

Evangelicals and the Annihilation of Hell

Part One

by Alan W. Gomes

And now, who is responsible for this God-dishonoring doctrine? And what is his purpose? The promulgator of it is Satan himself; and his purpose in introducing it has been to frighten the people away from studying the Bible and to make them hate God.

— *Joseph Franklin Rutherford, Watchtower Society's Second President* ^[1]

How can Christians possibly project a deity of such cruelty and vindictiveness whose ways include inflicting everlasting torture upon his creatures, however sinful they may have been? Surely a God who would do such a thing is more nearly like Satan than like God, at least by any ordinary moral standards, and by the gospel itself.

— *Clark Pinnock, Professor and Noted Evangelical Author* ^[2]

Christians through the centuries have affirmed that those who do not accept God's offer of salvation in Christ will suffer conscious, everlasting torment. Denial of this teaching has, until recently, been limited almost exclusively to cultic or quasi-cultic groups. For example, the Jehovah's Witnesses vociferously reject the orthodox teaching on hell, denouncing it as an error of apostate Christendom. They teach that the wicked will be "annihilated" rather than suffer eternal torment. Likewise, Herbert Armstrong's Worldwide Church of God, Christian Science, Mormonism, and the New Age movement all repudiate the orthodox doctrine. Besides these undeniably cultic groups, the Seventh-day Adventists also reject the historic doctrine in favor of annihilation. ^[3] While Seventh-day Adventism may not be a cult in the technical theological sense of the term I am using here, ^[4] they nonetheless have been perceived commonly as a "fringe" group by orthodox Christians. ^[5]

Alternative, unorthodox views concerning the final state of the wicked are no longer limited to the fringe. Today, individuals who have been regarded as solidly within the evangelical camp are abandoning the doctrine of conscious, eternal punishment in favor of various "annihilation" scenarios. Probably the most prominent evangelical to go over to the annihilationist position is Anglican John R. W. Stott, Rector of All Soul's church in London. Stott's shift came to light in a book published by InterVarsity Press entitled *Evangelical Essentials: A Liberal-Evangelical Dialogue*. In this book, Stott responds to liberal Anglican David Edwards on a range of theological issues. It was in response to Edwards's position on judgment and hell that Stott

presented his reformulated views. ^[6] Though Stott is probably the most respected evangelical to espouse the annihilationists' cause, others have joined this growing movement as well. Clark Pinnock, John Wenham, Philip Hughes, and Stephen Travis have all positioned themselves as annihilationists within the evangelical camp. ^[7] In addition, Adventist scholars who regard themselves as evangelical, such as Edward Fudge and David A. Dean, also actively propagate annihilationist views. ^[8]

There is every reason to think that more evangelicals will jump on the annihilationist bandwagon. As Clark Pinnock notes, the annihilationist position "does seem to be gaining ground among evangelicals. The fact that no less of a person than J. R. W. Stott has endorsed it now will certainly encourage this trend to continue." ^[9] Furthermore, this movement away from the traditional doctrine of hell is part and parcel of a larger evangelical "megashift" away from other standard orthodox teachings — such as the substitutionary atonement, sin, and judgment — in favor of so-called "new-model" views. ^[10] In other words, the rejection of eternal punishment is but one incident in the larger campaign to construct a kinder, gentler theology.

It is precisely this desire for a kinder, gentler theology that appears to be the dynamic that is driving this movement. Stott's own meditations on the doctrine of hell have led him to say, "Well, emotionally, I find the concept intolerable and do not understand how people can live with it without either cauterizing their feelings or cracking under the strain." ^[11] Pinnock's complaint is even more emotionally charged: "Everlasting torment is intolerable from a moral point of view because it makes God into a bloodthirsty monster who maintains an everlasting Auschwitz for victims whom he does not even allow to die." ^[12]

It would be easy to write off this shift as mere sentimentalism. Yet, such a facile conclusion would be unfair — as is clear in the case of Stott. As emotionally traumatic as Stott finds the doctrine, he admits that our emotions "are a fluctuating, unreliable guide to truth and must not be exalted to a place of supreme authority in determining it." ^[13] Stott is, after all, an evangelical. As such, he declares that the issue for him is "not what does my heart tell me, but what does God's word say?" ^[14]

When one reads the writings of "evangelical annihilationists," it is clear that they believe the Bible is on their side. We are not dealing with liberal critics — like Samuel Davidson, the famous nineteenth-century rationalist critic ^[15] — who admit on the one hand that the Bible teaches the eternal torment of the lost, but who then reject the doctrine in the next breath. In a way, the evangelical annihilationists represent more of a threat to the orthodox doctrine than the cultists and liberals. In the past, defenders of the traditional view could more readily attribute the annihilationist position to a cultic mind-set or to a general denigration of biblical authority. ^[16] Defenders of the doctrine of eternal punishment must now gird up their loins to meet the objections from within their own evangelical camp. ^[17]

Evangelicals must agree with Edward Fudge, a strong advocate of the annihilationist position, when he states that the doctrine must finally be determined by Scripture and Scripture alone. We must "humbly receive" what Scripture says "on this or any subject." ^[18] While it is true that the doctrine of endless punishment for the wicked is the position traditionally held by the church throughout the centuries, this in itself does not make it correct. ^[19] Of course, the fact that the church historically has interpreted the Scriptures to teach the doctrine of endless punishment ought to make us think long and hard before setting the doctrine aside. But when all is said and done, it is the teaching of Scripture that is determinative.

Alternatives to the Traditional View of Endless Punishment

Up until now we have mentioned two broad alternatives to the fate of the wicked: eternal, conscious torment (the traditional view) and annihilationism. But it is important to recognize that there are other nontraditional options besides annihilation, and that even within the annihilationist camp there is significant variety.

Universalism

Simply stated, the doctrine of universalism is that ultimately everyone will be saved. Though this teaching has never been the dominant view of the church, it nevertheless has had its champions. Space simply does not permit us to consider the history of universalistic teaching. ^[20] Suffice it to say, such teaching has not gained a significant foothold among evangelicals. For example, the recent Evangelical Affirmations Conference, held in May of 1989 at Trinity Seminary in Deerfield, Illinois, officially repudiated universalism, even though traditionalists could not muster enough support to secure a repudiation of annihilationism. ^[21] As Millard Erickson observes, it is "difficult to find any evangelicals" who hold to universalism. ^[22] Since universalism has not made significant inroads among evangelicals — at least so far — it is not the focus of this article. ^[23]

Annihilationism

As noted throughout the previous discussion, "annihilationism" is the teaching that God will "condemn them [the wicked] to extinction, which is the second death." ^[24] Those who remain impenitent will simply pass out of existence; they will be no more.

Within this basic model several variations emerge. For example, the Jehovah's Witnesses teach that some persons (e.g., Judas Iscariot) pass out of existence at death, never to return. Others will be raised from nonexistence during the Millennium and be given a chance to accept Jehovah's kingdom. Those failing to do so will be annihilated. ^[25]

The Seventh-day Adventist teaching differs somewhat from the above. Like the Witnesses, the Adventists deny that there is an entity called the "soul" that survives the body. That is to say, the conscious, thinking part of man dies (ceases to exist) with the body. Though this position is often called "soul sleep," the term "soul extinction" better describes it. ^[26] The Adventists teach that the wicked will be raised (or, more properly, "re-created") on the day of judgment. At that time, God will inflict on the wicked "conscious pain of whatever degree and duration God may justly determine." ^[27] This infliction is truly penal in character, though the suffering is not endless. "But in the end...the wicked will be consumed entirely and be no more." ^[28]

Other variations are possible. For one thing, not all annihilationists teach the doctrine of "soul sleep." Many would admit that the wicked experience conscious existence (or even punishment) between their deaths and resurrection (i.e., during the so-called "intermediate state"). Thus, they would experience extinction after their conscious existence in the intermediate state.

Regardless of the individual differences that exist (as well as those yet to be suggested), all annihilationists are united on these points: (1) The ultimate end of the wicked is annihilation or extinction of being, regardless of what state of existence may or may not precede this final annihilation event. (2) The annihilation is eternal; the sentence will never be reversed. These suppositions represent the irreducible core of annihilationist teaching.

Conditional Immortality and Annihilationism

Many writers believe that annihilationism and conditional immortality are just two different names for the same position. ^[29] However, these concepts — while related — are not the same.

Those who affirm "conditional immortality" are called "conditionalists." They deny that the soul of man is inherently immortal. Conditionalists maintain that "our immortality is not a natural attribute of humankind but God's gift." ^[30] David A. Dean says that immortality is "conditional" in the sense that "conditions must be met before the sinner can receive everlasting personal existence." ^[31] Conditionalists contrast their position with what they erroneously perceive to be the traditional teaching, namely, that the soul is by nature absolutely impervious to destruction.

On the other hand, annihilationism has to do with God's ultimate intention to annihilate the wicked, that is, remove them from existence forever. As we shall see below, it would be theoretically possible for one to believe in the natural immortality of the soul in the orthodox sense (rightly understood), and at the same time affirm that God will annihilate the wicked. Even though I will show that such a position is logically possible in theory, in actual practice those who teach annihilationism also teach conditional immortality, and vice versa. This accounts for the tendency to treat the terms as synonyms.

At this juncture, we should observe an error in the conditionalist's understanding of the orthodox view. Conditionalists are fond of charging the orthodox with simply having adopted the Platonic concept of an immortal, indestructible soul. ^[32] They allege that the Platonic teaching of the indestructibility of the soul "really drives the traditional doctrine of hell more than exegesis does." ^[33] The traditional logic, we are told, is that since the soul is incapable of destruction, it must live somewhere forever. Hell thus becomes an appropriate abode for the indestructible souls of wicked people. ^[34]

The conditionalists do not understand the orthodox teaching on the immortality of the soul. Even a cursory study of historic orthodoxy on this subject will bear this out. The orthodox point out that the immortality of the soul is not an absolute but a contingent immortality. The soul, as a created substance, depends on God's continuing providential support — just as all other created entities do. In the words of the seventeenth-century Reformed theologian Johannes Wollebius, "The human soul is immortal not ... because it cannot be reduced to nothing by God; but by God's ordinance and so far as it is indestructible by second causes." ^[35] In other words, while the "immortal" soul is impervious to destruction from both external secondary causes (e.g., people), and internal secondary causes (e.g., diseases, such as can afflict the body), the soul could be annihilated by its primary cause, God. ^[36]

The orthodox doctrine of the soul's immortality can therefore hardly be, as Pinnock states, the teaching that "drives the traditional doctrine of hell." In order for Pinnock to be correct, the orthodox would have to teach the soul's absolute indestructibility. Yet, as we have seen, the orthodox explicitly deny such a notion.

From the previous discussion, we see that annihilationism and conditionalism are not synonymous. One could — at least in theory — hold to the natural immortality of the soul in the orthodox sense (i.e., in terms of the soul's freedom from destruction by secondary causes), and at the same time affirm God's intention to annihilate the souls of the wicked. Therefore, the real issue is not whether God could annihilate the wicked, but whether there is any reason to think that God in fact intends to do so. And this question can be answered only by looking at the Bible.

Biblical Passages on the Nature and Duration of Punishment

Before considering the annihilationist's arguments against the doctrine of eternal, conscious punishment for the wicked (which we will do in [Part Two](#) of this series), we will first consider the teaching of Scripture on this subject. Then, we will have a framework for evaluating the annihilationist's arguments.

An exhaustive study on the doctrine of hell is not necessary, for this controversy revolves around only two main points: (1) Do the wicked experience conscious torment?; and (2) Do they suffer this torment eternally? Therefore, in looking at the scriptural evidence for the historic position, we will focus on those passages that address these two questions.

Even after narrowing the issue to these two main points, there are still too many pertinent texts to allow a detailed exegesis of them all. But I believe that there are two sets of texts that answer these two questions conclusively. One set of passages comes from Matthew 25; the other verses come from the Book of Revelation. While many other texts can be used in defense of the orthodox position, these are — in my opinion — the clearest. I will therefore treat these two sets of texts in detail.

Matthew 25:41, 46

[v. 41] "Then He will also say to those on His left, 'Depart from me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire [*to pur to aionion*] which has been prepared for the devil and his angels....' [v. 46] And these will go away into eternal punishment [*kolasin aionion*], but the righteous into life eternal [*zoen aionion*]."

First let us consider what these texts say about the nature of the wicked's fate. Then we shall consider what they teach about its duration.

The Nature of Hell From Matthew 25:41, 46. We observe first of all that the wicked share the same fate as Satan and his demonic hosts. Indeed, this text tells us that hell was created specifically for Satan and his angels. As followers of Satan, impenitent men will meet the same fate as he. This is significant, because when we look at other passages in the Book of Revelation that speak of the Devil's fate (see below), we are fully justified in ascribing this same fate to unredeemed men.

Notice that this passage describes hell as a place of "eternal fire." Should we understand this to mean literal, material, physical fire? Or should we regard the expression as metaphorical language, designed to convey an awful spiritual reality through physical language? Most conservatives — who affirm the doctrine of eternal, conscious punishment — would say that this is metaphorical language. ^[37] For one thing, the rich man in Luke 16:24 is described as being in agony in the flames. He is also described as having a tongue, and Lazarus is said to have a finger. But this scene occurs in Hades, during the disembodied state between death and resurrection. It is therefore difficult to see how a nonphysical being could have a literal tongue, much less be tormented by literal, physical fire. ^[38] The same would apply to the other physical metaphors used to describe hell, such as the undying worm (Mark 9:48) and the chains of darkness (Jude 6).

Some may object that invoking the concept of figurative language is a thinly veiled attempt to evade the force of Jesus' words. But precisely the opposite is true. The fact is, the horrors of hell are so great that no earthly language can do complete justice to them. By using the figure of unquenchable fire, undying worms, etc., Jesus selected the most horrific descriptions that earthly language would allow. As Robert Reymond observes, "the reality they [the figures] seek to represent should surely be understood by us to be more — not less — than the word pictures they depict." ^[39] Likewise, Ralph E. Powell urges, "If the descriptions of hell are figurative or symbolic, the conditions they represent are more intense and real than the figures of speech in which they are expressed." ^[40]

In the Matthean texts before us, the final state of the wicked is described as one of everlasting punishment (*kolasin aionion*). ^[41] From this it follows that the wicked are not annihilated. William Shedd cogently argues that "the extinction of consciousness is not of the nature of punishment." ^[42] If suffering is lacking, so is punishment; punishment entails suffering. But suffering entails consciousness. "If God by a positive act extinguishes, at death, the remorse of a hardened villain, by extinguishing his self-consciousness, it is a strange use of language to denominate this a punishment." ^[43]

Consider also the following differences between either cessation of consciousness/annihilation and punishment: (1) There are no degrees of annihilation. One is either annihilated or one is not. In contrast, the Scripture teaches that there will be degrees of punishment on the day of judgment (Matt. 10:15; 11:21-24; 16:27; Luke 12:47-48; John 15:22; Heb. 10:29; Rev. 20:11-15; 22:12, etc.). (2) For those who are experiencing severe punishment, extinction of consciousness is actually a state to be desired. Luke 23:30-31 and Revelation 9:6 talk about the wicked — experiencing the intense wrath of God — begging in vain to have the mountains fall on them. They clearly prefer unconsciousness to their continuing torment. As Shedd observes, "The guilty and remorseful have, in all ages, deemed the extinction of consciousness after death to be a blessing; but the advocate of conditional immortality explains it to be a curse..." ^[44] (3) Punishment demands the existence of the one being punished. As Gerstner points out, "One can exist and not be punished; but no one can be punished and not exist. Annihilation means the obliteration of existence and anything that pertains to existence, such as punishment. Annihilation avoids punishment, rather than encountering it." ^[45] (4) One could argue that annihilation might be the result of punishment. But the Scriptures say that it is the punishment itself which is eternal, not merely its result.

The punishment of the wicked entails separation from God as a key component. Notice that Christ banishes them forever from His presence. As Guthrie observes, "When we penetrate below the language about hell, the major impression is a sense of separation..." ^[46] Even those who do not follow Christ in this lifetime are still recipients of His goodness (Matt. 5:45), even if they do not acknowledge this. In the final state it will not be so.

The Duration of Hell From Matthew 25:41, 46. The Greek adjective *aionion* used in these verses means "everlasting, without end." We should note, however, that in certain contexts the adjective *aionios* is not always used of eternity. In some passages it refers to an "age" or period of time. Luke 1:70, for example, says that God "spoke by the mouths of His holy prophets from of old (*ap aionos*)."^[47] Clearly, this cannot be a reference to eternity past. A similar construction is found in Acts 3:21.^[47] On the other hand, the adjective is predicated of God (i.e., the "eternal God"), as in 1 Timothy 1:7, Romans 16:26, Hebrews 9:14, and 13:8. In these latter passages *aionios* means "eternal," as shown from their context and from the fact that God is the subject.

Granting that the term may or may not refer to eternity, how can we be sure of its meaning in Matthew 25? What is particularly determinative here is the fact that the duration of punishment for the wicked forms a parallel with the duration of life for the righteous: the adjective *aionios* is used to describe both the length of punishment for the wicked and the length of eternal life for the righteous. One cannot limit the duration of punishment for the wicked without at the same time limiting the duration of eternal life for the redeemed. It would do violence to the parallel to give it an unlimited signification in the case of eternal life, but a limited one when applied to the punishment of the wicked. John Broadus, in his classic commentary on Matthew, states, "It will at once be granted, by any unprejudiced and docile mind, that the punishment of the wicked will last as long as the life of the righteous; it is to the last degree improbable that the Great Teacher would have used an expression so inevitably suggesting a great doctrine he did not mean to teach..."^[48]

Revelation 14:9-11; 20:10

[14:9] "...If anyone worships the beast and his image... [14:10] he will be tormented [*basanisthesetai*] with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. [14:11] And the smoke of their torment [*basanismou*] goes up forever and ever [*eis aionas aionon*]; and they have no rest day or night, those who worship the beast and his image,... [20:10] And the Devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented [*basanisthesontai*] day and night forever and ever [*eis tous aionas ton aionon*]."

The Nature of Punishment in Revelation 14:9-11; 20:10. These texts describe the nature of the punishment as "torment." The words used in these texts are forms of the Greek word *basanizo*. As Thayer states, *basanizo* means "to vex with grievous pains (of body or mind), to torment."^[49] Likewise, Arndt and Gingrich say that *basanizo* means "to torture, torment," and may apply to either physical or mental vexation.^[50] When we examine the uses of the verb *basanizo* and its various noun forms throughout the New Testament, we see that great pain and conscious misery are in view, not annihilation or cessation of consciousness. For example, the centurion's sick

servant is grievously tormented (*deinos basanizomenos*) by his palsy (Matt. 8:6). Revelation 12:2 uses the verb to describe the pains of childbirth. In 2 Peter 2:8, righteous Lot is described as tormented (*ebasanizen*) in his soul by the wicked deeds of the Sodomites. In Luke 16:23 and 28, the plural noun "torments" (*basanoi*) is used to describe the rich man's conscious suffering in Hades. Indeed, in verse 28 Hades is described as "the place of torment" (*ho topos tou basanou*).

At this point, one might object that the passage does not specify whether or not the torment is "conscious." Are we not smuggling in the word conscious here? But, what other kind of torment is there besides conscious torment? Torment, by its very nature, demands a sentient (i.e., feeling) subject to experience it. A rock or a tree cannot be "tormented." How much less could a nonentity — such as an annihilated devil, beast, false prophet, or sinner — experience torment?

One might also object that these passages in Revelation do not say that men are tormented, just the Devil, the beast, and the false prophet. Are we justified in jumping from the Devil's torment to the torment of the wicked? As we already observed from Matthew 25, the fate of the wicked is the same as the Devil's fate. Other passages affirm the same fact (e.g., Rev. 20:15).

The Duration of Punishment in Revelation 14:9-11; 20:10. In the most emphatic language possible, we are told that the torment is unending. When we considered Matthew 25:46 above, we noted that *aionos* can, in some contexts, qualify nouns of limited duration. (Though, as we also observed, the context of Matthew 25 demands that we take *aionios* in its unlimited signification there.) But here, we find the emphatic forms *eis aionas aionon* and *eis tous aionas ton aionon* ("unto the ages of the ages"). This construction is only used to describe unending duration. As Sasse points out, the "twofold use of the term [*aionios*]" is designed "to emphasize the concept of eternity." ^[51] The fact that the forms used are plural in number further reinforces the idea of never-ending duration. Speaking of the Greek construction in this verse, the great biblical commentator R. C. H. Lenski observes: "The strongest expression for our 'forever' is *eis tous aionas ton aionon*, 'for the eons of eons'; many aeons, each of vast duration, are multiplied by many more, which we imitate by 'forever and ever.' Human language is able to use only temporal terms to express what is altogether beyond time and timeless. The Greek takes its greatest term for time, the eon, pluralizes this, and then multiplies it by its own plural, even using articles which make these eons the definite ones." ^[52]

This same emphatic construction is found in Revelation 1:6; 4:9; and 5:3, where it refers to the unending worship of God. In Revelation 4:10 and 10:6 it is used to describe God's own endless life. And in Revelation 22:5 the construction is employed to characterize the everlasting reign of the saints. ^[53]

Note also that the unending nature of the torment is shown by the fact that the expression "day and night" is used to describe its duration. The expression "day and night" is indicative of

ceaseless activity. This same phrase is used of the never-ending worship of God in Revelation 4:8 and 7:15. By juxtaposing the words "day and night" with "forever and ever" in 20:10, we have the most emphatic expression of unending, ceaseless activity possible in the Greek language.

In summary, these verses from Matthew and Revelation are more than adequate to answer the two questions before us. The language is unambiguous, emphatic, and conclusive. These verses by themselves should be sufficient to settle the argument forever.

Unquenchable Fire, Undying Worms

A lake of fire burns but is never quenched ... undying worms ... chains of darkness ... weeping and gnashing of teeth. Such is the powerful imagery for the horrible fate that awaits those who persist in their rejection of God and of His Christ. What else do these awesome figures force upon our imagination but a picture of unutterable suffering, fueled by the hopelessness of unceasing duration? Are they adapted to convey anything else? Does the thought of remedial, temporary suffering naturally come to mind when we contemplate the picture of unquenchable fire or undying worms? Do we envision the cessation of consciousness or the extinction of being as we picture the Devil and his followers tormented with fire and brimstone, day and night, forever and ever? Had Christ wished to teach the annihilation of the wicked, is it reasonable that He would have selected language guaranteed to lead His church astray? If annihilation is the true fate of the lost, would not Christ Himself be to blame for the erroneous teaching of His saints in all ages?

Let the reader note well that most of these graphic descriptions of perdition come from the lips of the Lord Jesus. "Without the explicit and reiterated statements of God Incarnate, it is doubtful whether so awful a truth would have such a conspicuous place as it always has had in the creed of Christendom." ^[54] If we gladly embrace the teaching of Incarnate Love when He speaks words of comfort and of life, must we not also receive, with all due solemnity, the words of Incarnate Justice when He speaks of judgment, perdition, and hell?

We can well sympathize with Stott, when he censures "the glibness, which almost appears to be the glee ... with which some evangelicals speaks about Hell." ^[55] Yet, speak of it we must, for it is the teaching of Scripture in general and of the Son of God in particular. As ambassadors of Christ we must deliver the message with which we have been entrusted. We must agree with Shedd's cogent summary in his classic work, *The Doctrine of Endless Punishment*: "Neither the Christian Ministry, nor the Christian church, are responsible for the doctrine of eternal perdition. It is given in charge to the ministry, and to the Church, by the Lord Christ Himself, in His last commission, as a truth to be preached to every creature." ^[56]

About the Author

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NOTES

1. Joseph Franklin Rutherford, *Let God Be True* (1946; rev. 1952), 79.
2. Clark Pinnock, "The Destruction of the Finally Impenitent," *Criswell Theological Review* 4 (Spring 1990):246-47.
3. I am not suggesting annihilationism is false because certain cults teach it. Nor am I suggesting that Seventh-day Adventists should be branded as a cult because their position on hell bears a certain (though inexact) resemblance to the Watchtower teaching. After all: the fact that the Jehovah's Witnesses believe in the inerrancy of Scripture and in the existence of God should hardly lead us to deny these two truths! The truth or falsity of a doctrine must stand or fall on its own merits, not on the basis of who holds it.
4. That is, a group that denies one or more of the central doctrines of the Christian faith. This would include the deity of Christ, the Trinity, the bodily resurrection, and salvation through Christ's atoning work.
5. See Ken Samples, "From Controversy to Crisis: An Updated Assessment of Seventh-day Adventism," *Christian Research Journal* (Summer 1988); and "The Recent Truth About Seventh-day Adventism," *Christianity Today*, 5 February 1990, 18-21.
6. David L. Edwards and John R. W. Stott, *Evangelical Essentials: A Liberal-Evangelical Dialogue* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1988), 312-20.
7. Clark Pinnock, "The Destruction of the Finally Impenitent"; "Fire, Then Nothing," *Christianity Today*, 20 March 1987, 40-41; John Wenham, *The Goodness of God* (London: Inter-Varsity, 1974), 27-41; Philip Hughes, *The True Image* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1989), 398 ff.; and Stephen Travis, *I Believe in the Second Coming of Jesus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1982), 196-99.
8. Edward W. Fudge, *The Fire That Consumes* (Fallbrook, CA: Verdict Publications, 1982); "The Final End of the Wicked," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 27 (September 1984):325-34; "Putting Hell in Its Place," *Christianity Today*, August 1976, 14-17; "'The Plain Meaning': A Review Essay," *Henceforth* 14 (1985):18-31; David A. Dean, "American Conditionalism in the Decade of the Eighties," *Henceforth* 17 (1989):3-10; *Resurrection: His and Ours* (Charlotte: Adventist Christian General Conference of America, 1977).
9. Pinnock, "Destruction of the Finally Impenitent," 249.
10. Robert Brow, "Evangelical Megashift: What You May Not Have Heard About Wrath, Sin, and Hell Recently," *Christianity Today*, 19 February 1990, 12-17.

11. Edwards and Stott, 314-15.
12. Pinnock, "Destruction of the Finally Impenitent," 253.
13. Edwards and Stott, 315.
14. *Ibid.*, 314-15.
15. Samuel Davidson, *The Doctrine of Last Things Contained in the New Testament* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, and Co., 1882), 133, 36, 51.
16. Note, however, the weakness of this reasoning as discussed in note 3 above.
17. See John H. Gerstner, *Repent or Perish* (Ligonier, PA: Soli Deo Gloria, 1990), 29-65.
18. Fudge, "Final End of the Wicked," 334.
19. Stott (*Evangelical Essentials*, 314) admits that the vast majority of Christians through the centuries have held to the doctrine of eternal punishment for the lost. Some Adventist scholars have tried to argue that many of the early church fathers held a different view, and that the doctrine of eternal punishment for the lost represents a later corruption. LeRoy Froom labors hard but in vain to demonstrate this in his massive work, *The Conditionalist Faith of Our Fathers*, 2 vols. (Washington, DC: The Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1965). A careful reading of the early fathers does not support Froom's thesis. See Robert A. Morey, *Death and the Afterlife* (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 1984), 58-60, 273-79 for a refutation of Froom's treatment of the church fathers.
20. See Roger Nicole, "Universalism: Will Everyone Be Saved?," *Christianity Today*, 20 March 1987, 31-39; John H. Gerstner, "The Bible and Hell" (in four parts), *His*, January 1968, 34-39; February 1968, 24-27; March 1968, 12-14; April 1968, 35.
21. Kenneth Kantzer and Carl F. H. Henry, eds., *Evangelical Affirmations* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1990), 36; 123-26; 137-49.
22. Millard Erickson, "Is Universalistic Thinking Now Appearing Among Evangelicals?," *United Evangelical Action*, September-October 1989, 6.
23. For a refutation of universalism, consult the following: Archibald Alexander's *Universalism False and Unscriptural* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publications, 1851); Robert Morey's *Death and the Afterlife*; and Roger Nicole, "Universalism: Will Everyone be Saved?"
24. Pinnock, "Fire, Then Nothing," 40.
25. For example, *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth* (New York: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, 1982), 76-89, 170-83.
26. Anthony A. Hoekema, *The Four Major Cults* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1963), 345.
27. Fudge, "The Plain Meaning," 18-19.
28. *Ibid.*

29. Harold O. J. Brown equates the two. See "Will the Lost Suffer Forever?," *Criswell Theological Review* 4 (Spring 1990):266.
30. Pinnock, "Destruction of the Finally Impenitent," 252.
31. Dean, *Resurrection: His and Ours*, 114-15.
32. Froom, 1:211; 1:529-600; Rutherford, 79; Fudge, "Final End of the Wicked," 325; Pinnock, "Fire, Then Nothing," 40; Edwards and Stott, 316.
33. Pinnock, "Destruction of the Finally Impenitent," 252.
34. *Ibid.*
35. Johannes Wollebius; cited in Heinrich Heppe, *Reformed Dogmatics, Set Out and Illustrated from the Sources*, ed. Ernst Bizer, trans. G. T. Thomson (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1978), 225.
36. See the concise discussion in Richard A. Muller, *Dictionary of Greek and Latin Theological Terms* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1985), 147.
37. On the use of these metaphors, see Morey, 29 ff.; John Calvin, *Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists, Matthew, Mark and Luke*, trans. William Pringle (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1949), 1:200-201; Harry Buis, *The Doctrine of Eternal Punishment* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1957), 76-77; and Nicole, "Punishment of the Wicked," 37.
38. See Nicole, "Punishment of the Wicked," 14.
39. Robert Reymond, "Dr. John Stott on Hell," *Presbyterion* 16 (Spring 1990):57.
40. Ralph E. Powell, "Hell," in *Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*, 953.
41. Bauer, Arndt and Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Literature*, 1957 ed., s.v. "kolasis." (Hereafter cited as BAG.) J. Schneider, "kolazo, kolasis," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* 3 (1965), 814-17. (Hereafter cited as TDNT.)
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43. *Ibid.*
44. *Ibid.*, 94.
45. Gerstner, "The Bible and Hell," part 1, 38.
46. Donald Guthrie, *New Testament Theology* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1981), 889-90.
47. See the discussion in TDNT 1 (1964), 199.

48. John A. Broadus, Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew, ed. Alvah Hovey (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1886), 512.

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51. Hermann Sasse, "aion, aionios," in TDNT 1 (1964), 199.

52. R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. John's Revelation (Columbus: Wartburg, 1943), 438, cf. 48.

53. See the discussion in Morey, 138.

54. Shedd, 12.

55. Edwards and Stott, 312-13.

56. Shedd, Preface, V.

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