The Doctrine of Hell and Eternal Conscious Punishment

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Introduction
Preston Sprinkle edited *Four Views on Hell*. An article on “The Campaign to Eliminate Hell” quotes Sprinkle:

“My prediction is that, even within conservative evangelical circles, the annihilation view of hell will be the dominant view in 10 or 15 years,” says Preston Sprinkle, who co-authored the book *Erasing Hell*, which, in 2011, debuted at number three on the *New York Times* bestseller list. “I base that on how many well-known pastors secretly hold that view. I think that we are at a time and place when there is a growing suspicion of adopting tradition for the sake of tradition.”
And later in the article: “I remember hearing that thinking, you can't be a Christian and believe that,” he says. “I was just reciting, like a parrot, the evangelical narrative regarding anybody who doesn't toe the line. But, back six years ago, when I truly revisited the question of hell, I was kind of shocked at how little biblical support there was for the traditional view.”
“The bow of God’s wrath is bent, and the arrow made ready on the string, and justice bends the arrow at your heart, and strains the bow, and it is nothing but the mere pleasure of God, and that of an angry God, without any promise or obligations at all, that keeps the arrow one moment from being made drunk with your blood.”

“What bothered me was the realization that this was a sermon I would never be game to preach – even allowing from some cultural transposition and differences in communication style. And it occurred to me that the reason for this was not high-minded and theological but very carnal. I am more frightened of being thought of as a redneck ‘fire and brimstone’ preacher than I am of God’s awful wrath. I care more about the high opinion of others than their eternal damnation in the fires of hell.”

Tony Payne, “A bit afraid of hell,” the eBriefing 381 (June 2010), 3.
CONTEMPORARY SCENE
Heaven

Don Piper, *90 Minutes in Heaven* (Grand Rapids: Revell, 2004).

Bill Wiese, *23 Minutes In Hell: One Man's Story About What He Saw, Heard, and Felt in that Place of Torment* (Lake Mary, Florida: Charisma House, 2006).

Erwin W. Lutzer, *One Minute After You Die* (Chicago: Moody 2007). (This is a good, biblical response to many of the speculative and sensational works.)


Kevin Malarkey, *The Boy Who Came Back from Heaven: A Remarkable Account of Miracles, Angels, and Life beyond This World* (Carol Stream: Tyndale, 2010).


Christopher W. Morgan and Robert A. Peterson, ed. *Is Hell for Real or Does Everyone Go To Heaven?* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2011).

On the one hand, there are those who go beyond what the Bible teaches about heaven. On the other hand, there are those who deny the reality of hell as eternal conscious punishment.
Al Mohler notes there are “Interrelated cultural, theological, and philosophical changes that explain the contemporary answer to the question, What happened to evangelical convictions about hell?” (Mohler, “Modern Theology: The Disappearance of Hell,” Hell Under Fire)
The first issue is a changed view of God. A second issue is a changed view of justice. A third shift in the larger culture concerns the advent of psychological worldview. A fourth shift concerns the concept of salvation.

Essentially, our concept of God and the gospel are at stake. What could be more important? . . . Hell may be denied, but it will not disappear.
The contemporary person’s question: Would a loving God really send good people to hell?

Paul’s perpetual and universal question: How could a just and holy God ever declare guilty sinners to be righteousness in his sight?
The first question is distorted in three ways: First, God is defined only in terms of love. God is not less than loving; he is more than loving. He is also holy, just and good. His wrath toward sin is just and is a proper display of his holiness and goodness.

The second distortion is that people are described as “good” in the question. But “no one is righteous, not even one.”

Third, the question also distorts the portrait of God by portraying him as the one sending people to hell, as if he happily does so. But Paul puts the blame on our shoulders.
The right question, the one that Paul answers in Romans is, “How can a loving and just God declare the guilty to be right with him?” or “How can those who deserve hell go to heaven?”

Christopher Morgan and Robert Peterson, What is Hell?
THE MAIN ISSUE
“Hell Under Fire: Part 1 of our Interview with Christopher Morgan”

http://www.koinoniablog.net/2011/03/hell-interview.html
“So, in a sense, the historic doctrine of hell stands for everything the contemporary culture rejects – that God’s love is not sentimental but interconnected to his holiness and justice, that humans are universally guilty and pervasively corrupt, that Jesus is the only substitute/representative/sacrifice for human sin, that faith in Christ is the only means to receive the benefits of his saving work, and that God’s ultimate victory does not mean the elimination of all sin from the universe, but the appropriate and final punishment of it.”
“I would suggest that though hell is not the point of the biblical story, it plays an important role as a backdrop, much like sin. It is not as critical as the deity of Christ or his being the only Mediator, but it is inescapably linked to such key doctrines – God, sin, and Christ’s saving work.

Further, I would also suggest that one’s doctrine of hell rarely drives the other aspects of a person’s theology. Instead, I submit that the reverse is true. A person’s view of hell is often the corollary to other more central doctrines – the love of God, the justice of God, the nature of God’s victory, guilt and corruption in Adam, and so on.”
“This means that a shift in a person or group’s view of hell is often an indication that these other beliefs have shifted as well. Unlike some, I do not see modifications related to hell as a slippery slope, but more like a thermometer.”
Theology, or our understanding of God, is more like a sweater than a smorgasbord. We can’t logically walk up to the Bible buffet and load up on the teachings we like while skipping the ones we don’t: give me an extra helping of love but hold the stuff about wrath. Instead, our beliefs about God and the Christian life are intertwined like the strands of yarn in a cable-knit sweater. When we tug on one, the others tend to come, too.

“Toward a Better Understanding of Hell”
Collin Hansen interview with Christopher Morgan

http://thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/tgc/2011/03/18/toward-a-better-understanding-of-hell/
“The traditional way to categorize the major views concerning hell is eternal punishment, annihilationism, and universalism. These differ as to the nature of hell. Eternal punishment, the historic view of the church, holds that hell is a place of eternal, conscious, and final punishment, banishment, and death.”
“The second view, annihilationism, and is sometimes known by one of its forms, “conditionalism.” It maintains that the wicked will ultimately be exterminated and cease to exist. In this view, hell is temporary.”
“The third view, universalism, contends that in the end all persons will experience the love of God and eternal life. All will be ultimately saved and none will be finally lost.

Historically, the church has regarded both annihilationism and universalism as significant errors, with universalism being very serious, even heretical.”
Hell is present, difficult existence, e.g. rape, AIDS, starvation, genocide, etc.

But, what does the Bible teach? Anything that we experience in this life, as horrible and horrific it is, it really nothing compared to the real, eternal hell.
Hell is self-exclusion from God, i.e. it is self-chosen and though God acknowledges this self-chosen destiny, He is passive.

Though accurate, it is not all there is to say. Hell is also God’s active response to and exclusion of us.
Al Mohler, “Air Conditioning Hell: How Liberalism Happens,” 9Marks eJournal 7/1 (January/February 2010), 13-15. This is how one “slides” into liberal theology:

First, a doctrine simply falls from mention.

Second, a doctrine is revised and retained in reduced form.

Third, a doctrine is subjected to a form of ridicule.

Fourth, a doctrine is reformulated in order to remove its intellectual and moral offensiveness.
Historical
Summary of Church History

“As regards the fate of the wicked ..., the general view was that their punishment would be eternal, without any possibility of remission.” (J.N.D. Kelly, Early Christian Doctrine, p, 56-57)

“Everlasting punishment of the wicked always was ... the orthodox theory.” (Phillip Schaff, History of the Christian Church, p. 273–74)

“The punishment inflicted upon the lost was regarded by the Fathers of the Ancient Church, with very few exceptions, as endless.” (William G. T. Shedd, A History of Christian Doctrine, p. 414)
“Until the nineteenth century almost all Christian theologians taught the reality of eternal torment in hell. Here and there, outside the theological mainstream, were some who believed that the wicked would be finally annihilated. . . . Even fewer were the advocates of universal salvation, though these few included some major theologians of the early church. Eternal punishment was firmly asserted in official creeds and confessions of the churches. It must have seemed as indispensable a part of the universal Christian belief as the doctrines of the Trinity and the incarnation. Since 1800 this situation has entirely changed, and no traditional Christian doctrine has been so widely abandoned as that of eternal punishment.” (p. 48)

Biblical
“ten biblical passages that I believe teach that the wicked will suffer eternal conscious punishment.”

1. Undying Worm and Unquenchable Fire (OT)

**Isaiah 66:22-24**

For as the new heavens and the new earth that I make shall remain before me, says the LORD, so shall your offspring and your name remain.

From new moon to new moon, and from Sabbath to Sabbath, all flesh shall come to worship before me, declares the LORD.

And they shall go out and look on the dead bodies of the men who have rebelled against me. For *their worm shall not die, their fire shall not be quenched*, and they shall be an abhorrence to all flesh.
2. Everlasting Life/
Everlasting Contempt

**Daniel 12:1-2**
At that time shall arise Michael, the great prince who has charge of your people. And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never has been since there was a nation till that time. But at that time your people shall be delivered, everyone whose name shall be found written in the book. And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.
3. Eternal Fire/The Fire of Hell

Matthew 18:6-9
Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe to the world for temptations to sin! For it is necessary that temptations come, but woe to the one by whom the temptation comes! And if your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life crippled or lame than with two hands or two feet to be thrown into the eternal fire. And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into the hell of fire.
4. Eternal Punishment/Eternal Life

Matthew 25:31-46
When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on his right, “Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” . . Then he will say to those on his left, “Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. . . . And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”
Mark 9:42-48

Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him if a great millstone were hung around his neck and he were thrown into the sea. And if your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than with two hands to go to hell, to the unquenchable fire. And if your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life lame than with two feet to be thrown into hell. And if your eye causes you to sin, tear it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than with two eyes to be thrown into hell, “where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.”
6. Everlasting Destruction

2 Thessalonians 1:5-10
This is evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be considered worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you are also suffering—since indeed God considers it just to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to grant relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints, and to be marveled at among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed.
7. The Punishment of Eternal Fire

**Jude 7**

Just as Sodom and Gomorrah and the surrounding cities, which likewise indulged in sexual immorality and pursued unnatural desire, serve as an example by undergoing a *punishment of eternal fire*. 
8. Blackest Darkness
Reserved Forever

**Jude 13**

[These people are] wild waves of the sea, casting up the foam of their own shame; wandering stars, for whom *the gloom of utter darkness has been reserved forever.*
9. The Smoke of Their Torment Rises For Ever and Ever

**Revelation 14:9-11**
If anyone worships the beast and its image and receives a mark on his forehead or on his hand, he also will drink the wine of God’s wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger, and he will be tormented with fire and sulfur in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest, day or night, these worshipers of the beast and its image, and whoever receives the mark of its name.
10. The Lake of Fire

**Revelation 20:10, 14-15**

And the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever. . . . Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.
Exegetical/Theological
Christopher W. Morgan and Robert A. Peterson, *What is Hell?* (P & R, 2010) and *Is Hell for Real or Does Everyone Go to Heaven?* (Zondervan, 2011). The following slides contain a summary of this work (including a summary and adaption from Andy Naselli’s notes regarding the five key truths).
First, “Hell is punishment” (Matt. 25:31-46; 2 Thess. 1:5–10; Rev. 20:10–15). God justly punishes people as retribution for their moral crimes against him. Hell is not even close to a big party. Jesus teaches that it would be better to cut off your hand or foot or to tear out your eye than to use them to sin and consequently suffer the just penalty in hell (Matt. 5:27–30; Mark 9:42–48).
a. The punishment is *deserved*. For clarity and emphasis, the biblical writers stress the justice of retributive punishment.

b. The punishment consists of *suffering*. Those in hell suffer intense and excruciating pain – emotional, spiritual, and physical. The suffering never ends. The intensity of the suffering seems to be according to the wickedness of the person’s behavior. And hell is utterly fearful and dreadful; the suffering is constant.
c. The punishment is *conscious*. “If hell did not consist of conscious suffering, it is hard to see how it could be worse than death, worse than earthly suffering, filled with weeping and gnashing of teeth, or a place of misery. The biblical images show that people in hell will be aware of their suffering and just punishment.” (*Is Hell for Real*, 43)
d. The punishment is *eternal*. The never-ending nature of the punishment is shown vividly in Revelation 14:11, where it is said that the wicked “will have no rest day or night.” The endlessness of the punishment is also confirmed by the forceful pronouncement in Revelation 20:10, “They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.”
Second, “Hell is destruction” and death (Matt. 7:13–14; John 3:1; 2 Thess. 1:9). It speaks of loss, waste ruin, and refers to the fact that one has lost the essence of our purpose or function, the reason for our being.

But what is the nature of the judgment that they suffer? . . . The words need not mean "destruction" in the sense of "extinction." In fact, leaving aside for the moment judgment texts, none of the key terms usually has this meaning in the old and New Testaments. Rather, they usually refer to the situation of a person or object that has lost the essence of its nature or function. . . . In other words, these key terms appear to be used in general much like we use the word "destroy" in the sentence, "The tornado destroyed the house." The component parts of that house did not cease to exist, but the entity "house," a structure that provides shelter for human beings, ceased to exist.
We conclude that annihilationism finds no clear support in the teaching of Paul and that, indeed, the language of 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9 (not to mention other passages) tends to undercut the notion. The wicked, Paul suggests, do not simply cease to exist; they undergo “eternal ruin,” punishment, and exclusion from God’s presence as long as the new age shall last.
Third, “Hell is banishment” (Matt. 7:23; 25:41; Rev. 22:15). Hell is the place where God banishes rebels from his kingdom once and for all. Separation could imply divine passivity, but banishment speaks of God’s active judgment and carries the weight of the dreadfulfulness of exclusion of God’s grace.
Fourth, “Hell is a place of suffering.” The Bible depicts hell with images that produce shock and fear: darkness, fire, and suffering.
Darkness. Those in hell are bound “hand and foot” and then thrown into “the outer darkness” (Matt. 8:12; 22:13; 25:30). “The gloom of utter darkness” awaits them (Jude 13).
Fire. Those in hell are thrown “into the fiery furnace” (Matt. 13:42, 50), and they burn with “unquenchable fire” (Mark 3:12; 9:43). “Their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched” (Mark 9:48). God’s judgment is “a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries” (Heb. 10:27). Those in hell “drink the wine of God’s wrath, poured full strength into the cup of his anger” and are “tormented with fire and sulfur” (Rev. 14:10). They are “thrown into the lake of fire” (Rev. 20:15; cf. 19:20; 20:10, 14; 21:8).
Suffering. Nothing on earth hurts like hell. The severe conscious punishment in hell hurts physically, emotionally, and mentally. That’s why “there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth” (Matt. 8:12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; 24:51; 25:30; Luke 13:28). God warns the wicked who are rich, “Your gold and silver have corroded, and their corrosion will be evidence against you and will eat your flesh like fire” (James 5:3).
Finally, “Hell is eternal” (Matt. 25:41, 46; Jude 7, 13; Rev. 14:10–11; 20:10). It lasts forever and ever. It never ever ends. There’s no relief in sight, ever.
“Scripture’s witness is clear: the suffering of the wicked in body and soul in hell will never end. There will never come a time when people in hell find relief. They rebelled against God and missed out on true life forever. They are punished by God and banished from his kingdom, and they suffer endlessly.” (What is Hell, 20)
Interpreting the Biblical Teaching on Hell

1. Mythical – not an option for Evangelicals who affirm the inerrancy and authority of the Bible.

2. Literal – yes, but the teaching on hell is also metaphorical.

3. Metaphor with a literal, real referent/meaning – we learn of the unknown from the known, and the reality lived/experienced is worse than the metaphor described.
Implications of these pictures of hell. First, they complement biblical portraits of God – Judge who sentences the wicked, Victor who defeats his enemies, King who allows his citizens into His kingdom. Second, they flow naturally from the biblical portraits of sin. They are logical aspects of sin – crime leads to punishment; spiritual death leads to destruction; alienation leads to banishment.
Third, they picture the doctrine of the atonement. On the cross, Jesus drank the cup of wrath – punishment; He offered Himself as a sacrifice for our sins – death; He experienced the God-forsakenness – banishment.

Fourth, they stand in contrast to biblical portraits of salvation. It awaits those who are not justified by faith, those who have never been reconciled to God through Christ.
Fifth, they contrast biblical portraits of the kingdom – punishment vs. reward; destruction vs. eternal life; banishment vs. presence of God; eternal punishment vs. inheriting the kingdom of God.
EFCA
Response and Eternal Destiny

10. We believe that God commands everyone everywhere to believe the gospel by turning to Him in repentance and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that God will raise the dead bodily and judge the world, assigning the unbeliever to condemnation and eternal conscious punishment and the believer to eternal blessedness and joy with the Lord in the new heaven and the new earth, to the praise of His glorious grace. Amen.
Cf. also *Evangelical Convictions: A Theological Exposition of the Statement of Faith of the Evangelical Church of America*, 250-252:

But what are we to make of the language of destruction? The Greek verb for “destroy” (*apollymi*, cf. also the related noun *apōleia*) need not mean “cease to exist” but is commonly used to describe the ruining of something such that it becomes useless for its intended purpose.

A related word (*olethron*) is used in a similar way. . . . Paul’s words imply an ongoing conscious existence, but one in which persons have been so corrupted that they almost cease to function as human beings created in the image of God.
Hell may be understood as a culmination of the effects of sin and the confirmation of God’s opposition to it. It is both the inexorable result of human choice and the active and deliberate judgment of God. The threefold description of hell as wrath, alienation and corruption is illustrated in the effects of the first sin. Adam and Eve incurred the wrath of God through the curse which resulted in physical suffering (strenuous work and painful childbearing), they were alienated from God (cast from the garden), and their nature was corrupted (through the spread of sin and death to all their descendants). Fallen humanity continues to experience these effects unless they are rescued by God’s grace in the gospel. Apart from that rescue, that state of wrath, alienation and corruption will be confirmed, intensified and made permanent when at the judgment God’s verdict of condemnation is pronounced and the sentence is executed in the ongoing reality the Bible calls hell.
Pastoral
Jonathan Gibson, “Where the Fires are Not Quenched”: Biblical, Theological & Pastoral Perspectives on Hell.” (VI. The Weight of Hell: Pastoral Reflections”)

Jonathan Gibson, “Hell part 4: Pastoral reflections on hell,” The Briefing:
http://matthiasmedia.com/briefing/2010/06/hell-part-4-pastoral-reflections-on-hell/
1. *How We Speak About Hell.* Hell should change the way we speak about hell. Reference to hell should not be flippant, and neither should it be used in an exaggerated way that goes beyond what Scripture teaches. And if there is a malicious joy in this life, I am not sure hell, or my condition or Christ or grace is understood/grasped.
2. *Clarity About End-Time Judgment*. The issue of how we speak about hell is appropriate for Christian preachers and teachers. Given the biblical teaching of hell, preachers and teachers should teach with clarity on the end-time judgment, not in vague and general terms. Preachers should not just talk about hell, they should preach hell. Once an apologia has been given about the reasonableness of speaking of hell, and this is necessary in our postmodern world, we should not stop short of actually preaching hell.
3. *Hell’s Insufficiency.* In preaching hell we ought to preach not only the stark reality of it, unpacking the variety of images and pictures, but we should also speak of hell’s insufficiency. Hell itself is not able to save people from hell, only Christ is, a Christ testified to by the Scriptures.
4. *People and Death*. Hell should change the way we think about people and death. Regarding people, “There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal.” (C. S. Lewis). Regarding death, the reality of hell, and the fact that many unbelievers pass from this life every day into eternity, should lead us to gospel urgency in order to warn people that death is not the end, hell is – and it does not end.
5. **Bold to Proclaim**. Hell should make believers bold to proclaim. Consider Jesus’ teaching in Matthew 10:28 and Luke 12:5 which arise out of His commission to His disciples to preach. Don’t fear people; fear the One who can destroy both body and soul in hell. The idolatry of pleasing other people and fearing what they think, which we are all so prone to, is best remedied by a wholesome fear of the One who rules hell.
6. Hell should make believers confident to persevere. In Revelation 14, the prospect of God’s future judgments on all who have worshipped the best, “calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who obey God’s commandments and remain faithful to Jesus” (14:12). In other words, eschatological judgment in hell that awaits those who worship the beast serves as a warning not to fall away from faithfully serving Jesus Christ. These texts also warn believers to persevere and endure to the end, helping us to fight sin, so that in the end we do not fall short (Heb. 3:12-14; 4:11).
7. God’s Final Just Punishment of the Ungodly Should Comfort Persecuted Believers. In 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10 Paul writes of hell in the context of Christians suffering persecution and trials. This is not, however, a vindictive statement. It is prefaced with a declaration of God’s right and just judgment (1:5-6). What the persecutor of Christians receive on that day is only what they deserve.
8. The Inevitability of Death and the Eternal Fixity of Hell Should Lead Us to Tears. The doctrine of hell is a painful topic, and those who do not respond with some emotional pain have simply not understood it. Jesus anguished over Jerusalem’s stubborn resistance to his message (Matt. 23:37). Paul did the same about his fellow Jews (Rom. 9:3). When was the last time you wept over someone you know who is going to hell? (This response to hell now in this life is different to our response once we are with the Lord in all of His glory in the new heaven and earth. Does our response reflect an over-realized eschatology?)
9. *The Doctrine of Hell Should Be Kept in the Right Perspective.* This point relates to hell and living now as we await Christ’s return. The thought that people are heading to hell should lead us to tears and to urgent efforts of gospel mission. When the church loses such urgency, it loses a part of its soul. The question is this: if hell is real, and it is!, what should I do tomorrow? What should I do with the rest of my life?
10. *Hell Shall Not Mar Heaven.* There is nothing in Scripture that hints in any way that hell will somehow disturb or spoil the enjoyment of heaven.
Conclusion
Using the ballast metaphor, Kevin DeYoung, “There’s Something Worse than Death,” concludes, “If we lose the doctrine of hell, either becoming too embarrassed to mention it or too culturally-sensitive to affirm it, we can count on this: the boat will drift. The cross will be stripped of propitiation, our preaching will be devoid of urgency and power, and our work in the world will no longer center on calling people to faith and repentance and building them to maturity in Christ. Lose the ballast of divine judgment and our message, our ministry, and our mission will all eventually change.”

http://www.9marks.org/ejournal/theres-something-worse-death
And when we speak of hell, remember M’Cheyne: “When Robert M’Cheyne met his dearest friend Andrew Bonar one Monday and enquired what Bonar had preached on the previous day, only to receive the answer ‘Hell,’ he asked, ‘Did you preach it with tears?’ That we cannot do until we have come to recognize our own great need of grace to save us from the wrath to come, the terrible nature of that judgment, the provision that God has made for us in Christ, and the calling he has given us to take the gospel to every creature in the name of the One who did not come into the world to condemn it, but to save it.”

(Sinclair B. Ferguson, “Pastoral Theology: The Preacher and Hell,” in *Hell Under Fire*, 237.)