbr.: Back to the Bible Publishers, 1962), p. 77.



There is not one unequivocal passage in the entire New Testament which assures us that in the end every individual in the race will be saved. If this conclusion is to be reached there must always be a jump in reasoning.

Moreover, many New Testament passages actually point in the opposite direction.<sup>56</sup>

In the use of Scripture the Universalist is lax in careful exegesis and in using the scripture in its context. James Packer feels that Universalism "is a speculation . . . which goes beyond scripture."<sup>57</sup> Climenhaga states the problem thus:

The liberal use of quotations from Scripture by some of the universalism advocates does not mean that the proponent of the new universalism quotes his Bible as the word of an authoritative, infallible Scripture. The neo-universalist takes proof texts (often out of context and with highly questionable exegesis) and assumes an infallibility at variance with his usual Biblical modes of interpretation.<sup>58</sup>

Climenhaga continues: "Thus we declare the neo-universalist has no right to lay hold of proof texts because he does not subscribe to the authority and infallibility of Scripture."<sup>59</sup>

#### General Considerations

To draw this study of Universalism to a close and make clear the picture of Universalism, several authorities should be cited. When studying Universalism, one thing must be kept in mind, that though the Universalist makes statements which sound quite evangelical, his

---

<sup>56</sup>Leon Morris, "The New Testament Teaching," One Race, One Gospel, One Task, eds. C. F. H. Henry and S. Mooneyham (Minneapolis: World Wide Publications, 1967), p. 180.

<sup>57</sup>Packer, op. cit., p. 182.

<sup>58</sup>Arthur Climenhaga, "Mission--and Neo-Universalism," The Church's Worldwide Mission, ed. Harold Lindsell (Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1966), p. 100.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid.



meaning is not the same as conservative Evangelicals. Climenhaga says:

Gradually, and in some cases more swiftly, the Universalist ministers of the day not only denied other tenets of the Christian faith, such as the deity of Christ, the trinity, and the authority of scripture, but they openly espoused looser forms of conduct than the generally accepted norms of the day.<sup>60</sup>

On the motivation for missions Leon Morris writes:

If it is true that all men will ultimately be saved, there is no reason why we should inconvenience ourselves by trying to bring the Gospel to those who do not believe. Yet the Christian Church has always been evangelistic. How is it then that some Christians embrace a view that removes all the urgency from evangelism?<sup>61</sup>

Lindsell adds, on the same theme: "When the conception of hell changes, or when hell is denied, or when attention is drawn away from the punitive justice of God in everlasting punishment and torment, the motive of missions changes and obscuration results."<sup>62</sup>

Donald Miller says concerning motivation in missions:

. . . although universalism is an inviting prospect, it is difficult to see how Paul could have taken God's wrath so seriously if he felt that ultimately all men would be saved. . . . To do all that can be done to dissuade men from such an irretrievable course is a part of the motivation to mission . . . it is by no means the only motive . . . . But that this is one motive which we would do well to ponder seems inescapable. Paul worked constantly under the stimulus of this motive, and even kept always before his mind the solemn fact that he, too, was to be judged at the last day. (II Cor. 5:11)<sup>63</sup>

Bernard Ramm gives the choice the Church must make:

The evangelistic and missionary statesmen are faced with a decision: do we write all of these countless people out of the kingdom and proclaim them lost? or in an act of Christian

---

<sup>60</sup>Ibid., p. 96. <sup>61</sup>Morris, loc. cit.

<sup>62</sup>Lindsell, op. cit., p. 67.

<sup>63</sup>Donald G. Miller, "Pauline Motives for the Christian Mission," The Theology of the Christian Mission, ed. Gerald Anderson (New York: Abingdon Press, 1961), p. 84.

generosity do we write them all in with a doctrine of universalism?<sup>64</sup>

Ramm's answer is strong and filled with conviction:

No! We do not slam the door shut on all those millions who have not heard the name of Christ. . . . We do pronounce that only the cross and resurrection of Christ saves. We equally pronounce that the non-Christian religions are devoid of saving truth. But there may be many hearts outside the sound of the gospel who have felt after God, who did seek for honor and immortality, who do have the true circumcision of the Spirit, and to these hearts God applies the salvation of Jesus Christ. How many we do not know. . . . Only in the final day of judgment, when the secrets of men's hearts is made known, can we speak a final word as to who is saved and as to who is lost.<sup>65</sup>

If the Bible is clearly against Universalist doctrine and the main stream of Christianity has been opposed to universal salvation of all men, why then is it such a live option for many? At the heart of this move toward Universalism is an anthropomorphic view of God, rather than a Biblical theistic view. As Morris says:

The real reason for espousing universalism is not the teaching of the Bible; the reason rises rather, from the conviction that something in the nature of God ensures that he will save all men. Thus it is often said that God is a God of love and therefore could not allow any man to perish.<sup>66</sup>

Some men refuse to accept the truth. As Savage writes:

If the doctrine of eternal punishment was clearly and unmistakably taught in every leaf of the Bible, and on every leaf of all the Bibles of all the world, I could not believe a word of it. I should appeal from these misconceptions of even the seers and the great men to the infinite and eternal God, who only is God, and who only on such terms could be worshipped.<sup>67</sup>

---

<sup>64</sup>Ramm, op. cit., p. 22. <sup>65</sup>Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>66</sup>Morris, op. cit., p. 181.

<sup>67</sup>M. J. Savage, Life Beyond Death (New York: The Knickerbocker Press, 1902), p. 101.



Universalism's main tenet is that all men will ultimately be saved. Universalists disagree as to how this will be accomplished. Some feel that men will go through various stages of reformatory punishment, others that somehow God's infinite grace and mercy will release men from the responsibility of their sins and reclaim their souls because man has already been reconciled to God through Christ's atonement. Universalists use scripture to support their claims, but reject the Bible as the inspired, infallible word of God. With this rejection is also the perversion of many other main doctrines traditionally held by mainline Christianity.

#### DOCTRINE OF ETERNAL PUNISHMENT

##### Arguments Against Hell

There are various arguments which have been set forth against the existence of hell. Some of these arguments are here set forth for examination.

Edmund Soper denies that men will be condemned to hell just because they have not heard of Jesus.<sup>68</sup> He also rejects the idea that there is motivation for missions in the doctrine of hell on two counts: first, limiting those who are going to heaven to those who have heard and believed on the name of Jesus Christ overlooks the fact that men of right motivation (desiring God) are consigned to the same punishment as the reprobate; and second, fear is not a valid motive for conversion.<sup>69</sup> For Soper, the reason for presenting the gospel

---

<sup>68</sup>Edmund D. Soper, The Philosophy of the Christian World Mission (New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1943), p. 142.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid., pp. 141-143.



to anyone is that they are "in desperate need now, and it would be mere hardness of heart to withhold a message which has in it the possibility of release and freedom and peace."<sup>70</sup> The point which needs to be made here is not that hell should be preached to the heathen as a motivation for conversion, but that hell should be preached to the Church as a motivation for mission. Also, there is a definite, positive factor in fear as a motivation.

A more subtle form of the argument against hell is seen in D. P. Walker's writings. "Hell's greatest strength, its deterrent effect in this life, also has its weak points, . . . the uselessness of hell after the end of the world."<sup>71</sup> Walker feels that hell is adequately disproved psychologically because the excessiveness of eternal torment makes it an ineffective deterrent: "Few if any men do in fact feel the degree of guilt that would merit an infinite punishment; they therefore ignore the threat altogether."<sup>72</sup> Walker does not base his arguments on any authority stronger than man's experience. He rejects the Biblical testimony concerning eternal punishment. This type of argument loses its effectiveness when the complete subjectivity of it is seen.

A similar view is held by James Buckley. He establishes the basic assumptions that no one can say that it is only through the gospel that one can be saved. After saying this, however, he asks why the Church should go and preach Christ, to which he answers:

---

<sup>70</sup>Ibid., p. 143.

<sup>71</sup>D. P. Walker, The Decline of Hell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), p. 40.

<sup>72</sup>Ibid., p. 41.

1. To endeavor to persuade them to renounce their superstitions, their debasing ceremonies, and their derogatory views of those who have the highest degree of Christian civilization and to accept the Savior of the world. 2. The number of the saved will be greater if Christianity be preached to the non-Christian world than if not.<sup>73</sup>

There are at least two falacies in Buckley's arguments. First, the first reason he gives for missions is not aimed at a Christian goal, that is, at converting people from a sinful life which leads ultimately to destruction. Though he uses the phrase "accept the Savior of the world," he is not using this in a Biblical sense. Anyone, not strictly a Christian, could be motivated to go and try to educate people on the futility of superstition. His second argument is illogical, given his presuppositions that people can be saved through other avenues than Christianity. If his presuppositions are correct, there is no real reason for preaching the Christian message.

Another argument, from John S. Bonnell, says:

The doctrine of everlasting torment offers no such hope (that by inflicting almost unbearable pain upon a heretic he would turn at last to true religion and save his soul). The only redemptive element is the possibility that living sinners may be deterred from evil by the knowledge that this dreadful fate awaits them.<sup>74</sup>

Bonnell agreed with and quotes William Inge as follows:

When we remember the character of God the Father as revealed to mankind by and in Christ, the blasphemy of regarding him as an implacable and ferocious torturer seems almost incredible and must remain a heavy reproach against European Christianity.<sup>75</sup>

---

<sup>73</sup>James M. Buckley, Theory and Practice of Foreign Missions (New York: Eaton and Mains, 1911), pp. 36, 37.

<sup>74</sup>John Sutherland Bonnell, Heaven and Hell (New York: Abingdon Press, 1956), p. 34.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid.



There is one final line of attack on the doctrine of hell which should be stated here. This comes from the existentialist thinker, Nicholas Berdyaev. He seems to be in a state of uncertainty about the doctrine of hell for he says that if hell is rejected, life is too easy and superficial, yet he feels that belief in hell makes the moral life meaningless because all that men do out of fear of hell and not out of the love of God has no religious significance.<sup>76</sup> For Berdyaev, "it is impossible to reconcile the idea that God created the world if he foresaw hell. To admit hell would be to deny God."<sup>77</sup>

Here, then are some of the arguments against the doctrine of hell. Usually an appeal is made to the loving nature of God or the incomprehensibility of eternal punishment. In all cases, however, the testimony of the Bible comes out against these arguments and asserts an eternal punishment which is deserved by sinful man.

#### General Motivation from the Doctrine

The material cited above in this chapter has dealt with the arguments against the doctrine of hell and therefore against there being any motivation in the doctrine of hell for the Church to perform the task of missions. It is the purpose of this section to examine the evidence supporting the thesis that there is motivation in the doctrine of eternal punishment which provides impetus for the Church to perform mission activities.

This doctrine has been the motivation behind the actions of many great Christian leaders. Martin Luther was motivated by the prospect of hell. Buis says of Luther: "It was an overwhelming fear of

---

<sup>76</sup>Buis, op. cit., p. 109. <sup>77</sup>Ibid.



hell which caused his entrance into the monastery, which was one of the most important turning points of his life."<sup>78</sup> He is only one example among many who were motivated by this doctrine.

The reason for the strong motivational factor of this doctrine was expressed by Lindsell: "There is absolutely nothing in the revelation which states or infers that there is any hope for those who die without having heard of Christ . . . without Christ there is absolutely no hope for men."<sup>79</sup> That this is not just a pet doctrine which the Church has thought up but one which is based directly on inspired scripture was also spelled out clearly by Lindsell:

The period of probation for man consists in that period during which he lives in the physical body. Beyond this life there is no probation and no possibility of a second chance. There is no foundation in Scripture for such a doctrine and the weak-kneed, watered down Christianity that often advances this idea is not the vital, dynamic, realistic Christianity of the Bible. Further, a final theology that is final does not provide for salvation for men who have never heard of Jesus Christ. The heathen who die in their sins without having heard are lost and lost forever.<sup>80</sup>

These two quotations make clear the basic tenets and foundations of evangelical faith concerning this doctrine. It is based solidly upon the foundation of the Bible as the authority for all doctrine, teaching, and reproof. The evangelical has an objective standard which does not change as moods of men or trends of thinking vary.

For a glimpse of contemporary attitudes toward the doctrine of eternal punishment a review of some of the material from a questionnaire sent out to all who attended the 1967 Urbana Conference of Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship is here made. The following

---

<sup>78</sup>Ibid., p. 73. <sup>79</sup>Lindsell, op. cit., p. 107.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid., p. 73.

statistics may be found in graph form in the study by Barkman, Dayton, and Gruman which is cited below.

The first question dealing with the area of motivation for mission asked: "If a person does not hear the gospel as taught in the Bible, I believe:."<sup>81</sup> Five choices were given. Of the total number of respondents, approximately 5000, "only 37% hold the view that a person not hearing the Gospel as taught in the Bible is eternally lost."<sup>82</sup> The next highest response to this question claimed 25% of the respondents. They believed that "he will be saved or lost on the basis of how well he followed what he did know."<sup>83</sup> In analysis of this the authors state:

It may be that the move toward Universalism is a result of the fact that we no longer believe it is possible to evangelize the world, and therefore have to find another way out. . . . It is evident that the teaching on this subject is either absent, inadequate or divergent.<sup>84</sup>

A related question, to which the responses were on a five point scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree, asked: "Unbelievers will be punished in a literal Hell of fire."<sup>85</sup> Only about 42% of all respondents agreed strongly that unbelievers would be punished in a literal hell of fire, but when the 15% which mildly agreed is added to that number, well over a majority held this concept to be true.<sup>86</sup> It is evident from the above statistics that this group of people, which is probably a fair representation of the majority of

---

<sup>81</sup>p. F. Barkman, E. R. Dayton, and E. L. Gruman (eds.), Christian Collegians and Foreign Missions (Monrovia, Calif.: MARC, 1969), p. 29.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid., p. 28. <sup>83</sup>Ibid. <sup>84</sup>Ibid.

<sup>85</sup>Ibid., p. 29. <sup>86</sup>Ibid.



evangelical students, need a more accurate understanding of the doctrine of eternal punishment as taught in the Scriptures.

The next two graphs used for this paper from Barkman's book are located on page 31. They show a wide gap between the belief that there will be a judgment and that this judgment is the primary motive for missions. While some 96% of all respondents agreed that "a person's soul continues to exist and will be rewarded or punished by God" after death, only 16% of all respondents felt that the primary motive for missions was "to save souls from eternal judgment."<sup>87</sup> The respondents felt that the most important motives for missions were "to reconcile men to God" (43%), and "to follow God's commands" (35%).<sup>88</sup>

Of the total number of respondents, there were 83 people who said they had already been accepted as missionary candidates.<sup>89</sup> Surprisingly, this group did not believe any more strongly than the total group concerning the lostness of those not hearing the gospel (44% of the missionary candidates) and unbelievers being punished in a literal hell of fire (43% of the missionary candidates). They are only a few percentage points different in their responses from the entire group of respondents. They are a fairly representative cross-section of the entire group.

Two more groups are significant for this study. There were 155 missionaries among those who responded to the questionnaire.<sup>90</sup> A higher percentage (62%) of this group believed that a person not hearing the gospel would be eternally lost.<sup>91</sup> However, fewer of them

---

<sup>87</sup>Ibid., p. 31. <sup>88</sup>Ibid. <sup>89</sup>Ibid., p. 89.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid., p. 119. <sup>91</sup>Ibid., p. 125.



(only 7%) felt that saving souls from eternal judgment was the primary motive for missions. The missionaries gave as their primary motive for missions the "following of God's commands" (45%) and "reconciling men to God" (46%).<sup>92</sup> The editors comment:

We should not conclude from this that missionaries don't think that missions are in the business of "saving souls." Rather we should better understand that what is meant is this is not the driving force that impels men to become missionaries.<sup>93</sup>

The final group considered in this paper, the seminarians, seemed to be much more idealistic in some areas than the older veteran missionaries. Of the seminarians 55.6% felt that men dying without hearing the gospel are lost eternally.<sup>94</sup> This is lower than the same figure for the missionaries (62%), but in motivation for missions more seminarians (20%) held that the salvation of souls from eternal judgment is the most important factor.<sup>95</sup>

This gives a picture of one group of Christians and their views of missions. Positive application of the generalizations made from the study should be made with extreme caution to the larger Church because of the selectivity of this group. There are some possible lessons to be gleaned from a study such as the one cited here. As the editors said, the percentage of respondents who indicated that a man would be saved or lost on the basis of how well he followed what he knew indicates a need for a reevaluation of doctrinal teaching in our churches. Second, as to why more of the respondents selected reconciliation of men to God over saving souls from eternal judgment may be only a semantic problem: "This could be a reaction against

---

<sup>92</sup>Ibid. <sup>93</sup>Ibid., p. 124. <sup>94</sup>Ibid., p. 161. <sup>95</sup>Ibid.

the time worn phrase 'saving souls,' and the implication that we are not interested in the 'whole man.'<sup>96</sup> The authors clarify this by asking:

Is it the language that is changed, with today's "reconciling men to God" really being equal to yesterday's "saving souls from eternal judgment"? Do today's young men and women have a better understanding of God's Word? Or is some re-education needed?<sup>97</sup>

#### The Doctrine as Motivation for the Church

The final section of this chapter deals with the doctrine of eternal punishment, as found in the New Testament, as it should be related to the mission of the Church. The importance of this relationship was recognized by Buis in the appendix to his book:

Our conclusions with regard to this question inevitably affect our missionary zeal. As one studies the lives of men like Hudson Taylor and David Brainerd it is obvious that they were driven forward by a deep conviction that the heathen who did not hear and accept the gospel message were utterly lost. If they had not had this conviction their work and the great inspiration produced by their work on each succeeding generation would have been lost. To the degree that we share their conviction we too will be zealous for missions, and to the degree that our conviction at this point is weakened, to that degree our missionary zeal will evaporate.<sup>98</sup>

In a study which radically changed the face of missions earlier in this century, William Hocking and his Commission produced ideas which led to severe reductions in mission programs. Even though much of their study was not Biblically based and the interpretations do not appear valid, they did correctly evaluate early Protestant missions:

The motive of all religious missions is an ardent desire to communicate a spiritual value regarded as unique and of supreme importance. It is an integral part of the passion for "saving" men and peoples, and implies a peculiar sense of the tragedy and danger of the unsaved. . . .

---

<sup>96</sup>Ibid., p. 30. <sup>97</sup>Ibid. <sup>98</sup>Buis, p. 142.



To us it seems that this further motive in the early days of the Protestant missions was primarily the sense of the greater need of the Orient, and the greater return for a given effort. The pioneers were moved by the disturbing sense that many in Asia had not so much as heard the Gospel: millions of souls, believed to be in danger of eternal death, might be given the opportunity of life; there was but one way, the way of Christ. There was need for haste.<sup>99</sup>

There has been, therefore, a vital connection between the doctrine of eternal punishment and the motivation of the Church toward missions in the past. The same principle holds true today. The doctrine of eternal punishment must be preached in the Church today.

Rufus Anderson points out the importance of making a decision to serve as a missionary early in the educational process. He says that when decision to go as a missionary is delayed, many things happen which dull the urgency of the call--among them "the cries of the heathen, and their distress, move with less and less power."<sup>100</sup> He continues: "When a student decides on missions early, he develops a special interest in . . . how the deep intellectual and moral gloom resting upon the heathen world may be dispelled."<sup>101</sup>

J. Gresham Machen writes that "the responsibility of the Church in the new age is the same as its responsibility in every age. It is to testify that this world is lost in sin . . . ."<sup>102</sup> Though Machen said this forty years ago, it is still true today.

---

<sup>99</sup>William E. Hocking, Chairman of the Commission of Appraisal of the Laymen's Foreign Missions Inquiry, Rethinking Missions (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1932), pp. 6, 8.

<sup>100</sup>Rufus Anderson, To Advance the Gospel, (ed.) R. Pierce Beaver (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967), p. 185.

<sup>101</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 189.

<sup>102</sup>J. Gresham Machen, What Is Christianity (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1951), p. 287.



These quotations introduce the area of eternal punishment as a motivation for the Church to perform missions.

### The State of Sinners

Rufus Anderson defined the missionary spirit as the "feelings common to every pious heart, directed by a judgment under the influence of the truth, and the Spirit of God, strongly drawn out toward the heathen by their wretched, helpless, perishing, condition."<sup>103</sup>

When the true Biblical picture of sin and its eternal results is clearly understood, there is a natural drive within the Christian to share the gospel with the unsaved. As John Harris said:

We cannot be adequately impressed with the danger of the heathen, unless we remember that their idolatrous condition is never represented in Scripture as a palliation of their guilt, but as constituting its vilest element.<sup>104</sup>

The issue in this discussion is of eternal importance. This fact is what makes the Universalist position so dangerous. The Church must be made aware once more of the absolute necessity of reaching sinners with the gospel. Leon Morris spelled out at the Berlin Congress the importance of man's relationship with God:

If they live without him in this life they must also live the next life without him. This is what makes the Gospel offer of salvation so serious. When Christians evangelize, they are not engaging in some harmless and pleasant pastime. They are engaging in a fearful struggle, the issues of which are eternal.<sup>105</sup>

The dilemma in which sinners find themselves lends added

---

<sup>103</sup>Anderson, op. cit., p. 178.

<sup>104</sup>John Harris, The Great Commission (Boston: Gould, Kendall, and Lincoln, 1842), p. 331.

<sup>105</sup>Morris, op. cit., p. 181.

urgency to the mission of the Church. Norman Lewis describes this problem thus:

The Bible describes a vast multitude . . . the unevangelized . . . (who) could not be saved if they would. They have no knowledge of the way of salvation. . . . The Bible says they are lost even now. All men out of Christ are lost.<sup>106</sup>

Lewis adds to this description the awful fact that "it is not just that the unreached millions are lost . . . the unreached of the earth cannot help themselves without our help. This fact should underlie all our Christian activity."<sup>107</sup> Again Lewis says, with a note of urgency: "We must obey God. We must reach the unreached with the gospel. If not, we leave them to die never knowing. They cannot know Christ unless we tell them. Unless they know, they cannot live."<sup>108</sup>

Lastly, Richard Wolff of the Back to the Bible Hour, pleads: "May the ultimate destiny of those ignorant of the gospel be another incentive to fulfill our obligation so that salvation will be proclaimed throughout the earth to a perishing world."<sup>109</sup>

#### The Church's Mission

There is more to the urgency of the Christian message than the important fact that sinners are lost. The motivation to mission comes also from the fact that the Church has an answer to the problem of the sinner. Lindsell points to this as part of the motivation

---

<sup>106</sup>Lewis, op. cit., p. 76.

<sup>107</sup>Norman Lewis, "Why Preach In Regions Beyond?" "Go Ye" Means You (Lincoln, Nbr.: Back to the Bible Publishers, 1962), p. 71.

<sup>108</sup>Ibid., p. 70.

<sup>109</sup>Richard Wolff, The Final Destiny of the Heathen (Lincoln, Nbr.: Back to the Bible Publishers, 1961), p. 103.



for mission when he says:

The revolt (against hell) in the Christian mind lies in the thought that men have to go there at all, recognizing that God has made it possible for men to be redeemed and to escape hell. It is precisely this aspect of hell with reference to the Christian mind that has stimulated missionary enterprise.<sup>110</sup>

Some critics of the missions programs of Christianity have charged that there is too little return for the total expenditure. This criticism shows the difference between God's viewpoint and man's viewpoint. Harold Cook said: "There is a possibility that some of them--perhaps only a minority--will accept God's offer of new life if someone only tells them of it. But that puts the burden on us."<sup>111</sup> The value of one soul is inestimable and "God . . . has charged those of us who already know the good news with the responsibility of spreading it to others. They are . . . dead in their sins; and . . . they are without excuse."<sup>112</sup>

The key to whether or not the Church will be motivated by the prospects of sinners going to hell ultimately rests on whether the Church takes to heart the Biblical message concerning sinners and their ultimate destiny and the responsibility given by God to the Church. As Harold Cook points out:

When we talk about salvation we mean salvation from sin and from the results of sin. . . . According to the New Testament, mankind is lost, condemned by God because of its sin. . . . But no man can fully believe the New Testament picture of mankind apart from Christ and remain indifferent.

---

<sup>110</sup>Lindsell, op. cit., p. 72.

<sup>111</sup>Harold R. Cook, Introduction to Christian Missions (Chicago: Moody Press, 1971, p. 27.

<sup>112</sup>Ibid.

If he really believes it, he cannot help feeling constrained to make the message of salvation known--known to lost men everywhere.<sup>113</sup>

Another way of looking at this responsibility of the Church was given by Cook:

But if Christianity is the only true religion; if Christ is the only Savior; if the gospel is the only message that can offer men eternal life, then how can I keep quiet? Can I rejoice in my own salvation, knowing that others are dying without that salvation?<sup>114</sup>

Some feel that the Church should be more concerned with the problems it faces at home before trying to win the world. This argument overlooks the task set for the Church by God. Lewis outlines this task by saying:

To what people are Christians most responsible? The Bible answers: To those not yet reached by the gospel. God's goal in this age is not a converted world. Rather, it is a world evangelized. We must go to distant lands. We must offer Christ to every man.<sup>115</sup>

In connection with II Corinthians 5:10 which says that "we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad," Lewis points out: "No excuse will stand the test of that hour . . . . Christians who refused the gospel to lost men will be faced with their crime."<sup>116</sup> Lewis feels that Christians who deprive sinners of the Gospel will be judged for it:

What of a man who knows others are dying without Christ, yet shuts his heart against them? Can a man belong to Christ

---

<sup>113</sup>Ibid., pp. 22, 24. <sup>114</sup>Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>115</sup>Norman Lewis, "Missionary Purpose," "Go Ye" Means You (Lincoln, Nbr.: Back to the Bible Publishers, 1962), p. 89.

<sup>116</sup>Lewis, "The Church's Crime," pp. 80, 81.



and have none of Christ's compassion? The Bible says, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Rom. 8:9). Can the Holy Spirit be in a man's life without manifesting His presence?<sup>117</sup>

Lewis makes a good point when he says: "To damn the people, Christians have but to leave them alone. By doing nothing we doom them forever. . . . To destroy them we need only let them die, as they now live, knowing not the gospel."<sup>118</sup> The Church cannot be idle. Idleness is the same as refusal to obey Christ's command.

Lindsell also placed a strong emphasis upon the connection between the doctrine of hell and the Church's motivation:

Hell has got to be linked always with the obligation and the responsibility of the Christian to do something about it so that men will have an opportunity to hear of Christ before the time of their probation is over. . . . Hell becomes a powerful force which constrains us to labor in the Father's business.<sup>119</sup>

Lindsell rejects the idea that God will somehow reveal Himself apart from the gospel of Jesus Christ, as preached through the Church. Once he has established this, he says:

Denying the idea, then, that God reveals Himself apart from the gospel as mediated through the Church, it does make the situation with reference to the heathen look very bad. The blackness of the picture, on the other hand, ought to break the heart of the Church and bring the Church to its knees in an honest and sincere effort to remedy the condition that there are so many men without Christ and thus without hope in this world or in eternity.<sup>120</sup>

H. Orton Wiley, in his works on theology, outlines the doctrine of hell carefully. He does not consider at great lengths the relationship between this doctrine and the motivation of the Church for mission. He does say, however, that "this consideration should

---

<sup>117</sup>Ibid., p. 81. <sup>118</sup>Ibid., p. 77.

<sup>119</sup>Lindsell, op. cit., p. 74. <sup>120</sup>Ibid., p. 111.

suppress trifling, inspire caution, and wake concern."<sup>121</sup>

In drawing his comprehensive work on the doctrine of eternal punishment to a close, Buis summarizes:

This doctrine must be preached with the prayer that it will awaken the unconverted, but perhaps its preaching will be more effective in another way; that is, as a means to awaken God's people to the urgency of evangelistic and missionary endeavors.<sup>122</sup>

#### Specific Motivation from the Doctrine

The thesis of this study is that there is a definite motivation for mission in the doctrine of eternal punishment. This is supported by Junius B. Reimensnyder who states, "the fear of eternal sufferings and the hope of everlasting rewards, are the most powerful motives of human conduct."<sup>123</sup>

This is not to say that this doctrine is the only, or even the most important, motive for missions. There are many other reasons for performing missions and some of them motivate people more strongly than the doctrine of eternal punishment. Some feel more motivation from the idea of God's love, others from God's commands, while still others want to deal with man in the wholistic sense of improving his life now as well as give him hope for eternal life. Soper felt that:

There can be no doubt that fear of hell has been a motive in missionary preaching. Missionaries have gone out to take the gospel to those who have not heard of Christ in order to save them from a dreadful fate. . . . But there is great need

---

<sup>121</sup>H. Orton Wiley and Paul T. Culbertson, Introduction to Christian Theology (Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1964), p. 435.

<sup>122</sup>Buis, op. cit., p. 135.

<sup>123</sup>Junius B. Reimensnyder, Doom Eternal (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1887), p. 280.



of caution in making the charge that this has been a leading motive.<sup>124</sup>

This doctrine must be a part of the total picture of the Church's responsibility toward the world because it occupies such a prominent place in the Bible. Even D. T. Niles admitted:

There are those who insist that no genuine and urgent conviction about the mission of the Church is possible unless one is able to say positively: Some will be saved and others will be damned . . . those who are able to state the matter in this way do have a sense of urgency about their evangelistic and missionary responsibility . . . .<sup>125</sup>

Arthur Climenhaga states the position of evangelicals as follows:

We will stress the awful reality of eternal loss through sin and unbelief for those who are found out of Christ at the cessation of this life. . . . We shall speak of the reality of divine judgment and divine retribution, punishment of sin and unbelief eternally. On that basis we shall take very seriously the reality of hell and the lake of fire.<sup>126</sup>

Francis Schaeffer established a method of witnessing to non-Christians in the book The God Who Is There. It involved pushing an unbeliever to the logical conclusion of his presuppositions to make him see that his actions are not supported by his beliefs. After establishing this method of witnessing he said:

How dare we deal with men in this way? Only for one reason--because Christianity is truth. If we are not functioning in the area that this is absolute truth, such evangelism is cruel beyond measure. But if this is truth, if it is true that this man before me is separated from God and lost now and for eternity, then even though in individual cases men do not accept Christ and are left worse off than when you began, you must nevertheless have the courage

---

<sup>124</sup>Soper, op. cit., p. 145.

<sup>125</sup>Niles, op. cit., p. 92.

<sup>126</sup>Climenhaga, "Mission--and the Neo-Universalism," p. 13.

so to speak.<sup>127</sup> . . . If there is true Christian salvation there is lostness.

The truth of the lostness of man forms the basis for the motivation for, and the importance of, the work of missions. The basis for the motivation in mission from the doctrine of eternal punishment is no less than the truth of Christianity as objective truth. If Christianity as revealed in Scripture is not considered as objective truth then there is no motivation for missions. More than that, there is no real basis for Christians proclaiming the gospel at all for it is no longer the "good news." It is only a cultural expression which has no greater claim on men's lives than any anthropological system. The importance of mission work revolves around the fact that men are really lost and bound for an eternity without Christ.

#### SUMMARY

The stated purpose of this chapter was to discuss the major trends of thinking for and against the doctrine of eternal punishment as motivation for mission.

It was shown that there has been a rise of opposition to this doctrine, in any form, especially in Universalism, which has become prevalent in this century. Universalism's attack on the doctrine of eternal punishment appealed largely to the infinite love of God as overruling all else. Universalists do not agree on how God will ultimately bring all men into conformation with His will, but they are unanimous in rejecting the idea that hell is eternal. Much of the

---

<sup>127</sup>Francis A. Schaeffer, The God Who Is There (Downer's Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1968), p. 131.



problem with Universalism arises from an incorrect understanding of the nature of Christ, the authority of Scripture, and misconceptions in many other areas of the Christian faith.

Similar to the arguments of Universalism were the attacks of those who reject the doctrine of hell. Of this group Soper, Walker, Buckley, Bonnell, and Inge were quoted. It was shown that these arguments all arose from a faulty view of Scripture. It was pointed out that the Scriptures are the basis for the doctrine of hell.

A study of approximately 5000 people who attended Urbana '67 showed the need for a renewed emphasis on the doctrine of eternal punishment. Though almost all of those responding to a questionnaire felt that man's soul lived on after death and would be rewarded or punished or punished by God, only some 16% felt that "saving souls" was a primary motive for missions.

The doctrine of eternal punishment was examined and found to contain much motivation for the Church to be involved in the missions endeavor. It was stated that the doctrine, correctly understood from a Biblical perspective, furnished much motivation for missions.

The state of sinners under the condemnation of God was studied. It was shown that this necessitated a renewed emphasis upon this doctrine in the Church. The responsibility of the Church to the world was seen as arising directly out of the doctrine of eternal punishment. The chapter concluded by quoting, among others, Lindsell, Climenhaga, Lewis, and Schaeffer. They pointed to the fact that there is definite motivation for the Church in this doctrine.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### FOR FURTHER STUDY

The twentieth century has witnessed the resurgence of Universalism. Universalism rejects the "eternal" aspect of eternal punishment. It holds that all men will ultimately be saved. Hell is reformatory rather than retributive. The love of God will finally overrule all else. The rejection of this doctrine cuts the nerve of the motivation for missions. Universalism should be rejected because it is built on men's assumptions and misconceptions about the nature of God, not on the Word of God.

#### SUMMARY

The problem under investigation in this study was stated in question form in chapter one: "Does the doctrine that sinners are going to hell motivate the Church to do anything for them?" This was answered by an investigation of the attacks on the doctrine and by researching the support for the doctrine found in the Bible and in contemporary literature.

The arguments against the doctrine of eternal punishment are based on false premises. If the Bible is taken as the authority, this doctrine must be a part of one's theology.

Given the Biblical basis for this doctrine, the Church must renew its teaching concerning a proper concept of eternal



punishment. The literature cited showed the urgency which should characterize the Church's mission activity. The study by Barkman indicated a lack in understanding either the doctrine of eternal punishment or the relationship between the doctrine and the motivation for mission. This points to the need for renewed emphasis upon the doctrine. It was shown that those who accept the authority of the Bible also feel the urgency of missions because man is lost and hell-bound. The motivation felt by the Church rests finally on whether the Church takes seriously the Biblical message concerning sinners and their ultimate destiny and the responsibility given by Jesus to the Church to reach sinners. It was pointed out that all the Church must do to condemn sinners to hell is to leave them alone in their sin.

From word studies and inductive studies of the Scriptures it was shown that especially Jesus, Paul, and John taught a literal, real punishment for all sinners. It was shown that eternal punishment involves suffering, separation from God, and that it is everlasting.

The best example of motivation was in God's sending Christ to save sinful man from hell, for God does "not wish any to perish but for all to come to repentance" (II Peter 3:9). Christ's whole mission on earth centered around seeking and saving lost man (Luke 19:10). Man is already judged and in a lost condition because he does not believe in the name of God's Son (John 3:18). The necessity of Christ's death was caused by the reality that sinful men are on the way to eternal punishment. Paul, too, was motivated by the fact that man's sinfulness leads only to eternal punishment. The Church should find a great deal of motivation from Hebrews 10:31: "It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God."

## CONCLUSIONS

Several conclusions arise from this study. These were the more important:

1. The Bible teaches that there is eternal punishment for all who do not claim the salvation available in Jesus Christ.
2. There is a discernable motivation arising from the doctrine of eternal punishment, shown in the actions of Biblical characters toward sinners (God sending Christ; Christ coming into the world and dying willingly; Paul's preaching and missionary activities; and John's teachings, to name a few).
3. There is a deadening influence on motivation for missions when the doctrine of eternal punishment is discarded or neglected.
4. The Church today needs a renewed emphasis upon the doctrine of eternal punishment if it is going to accomplish its mission in the world.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Future investigations may include an historical study of the relationship between the doctrine of eternal punishment and missions activity from Biblical times until the present. This would involve determining what groups were involved in the most intensive mission activity in relation to their concept of eternal punishment. It would also involve the converse: what groups had a strong emphasis upon the doctrine of eternal punishment and what impact did this doctrine have on their mission activity.

A study could be made on the subjective experience of various



missionaries and to what degree they have been motivated by their understanding of eternal punishment. This might be accomplished by a questionnaire to be administered to different groups of missionaries, active as well as retired, prospective as well as veteran.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### A. BOOKS

- Anderson, Gerald (ed.). The Theology of the Christian Mission. New York: Abingdon Press, 1961.
- Arndt, Wm. F., and F. Wilbur Gingrich. A Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957.
- Barkman, P. F., E. R. Dayton, and E. L. Gruman (eds.). Christian Collegians and Foreign Missions. Monrovia, Calif.: MARC, 1969.
- Barnes, Albert. Barnes' Notes on the New Testament. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 1962.
- Bartlett, Samuel C. Life and Death Eternal. Boston: American Tract Society, 1866.
- Beaver, R. Pierce (ed.). To Advance the Gospel. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967.
- Bonnell, John Sutherland. Heaven and Hell. New York: Abingdon Press, 1956.
- Buckley, James M. Theory and Practice of Foreign Missions. New York: Eaton and Mains, 1911.
- Buis, Harry. The Doctrine of Eternal Punishment. Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1957.
- Bullinger, Ethelbert W. A Critical Lexicon and Concordance. London: Samuel Bagster and Sons, Ltd., 1969.
- Cassara, Ernest (ed.). Universalism in America. Boston: Beacon Press, 1971.
- Cook, Harold R. Introduction to Christian Missions. Chicago: Moody Press, 1971.
- Ferre, Nels F. S. The Christian Understanding of God. New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1951.
- \_\_\_\_\_. The Sun and the Umbrella. New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1953.



- Godbey, W. B. Commentary on the New Testament. 7 vols. Cincinnati, Ohio: M. W. Knapp, 1898.
- Harmon, Nolan B. (ed.). The Interpreter's Bible. 12 vols. New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1951.
- Henry, C. F. H., and S. Mooneyham (eds.). One Race, One Gospel, One Task. Minneapolis: World Wide Publications, 1967.
- Hocking, William E. Rethinking Missions. New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1932.
- Kittel, Gerhard (ed.). Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. 8 vols. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1965.
- Lewis, Norman. "Go Ye" Means You. Lincoln, Nbr.: Back to the Bible Publishers, 1962.
- Lindsell, Harold (ed.). The Church's Worldwide Mission. Waco, Texas: Word Books, 1966.
- \_\_\_\_\_. An Evangelical Theology of Missions. Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1970.
- Machen, J. Gresham. What Is Christianity. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1951.
- Niles, D. T. Upon the Earth. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1962.
- Reimensnyder, Junius B. Doom Eternal. New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1887.
- Savage, M. J. Life Beyond Death. New York: The Knickerbocker Press, 1902.
- Schaeffer, Francis A. The God Who Is There. Downer's Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1968.
- Soper, Edmund D. The Philosophy of the Christian World Mission. New York: Abingdon-Codesbury Press, 1943.
- The Triumph of the Missionary Motive. Philadelphia: American Baptist Publishing Society, 1920.
- Walker, D. P. The Decline of Hell. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964.
- Weaver, Bishop J. Universal Restoration. Dayton, Ohio: United Brethren Publishing House, 1878.
- Webster, Noah. Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary, ed. Jean L. McKechnie. New York: Library Guild, Inc., 1965.

Webster's New World Dictionary. New York: The World Publishing Co., 1964.

Wiley, H. Orton. Christian Theology. 3 vols. Kansas City, Mo.: Beacon Hill Press, 1952.

\_\_\_\_\_ and Paul T. Culbertson. Introduction to Christian Theology. Kansas City: Beacon Hill Press, 1964.

Wolff, Richard. The Final Destiny of the Heathen. Lincoln, Nbr.: Back to the Bible Publishers, 1961.

#### B. PERIODICALS

Farley, Edward. "Dimensions of Death in the Life of Faith," Pittsburgh Perspective, Vol. VI, No. 1 (March, 1965), p. 10.

Ramm, Bernard. "Will All Men Be Finally Saved?" Eternity, Vol. 15, No. 8 (August, 1964), p. 22.

Torrance, T. F. "Universalism or Election?" Scottish Journal of Theology, Vol. 2, No. 3 (September, 1949), p. 318.

#### C. UNPUBLISHED SOURCES

Climenhaga, Arthur. "Mission--and the Neo-Universalism." Unpublished paper presented to the Contemporary Theological Trends class, Western Evangelical Seminary, January, 1973.

\_\_\_\_\_. "The New Universalism." Unpublished paper presented to a Ministerial Conference sponsored jointly by Western Conservative Baptist Theological Seminary and Western Evangelical Seminary, March, 1965, Portland, Oregon.