

Doctrine of Endless Punishment

1. Question: “Will a loving God sent anyone to an eternal hell?”
2. This question is raised
 - by the Universalist
 - by the Annihilationist and
 - by the Conditional Annihilationist including some Reformed theologians.
3. The question is an emotional one and a difficult one. But, is it truth?
4. It is a lovely idea, held by the Universalist that everyone is ultimately going to be saved. It has been noted, however, that in moments of personal indignation, no-one remains a Universalist.
5. Two church theories have been advanced in opposition to the doctrine of eternal punishment.
 - Universalism.
 - Annihilationism.
6. Non-Christians who deny eternal punishment might believe in reincarnation.
7. Universalism exists in two forms.
 - There is the belief in a restoration to God in life or in death.

2 Corinthians 5:19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

Romans 5:18 Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.

Special Note.

Note in context, that verse 17 says there is an act of embracing the grace of God before eternal life is received. *Romans 5:17 For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)*

1 Corinthians 15:22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

Special Note.

The question is, “Who are those who are ‘in Christ’”? While everyone is ‘in Adam’ who is the Federal Head of Mankind, Christ is the Federal Head only of the Redeemed. Moreover, the term “made alive” is not used for resurrection, but only for regeneration. All who are in Christ shall receive spiritual life.

1 Peter 3:18 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit: 19 By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; 20 Which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. 21 The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

Special Note.

This text has been used by the Universalist to teach that the gospel is preached as a second chance to those who have died. Surely, those in hell would respond to the gospel and be saved.

However, there is a failure by the Universalist to recognize that the term “*spirits*” refer to angelic beings. Being having a second chance to receive the gospel is not in view. What is taught is that Christ went to make a proclamation of the victory of the Cross to the “*spirits in prison*”.

- There is a belief in a restoration to God after some form of purgatorial punishment. Heaven will be obtained by way of hell.
8. In contrast to the incredible optimism of the Universalist is the Doctrine of Conditional Immortality.
 9. Historically, this doctrine has been widely embraced by the Jehovah Witnesses and teaches that immortality is for believers. The wicked have only conditional mortality. Thus, “the soul that sinneth shall die” (Ezekiel 18:20). The soul will pass into annihilation.
 10. The basis for believing in conditional immortality is that the soul is immortal by grace, not by nature.
 11. The punishment of the wicked is eternal in its finality but not in its duration. The consequences of unbelief will be eternal, but not the consciousness of unbelief.

Special Note.

The Jehovah Witlessness once believed that only 144,000 were going to heaven. But then the movement grew and a new understanding was needed. Now, the thinking is that only 144,000 shall reign with Christ in heaven while the rest enjoy a paradise on earth. “Many living shall never die”, was a popular teaching at one time. These were the “men of good will”, “other sheep”, or, “Jonadabs”.

12. The main concern with the Doctrine of Universalism, and the Doctrine of Conditional Immortality, is that they undermine the Christian gospel.
13. According to the gospel, salvation presupposes a prior damnation. If a person is to be saved, that person must first realize he is lost. There is no need for a Savior, or repentance, if death is the only and final punishment. "Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die."
14. In Universalism, and in Conditional Immortality, sin is transformed into misfortune, the Doctrine of Divine Retributive Justice is undermined, all suffering is turned into chastisement, and the sacrificial work of Christ is reduced to moral influence.

If Universalism or Annihilationism is true, Christ did not die to bear the penalty of sin's eternal judgment because there is no eternal judgment.

But, the Bible teaches that the death of Christ was based upon retributive justice. He died under the wrath of God. Universalism makes all the suffering of man to be remedial only.

"He paid a debt, He did not owe,
I owe a debt, I could not pay,
I needed Someone to wash my sins away.

And now I sing a brand new song.
Amazing grace all day long.
Christ Jesus paid a debt that I could never pay."

The History of the Doctrine of Annihilationism and the Early Church

15. The general belief of the early church is best reflected in the creeds of Christendom.
16. There were some who deviated from the orthodox faith, but not enough deviation took place to form a church council to debate the issue.
17. If Universalism is true there is no need for the gospel, for this is good news in itself.

The Alexandrian School

- Clement of Alexandria (c. 150-c. 215).
- Origen (c. 185 – c. 254) denied endless punishment as he embraced Christian restorationism. He believed that the heathen, the wicked, and even Satan would come forth purified after a period of suffering. Origen embraced the freedom of the will, the power of contrary choice.

Special Note.

Augustine challenged the teaching of Origen, and prevailed.

- Gregory of Nyssa offered three reasons why he believed in universalism.
 - ❖ The goodness of God. Because God is good, He is filled with pity for His creation. Because God is wise He is not ignorant of the means of man's recovery.
 - ❖ The nature of evil. Evil must in the end cease to be. Evil is essentially negative and doomed to non-existence.
 - ❖ The purpose of punishment. The purpose of punishment is always remedial. Punishment is like separating alloy from the gold; it is like a much needed surgical operation to remove a cancer. Punishment is design to improve and correct a person.

18. When the annihilationist is asked *why* God annihilates a person, there is an unclear response.

- Some see in annihilation a form of retributive punishment justly due for sin.
- Others believe God annihilates the lost out of love for them.

19. One compelling argument, for many, for annihilationism derives from the traditional theistic doctrine of divine conservation: all things depend on God to conserve their existence from moment to moment, and so exist only so long as they are connected to God in some way. But if hell is complete and utter separation or disconnection from God, then hell would be a state of non-existence.

Special Note.

It has been observed that it is contrary to God's creative nature to annihilate anything. The First and Second Laws of Thermodynamics testify to this principle.

The Reformation

20. When the Reformation church arose, the saints embraced the Doctrine of the Trinity, the Doctrine of the Substitutionary Death of Christ, and Doctrine of the Virgin Birth, and many other orthodox tenets. They did not accept the teaching on restorationism.

21. There were some exceptions, such as the German theologian Friedrich Schleiermacher. Schleiermacher was born on November 21, 1767, in Breslau, Silesia. He died, February 12, 1834 in Berlin. Schleiermacher was influential as a modern Protestant theologian.

The problem was that in his exegetical work, Schleiermacher took the words of Christ in Matthew 25:46 and made them figurative. *Matthew 25:46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.*

He took the words of Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:25-26, and made them teach that ultimately all evil would be overcome. Restorationism, he insisted, was true. *1 Corinthians 15:25 For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.*

He taught that the damned were remorseful in hell. Did not Jesus teach of men gnashing their teeth? *Matthew 8:12 But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.* Does this not prove that men are better men in hell than they were on earth and so become worthy of mercy and grace. Remorse is a virtue, is it not?

Special Note.

Is remorse only a virtue, or is remorse part of the punishment?

The Modern Era and Conditional Immortality

22. Moving into the modern era, some very influential voices have been raised in defense of universalism, and conditional immortality. William Barclay represents the first group while John Stott the latter.
23. In his book, *A Spiritual Autobiography*, William Barclay shares those thoughts which persuaded him personally of universalism.
- Mr. Barclay found hope in several New Testament passages of Scripture.
 - ❖ *John 12:32 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.*
 - ❖ *Romans 11:32 For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all.*
 - ❖ *1 Corinthians 15:22 For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.*
 - ❖ *1 Corinthians 15:28 And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.*
 - ❖ *1 Timothy 2:4 Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; 6 Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.*
 - Mr. Barclay found the teaching of one text in particular to be very persuasive, Matthew 25:46.
 - ❖ *Matthew 25:46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.*

Special Note.

The Argument. The Greek word for punishment is *kolasis*. Originally, this word was not an ethical word but was used for pruning of trees to make them grow better. The word for eternal is *aionois*. Plato, who may have invented the word, taught that something can be everlasting but not *aionois*. Only God is eternal. Only God is immortal. “Eternal

punishment is then literally that kind of remedial punishment which it befits God to give and which only God can give” (William Barclay).

The Response.

While punishment is part of God’s divine discipline, more importantly is the satisfaction of His wrath against sin. God has a right to declare what shall satisfy His justice, and if that satisfaction seems unusually cruel to the human heart, it might be because the human heart cannot fathom God, either the depths of His love, or the intensity of His severity.

- Mr. Barclay embraced the belief that it is impossible to set limits to the grace of God.
 - Mr. Barclay believed in the ultimate and complete triumph of God, when all things shall be subject to Him.
- ❖ *1 Corinthians 15:24 Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. 25 For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. 26 The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. 27 For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, all things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. 28 And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.*

Special Note.

The Argument. God is more than just King and Judge, He is also Father. No Father would be happy until all His children were subject to Him, and so it shall be.

The Response. Jesus taught that some men are of their “father” the devil. Therefore, the idea that God is Father of all men without distinction is not a biblical concept.

- ❖ *John 8:44 Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.*

24. One main objection against Universalism is that the doctrine takes the threat out of Christianity because it removes the threat. No longer can the “hangman’s whip”, or the fear of hell be cracked over the sinner’s conscience.

Special Note.

The Argument in defense of Universalism. What is forgotten is that God has eternity to work on the sinner and bring each soul to gospel repentance. Moreover, there is still the fear of death. While the unbeliever can fear death, the Christian fears only dying for there is the hope of the resurrection. “One thing is quite certain – Christian orthodoxy does not teach the immortality of the soul; it teaches the resurrection of the body” (William Barclay).

The Response.

- When Jesus spoke of hell, and the fires of hell, was He only bluffing? Was the Lord only trying to scare people into salvation? Or, was Jesus revealing something about endless punishment that is significant? Fear is a legitimate evangelical motive for repentance.
25. If the love of God is such that we cannot think of the fires of hell as being expressive of the character of God, then Jesus was wrong to speak of hell and hell fire.
- *Matthew 5:22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire*
 - *Matthew 18:9 Matt 18:9 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.*
26. Wanting to take the stigma out of the words of Christ, and the severity out of the wrath of God against individuals, and also wanting to not let the sinner “off the hook” for the evil that has been done in life, the doctrine of conditional immortality becomes very attractive.
27. According to the Doctrine of Conditional Immortality the wicked are punished in hell, but only for a period of time, and then they are annihilated at the Last Judgment which shall occur at the end of time. The suffering ends, the pain ceases, the penalty is eternal. So there is endless punishment, but not conscious endless punishment.
28. This is an attractive position to hold and many are embracing it. But is this what the Bible teaches?
29. Conditional Immortality postulates several concepts.
- Man is not immortal. Only God is immortal. *1 Timothy 1:17 Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.*
 - Christianity does not teach the immortality of the soul, but the resurrection of the body. The concept of the soul’s immortality is a Greek concept embraced by the Jewish culture, and incorporated into the Christian faith as a corrupting element.
 - Immortality is really the gift of God, but it is not something that is intrinsic to human nature.
 - Unbelievers will bear just punishment after death and then be annihilated.

- Conditional Immortality is heavily dependent upon the love of God, as is universalism and annihilationism.
- An appeal to some Scripture is sought, much to the credit of those who teach Conditional Immortality.

30. In recent years, a concerted effort has been made to convince the church that one of its cardinal doctrines has been wrong for over two thousand years.

- The book, *The Fire that Consumes*, by Edward Fudge is set forth as a biblical and historical study of the Doctrine of Final Punishment.

A Response to the Foundational Concepts of Conditional Immortality

31. The Jews did not embrace the idea of conditional immortality. The Jews believed in the eternal conscious punishment of the finally impenitent, and Jesus made no effort to distinguish His view from theirs.

32. The whole Christian church has taught the doctrine of the eternal conscious punishment of the impenitent. This is not the doctrine of a few people but the doctrine of the church universal be it Latin, Roman, Coptic, or Orthodox. It is the doctrine of John Wesley and it is the doctrine of John Calvin in the Protestant church.

33. Jesus, and the apostles, did not plainly endorse nor openly or plainly teach Restorationism, Universalism, or Conditional Immortality.

34. However if these things are true, then the Lord and the apostles should have plainly taught against what so many held to be true rather than to leave the church in error from its inception. Other critical doctrines were pointed addressed as error, why not this one?

35. If annihilation is the final state of the wicked, how can there be degrees of punishment? Notice the Lord's words.

- *Luke 12:43 Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. 44 Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath. 45 But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; 46 The lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.*

47 And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. 48 But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.

36. Annihilationism is not punishment. The essence of punishment is suffering. Suffering belongs to consciousness. And why call this, “*endless punishment*” if it in fact ends?

A Dialogue with Deity

Introduction

The King Speaks of a Day of Great Judgment

Matthew 25:31 When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: 32 And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: 33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

The King Speaks of an Invitation.

34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: 36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

The Righteous Speak in Amazement.

37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? Or thirsty, and gave thee drink? 38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? Or naked, and clothed thee? 39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

The King Speaks About His Investigation.

40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

The King Speaks to the Unrighteous in Judgment.

41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: 42 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: 43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.

The Unrighteous Speak in Protest.

44 Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee?

The King Answers the Unrighteous.

45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.

The King Speaks of a Final Destination for All

46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

Reasons from Nature

37. There are reasons from nature to believe in the biblical doctrine of a severe judgment.

Special Note.

It must be kept in mind that God is not only a Father, but a Righteous Judge. As a judge, God is severe. Consider the days of Noah. God judged the whole world, and everyone perished who was not in the Ark. So everyone shall perish who is not in the Ark of Safety, Jesus Christ the Righteous One.

Romans 11:22

*Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God:
on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness,
if thou continue in his goodness:
otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.*

- There is the testimony of the physical universe. There is the majesty of the sea, and also there are tidal waves. There is the necessity of the sun, but it also burns and scorches crops. There is blessing and cursing.
- There is the testimony of history. Science has blessed mankind, and also given it the nuclear bomb. There are great leaders, and there are Hitler's and Stalin's. There is blessing and cursing.
- There is the testimony of the mind. From the mind come the arts, drama, and literature. But minds can also produce pedophiles, murderers, and all forms of evil. The soul can enjoy rapturous joy, but it can also understand morality, remorse, and sorrow. There is blessing and cursing.

Reasons from Logic

38. From the area of logic comes thinking which produces the rational case for eternal judgment. Of course, human reasoning is limited and must be under submission to the revelation of God. Revelation, when accepted, goes beyond that of human reasoning and yet it appeals to the human mind. God has revealed the following.

- Hell is rational because of the holiness of God. The one attribute of God tripled in both the Old Testament and the New Testament is the holiness of God.

Isaiah 6:3 And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

Revelation 4:8 And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him; and they were full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

- Hell is rational because it produces fear. Fear is a rational motive for doing the will of God. When Noah built the ark, he was motivated by fear.

Hebrews 11:7 By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith. Fear is also a good motive for evangelism. Jude 23 And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

- Hell is rational because of the endlessness of guilt. How long is a person guilty when a crime is committed? The answer: the guilt is endless. Time does not do away with guilt. If guilt is endless so is the punishment, apart from pardon or satisfaction of the verdict rendered.

There is no indication of repentance in hell. There is remorse but remorse is not a virtue. In the book of Revelation the impenitent are revealed to be confirmed in their sin despite great judgment.

Revelation 9:20 And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk:

The only prayer of the wicked is that they might escape the judgment of God, not by way of the Cross but by way of annihilation. That prayer is not answered.

Revelation 6:15 And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; 16 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:

- Hell is rational because sin is an infinite evil. It is committed against an Infinite Person.

Reasons from the Scriptures

39. There are Scriptural reasons for eternal punishment.

- *Ezekiel 13:22 Because with lies ye have made the heart of the righteous sad, whom I have not made sad; and strengthened the hands of the wicked, that he should not return from his wicked way, by promising him life:*

The promise of life, or in the case of the Annihilationist, the extermination of life for the wicked, only strengthens the hands of the wicked. They will say, “*Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we will die.*” And they would be right. Those who offer false comfort to evil men are condemned by Scripture as per the prophets during the days of Ezekiel.

- *Matthew 10:28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.*
- *Matthew 18:8 Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire.*
- *Matthew 25:46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.*

Special Note.

everlasting	punishment	life	eternal
<i>aionion</i>	<i>kolasin</i>	<i>zoen</i>	<i>aionion</i>

Scholars of the Greek language reveal the following about the word *aionion*.

“The word *aionion* is used in the New Testament of persons and things which are in their nature endless, as, e.g., of God (Romans 16:26); of His power, (1 Timothy 6:16), and of His Glory, (1 Peter 5:10); of the Holy Spirit, (Hebrews 9:14); of the redemption effected by Christ (Hebrews 9:12), of the redemption effected by Christ, (Hebrews 9:12), and of the consequent salvation of men, (Hebrews 5:9), as well as of His future rule, (2 Peter 1:11), which is elsewhere declared to be without end, (Luke 1:33); of the life received by those who believe in Christ, (John 3:16), concerning whom He said, ‘they shall never perish,’ (John 10:28), and of the resurrection body, (2 Corinthians 5:1), elsewhere said to be ‘immortal,’ (1 Corinthians 15:53), in which that life will be finally realized, (Matthew 25:46; Titus 1:2).

Aionios is also used of the sin that 'hath never forgiveness,' (Mark 3:29), and of the judgment of God, from which there is no appeal, (Hebrews 6:2), and of the fire, which is one of its instruments, (Matthew 18:8; 25:41; Jude 7), and which is elsewhere said to be 'unquenchable,' (Mark 9:43).

The use of *aionios* here shows that the punishment referred to in 2 Thessalonians 1:9, is not temporary, but final, and, accordingly, the phraseology shows that its purpose is not remedial but retributive."

(From *Notes on Thessalonians*, by Hogg and Vine, pp 232, 233. *Vine's Expository Dictionary of Biblical Words*)

- *2 Thessalonians 1:9 Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power;*
- *Revelation 14:11 And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.*
- *Mark 14:21 The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written of him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! Good were it for that man if he had never been born.*

Special Note.

There is human responsibility and there is divine sovereignty. If, in the end, Judas is to be restored to fellowship with the Lord, if Judas is to be annihilated after a long period of time, then the words of Christ would fail in their meaning, "*good were it for that man if he had never been born.*"

God is love.

God is a consuming fire.

Behold the goodness and severity of God.

40. The Doctrine of Everlasting Punishment is a fearful and terrible teaching. Therefore it must be presented against the backdrop of the Cross, and God's way of escaping this fearful place. Let the church never forget to preach that there is wideness in God's mercy.

"The Fount of love
His Servant sent to tell
Love's deeds,
Himself reveals the sinner's hell."

Jesus spoke about hell out of a full heart of divine love. And then He spoke of the Love of God.

“There’s wideness in God’s mercy,
Like the wideness of the sea;
There’s a kingdom in His justice
Which is more than liberty.

For the love of God is broader
Than the measures of man’s mind;
And the heart of the Eternal
Is most wonderfully kind.”

Faber