Hell

D.L. Moody:

A man came to me the other day and said: "I like your preaching. You don't preach hell, and I suppose you don't believe in one." Now I don't want any one to rise up in the Judgment and say that I was not a faithful preacher of the Word of God. It is my duty to preach God's Word just as He gives it to me; I have no right to pick out a text here and there, and say, "I don't believe that." If I throw out one text I must throw out all, for in the same Bible I read of rewards and punishments, Heaven and hell.

No one ever drew such a picture of hell as the Son of God. No one could do it, for He alone knew what the future would be. He didn't keep back this doctrine of retribution, but preached it out plainly; preached it, too, with pure love, just as a mother would warn her son of the end of his course of sin.

The Spirit of God tells us that we shall carry our memory with us into the other world. There are many things we would like to forget. I have heard Mr. Cough say he would give his right hand if he could forget how badly he had treated his mother. I believe the worm that dieth not is our memory. We say now that we forget, and we think we do; but the time is coming when we shall remember, and cannot forget. We talk about the recording angel keeping record of our life. God makes us keep our own record.

We won't need any one to condemn us at the bar of God; it will be our own conscience that will come up as a witness against us. God won't condemn us at his bar; we shall condemn ourselves. Memory is God's officer, and when He shall touch these secret springs and say, "Son, daughter, remember" - then tramp, tramp, tramp will come before us, in a long procession, all the sins we have ever committed.

I have been twice in the jaws of death. Once I was drowning, and was about to sink, when I was rescued. In the twinkling of an eye every thing I had said, done, or thought of flashed across my mind. I do not understand how every thing in a man's life can be crowded into his recollection in an instant of time, but it all flashed through my mind at once. Another time I was caught in the Clark street bridge, and thought I was dying. Then memory seemed to bring all my life back to me again. It is just so that all things we think we have forgotten will come back by and by. It is only a question of time. We shall hear the words, "Son, remember" - and it is a good deal better to remember our sins now, and be saved from them, than to put off repentance till it is too late to do any good.

The scientific men say that every thought comes back again, sooner or later. I heard of a servant girl whose master used to read Hebrew in her hearing, and some time afterward, when she was sick of a fever, she would talk Hebrew by the hour.

Do you think Cain has forgotten the face of his murdered brother, whom he killed six thousand years ago? Do you think Judas has forgotten that kiss with which he betrayed his Master, or the look that Master gave him as he said, "Betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?" Do you think these antediluvians have forgotten the Ark, and the flood that came and swept them all away?

My friends, it is a good thing to be warned in time. Satan told Eve that she should not surely die; and there are many men and women now who think that all souls will at last be saved in spite of all their sins.

Do you suppose those antediluvians who perished in Noah's day - those men too vile and sinful for the world - do you think God swept those men right into Heaven, and left Noah, the only righteous man, to struggle through the deluge? Do you think when the judgment came upon Sodom that those wicked men were taken right into the presence of God, and the only righteous man was left behind to suffer?

There will be no tender, loving Jesus coming and offering you salvation there - no loving wife or mother to pray for you there. Many in that lost world would give millions, if they had them, if they had their mothers to pray them out of that place, but it will be too late. They have been neglecting salvation until the time has come when God say, "Cut them down; the day of mercy is ended."

You laugh at the Bible; but how many there are in that lost world today who would give countless treasures if they had the blessed Bible there! You may make sport of Ministers, but bear in mind there will be no preaching of the Gospel there. Here they are God's messengers to you - loving friends that look after your soul. You may have some friends praying for your salvation today; but remember, you will not have one in that lost world. There will be no one to come and put his band on your shoulder and weep over you there and invite you to come to Christ.

There are some people who ridicule these revival meetings, but remember, there will be no revivals in hell.

There was a man in an insane asylum who used to say over to himself in a voice of horror, "If I only had." He had been in charge of a railway drawbridge, and had received orders to keep it closed until the passage of an extra express train; but a friend came along with a vessel, and persuaded him to open the bridge just for him, and while it was open the train came thundering along, and leaped into destruction. Many were killed, and the poor bridge tender went mad over the result of his own neglect of duty. "If I only had!"

A good man was one day passing a saloon as a young man was coming out, and thinking to make sport of him he called out, "Deacon, how far is it to hell?" The deacon gave no answer, but after riding a few rods he turned to look after the scoffer, and found that his horse had thrown him to the ground and broken his neck. I tell you, my friends, I would sooner give that right hand than to trifle with eternal things.

Tonight you may be saved. We are trying to win you to Christ, and if you go down from this building to hell you will remember the meetings we had here. You will remember how these Ministers looked, how the people looked, and how it has seemed sometimes as if we were in the very presence of God himself. In that lost world you won't hear that beautiful hymn, "Jesus of Nazareth Passeth By." He will have passed by. There will be no Jesus passing that way. There will be no sweet songs of Zion there. No little children either to pray for their impenitent fathers and mothers.

It is now a day of Grace and a day of Mercy. God is calling the world to Himself. He says, "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die?"

O, if you neglect this salvation, how shall you escape? What hope is there? May your memories be wide awake today, and may you remember that Christ stands right here! He is in this assembly, offering salvation to every soul. He is not willing that any should perish, but turn to him and live.

When I was at the Paris Exhibition in 1867 I noticed there a little oil painting, only about a foot square, and the face was the most hideous I had ever seen. It was said to be about seven hundred years old. On the paper attached to the painting were the words, "Sowing the tares." The face looked more like a demon's than a man's, and as he sowed these tares, up came serpents and reptiles. They were crawling up on his body; and all around were woods with wolves and animals prowling in them. I have seen that picture many times since. Ah! The reaping time is coming. If you sow to the flesh you must reap corruption. If you sow to the wind you must reap the whirlwind. God wants you to come to him and receive salvation as a gift. You can decide your destiny today if you will. Heaven and hell are set before this audience, and you are called upon to choose. Which will you have? If you will take Christ He will receive you to his arms; if you reject him He will reject you.

Now, my friends, will Christ ever be more willing to save you than He is now? Will He ever have more power than He has now? Why not make up your mind to be saved while mercy is offered to you?

I remember a few years ago, while the Spirit of God was working in my Church, I closed the meeting one night by asking any that would like to become Christians to rise, and to my great joy, a man arose who had been anxious for some time. I went up to him and took him by the hand and shook it, and said, "I am glad to see you get up. You are coming out for the Lord now in earnest, are you not?"

"Yes," said he, "I think so. That is, there is only one thing in my way."

"What's that?" said 1.

"Well," said he, "I lack moral courage. I confess to you that if such a man [naming a friend of his] had been here tonight I should not have risen. He would laugh at me if he knew of this, and I don't believe I have the courage to tell him."

"But," said I, "You have got to come out boldly for the Lord if you come out at all."

While I talked with him he was trembling from head to foot, and I believe the Spirit was striving earnestly with him. He came back the next night, and the next, and the next; the Spirit of God strove with him for weeks; it seemed as if he came to the very threshold of Heaven, and was almost stepping over into the blessed world. I never could find out any reason for his hesitation, except that he feared his old companions would laugh at him.

At last the Spirit of God seemed to leave him; conviction was gone. Six months from that time I got a message from him that he was sick and wanted to see me. I went to him in great haste. He was very sick, and thought he was dying. He asked me if there was any hope. Yes, I told him, God had sent Christ to save him; and I prayed with him.

Contrary to all expectations he recovered. One day I went down to see him. It was a bright, beautiful day, and he was sitting out in front of his house.

"You are coming out for God now, aren't you? You will be well enough soon to come back to our meetings again."

"Mr. Moody," said he, "I have made up my mind to become a Christian. My mind is fully made up to that, but I wont't be one just now. I am going to Michigan to buy a farm and settle down, and then I will become a Christian."

"But you don't know yet that you will get well."

"O," said he, "I shall be perfectly well in a few days. I have got a new lease of life."

I pleaded with him, and tried every way to get him to take his stand. At last he said, "Mr. Moody, I can't be a Christian in Chicago. When I get away from Chicago, and get to Michigan, away from my friends and acquaintances who laugh at me, I will be ready to go to Christ."

"If God has not Grace enough to save you in Chicago, he has not in Michigan" I answered.

At last he got a little irritated and said, "Mr. Moody, I'll take the risk," and so I left him.

I well remember the day of the week, Thursday, about noon, just one week from that very day, when I was sent for by his wife to come in great haste. I hurried there at once. His poor wife met me at the door, and I asked her what was the matter.

"My husband," she said, "has had a relapse; I have just had a council of physicians here, and they have all given him up to die."

"Does he want to see me?" I asked.

"No."

"Then why did you send for me?"

"I cannot bear to see him die in this terrible siate of mind."

"What does he say?" I asked.

"He says his damnation is sealed, and he will be in hell in a little while."

I went in, and he at once fixed his eyes upon me. I called him by name, but he was silent. I went around to the foot of the bed, and looked in his face and said, "Won't you speak to me?", and at last he fixed that terrible deathly look upon me and said:

"Mr. Moody, you need not talk to me any more. It is too late. You can talk to my wife and children; pray for them; but my heart is as hard as the iron in that stove there. My damnation is sealed, and I shall be in hell in a little while."

I tried to tell him of Jesus' love and God's forgiveness, but he said, "Mr. Moody, I tell you there is no hope for me." And as I fell on my knees, he said, "You need not pray for me. My wife will soon be left a widow and my children will be fatherless; they need your prayers, but you need not pray for me."

I tried to pray, but it seemed as if my prayers didn't go higher than my head, and as if Heaven above me was like brass. The next day, his wife told me, he lingered until the sun went down, and from noon until he died all he

was heard to say was, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and I am not saved." After lingering along for an hour he would say again those awful words, and just as he was expiring his wife noticed his lips quiver, and that he was trying to say something, and as she bent over him she heard him mutter, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and I am not saved." He lived a Christless life, he died a Christless death - we wrapped him in a Christless shroud, and bore him away to a Christless grave.

Are there some here that are almost persuaded to be Christians? Take my advice and don't let any thing keep you away. Fly to the arms of Jesus this hour. You can be saved if you will.

(Mr. Moody closed by reading the following piece of poetry, which, he said, had affected him deeply):

I sat alone with my conscience,
In a place where time was o'er.
And we talked of my former living,
In the land of the evermore.
And I felt I should have to answer,
The question it put to me.
And to face the answer and question,
Throughout an eternity.

The ghosts of forgotten actions,
Came floating before my sight.
And things that I thought had perished,
Were alive with a terrible might.
And the vision of life's dark record,
Was an awful thing to face.
Alone with my conscience sitting,
In that solemnly silent place.

And I thought of a far away warning,
Of a sorrow that was to be mine.
In a land that then was the future,
But now is the present time.
And I thought of my former thinking,
Of the Judgment day to be.
But sitting alone with my conscience,
Seemed Judgment enough for me.

And I wondered if there was a future,
To this land beyond the grave.
But no one gave me an answer,
And no one came to save.
Then I felt that the future was present,
And the present would never go by.
For it was but the thought of a future,
Become an eternity.

Then I woke from my timely dreaming,
And the vision passed away.
And I knew the far away warning,
Was a warning of yesterday.
And I pray that I may not forget it,
In this land before the grave.
That I may not cry in the future,
And no one come to save.

I have learned a solemn lesson,
Which I ought to have known before.
And which though I learned it dreaming,
I hope to forget no more.

**So I sit alone with my conscience,
In the place where the years increase.
And I try to fathom the future,
In the land where time will cease.
And I know of the future judgment,
How dreadful soe'er it be.
That to sit alone with my conscience,
Will be Judgment enough for me.**