

sins committed in time and suffering experienced forever. The fact that sin has been committed against an infinite God does not make the sin infinite. The chief point is that eternal torment serves no purpose and exhibits a vindictiveness out of keeping with the love of God revealed in the gospel.

5. Finally, from a metaphysical point of view, everlasting torment gives the clear picture of an unending cosmological dualism. Heaven and hell just go on existing alongside of each other forever. But how can this be if God is to be "all in all" (1 Cor 15:28) and if God is making "all things new" (Rev 21:5)? It just does not add up right

6. Nevertheless, the reader may be asking, have I not forgotten something important? What about the texts which have always been taken to support the doctrine of everlasting conscious torment? In regard to them I would say that their number is very small. The texts which can be taken to teach this doctrine are few in number and capable of being fairly interpreted in harmony with the majority of verses which teach the destruction of the wicked.

Concluding Remarks. First, I hope we remember that eschatology is an area in which what we know by way of specific knowledge is quite limited. The Bible is reserved about giving us detailed information about heaven or hell, so we should try not to be too dogmatic or harsh with one another.

Second, I hope that traditionalists will not make this issue into one which will divide evangelicals from one another as seems quite possible. Whether the wicked perish or suffer endlessly, hell is a very grim prospect, and I and the others are not trying to lessen it.

3. Edward Fudge, in "The Final End of the Wicked," published in the *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* in the September, 1984 issue (27.3, pp 325-334) looks at the New Testament language on the