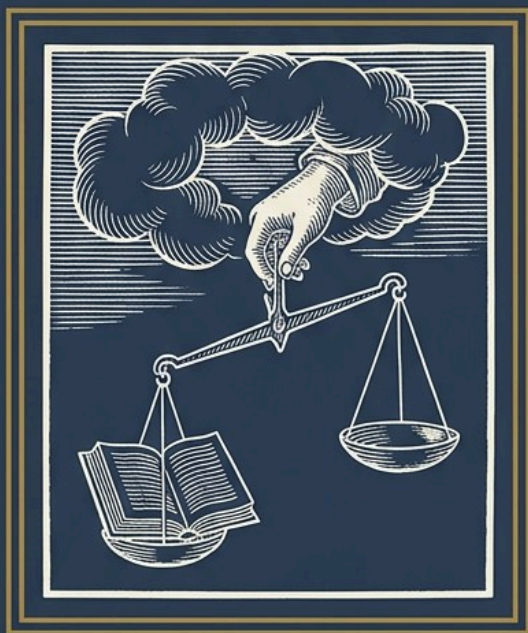


TRUE GRACE DISTINGUISHED FROM THE EXPERIENCE OF DEVILS

Jonathan Edwards



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DEVILS

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ABOUT THIS BOOK



A penetrating sermon on **James 2:19**, arguing that intellectual belief, emotional conviction, and even trembling before God are **no sure signs of saving grace**—since devils possess all these experiences too. Edwards systematically dismantles common marks of religion—doctrinal knowledge, sense of God's majesty, awareness of eternity, sorrow for sin—showing each falls short as evidence of true conversion. What distinguishes genuine faith is something **wholly different in nature**: a spiritual, holy transformation that no unregenerate heart can counterfeit. A vital work for anyone seeking to discern authentic faith from religious self-deception.



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TITLE PAGE



TRUE GRACE, Distinguished from the EXPERIENCE OF
DEVILS;

IN A SERMON, Preached before the SYNOD OF **NEW-YORK**, Convened at **Newark**, in **NEW-JERSEY**, On **September 28, New Style, 1752.**

By **Jonathan Edwards**, Master of Arts, Pastor of the Church of **CHRIST** in **Stockbridge** in **New England.**

(Printed by the Desire of the SYNOD.)

2 Corinthians 11:3. I fear, lest by any Means, as the Serpent beguiled Eve through his Subtlety, so your Minds should be corrupted from the Simplicity that is in **CHRIST:**

Verse 14. For **Satan** Himself; is transformed into an Angel of Light.

NEW-YORK: Printed by JAMES PARKER, at the **New Printing-Office** in **Beaver Street, 1753.**

APPROBATION



At a Meeting of the Synod of New York, at Newark,
September 28, 1752.

The Synod agree, to desire the Reverend Mister
Edwards, to publish his Sermon, preached before them.

A true Copy, Richard Treat, Synod Clerk.

TRUE GRACE, DISTINGUISHED FROM THE EXPERIENCE OF DEVILS



TRUE GRACE, DISTINGUISHED FROM THE EXPERIENCE OF DEVILS.

JAMES 2. 19._ You believe that there is one GOD; you do well; the Devils also believe and tremble.

OBSERVE in these Words. 1. Something that some depended on, as an Evidence of their good Estate, and Acceptance, as the Objects of GOD's Favor, **namely** a speculative Faith, or Belief of the Doctrines of Religion. The great Doctrine of the Existence of one only GOD is particularly mentioned; probably, because this was a Doctrine wherein, especially, there was a visible and noted Distinction, between professing Christians and the Heathens, amongst whom the Christians in those Days were dispersed: And therefore, this was what many trusted in, as what recommended them **to**; or at least, was an Evidence **of**, their Interest, in the great, spiritual and eternal Privileges, in which real Christians were distinguished from the rest of the World.

2. How much is allowed concerning this Faith, **namely** That it is a good Attainment: **You do well.** It was good, as it was necessary. This Doctrine was one of the fundamental Doctrines of Christianity; and, in some Respects, above all others fundamental. It was necessary to be believed, in order to Salvation: And a Being without the Belief of this Doctrine, especially in those that had such Advantage to know, as they had, whom the Apostle wrote to, would be a great Sin, and what would vastly aggravate their Damnation. This Belief was also good, as it had a good Tendency in many Respects.

3. What is implicitly denied concerning it, **namely** That it is any Evidence of a Person's being in a State of Salvation. The whole Context, shows this to be the Design of the Apostle in the Words: And, it is particularly manifest, by the Conclusion of the Verse; which is the

4. Thing observable in the Words, **namely** The Argument by which the Apostle proves, that this is no Sign of a State of Grace, **namely** that it is found in the Devils. They believe that there is one GOD, and that He is a holy sin-hating GOD; and that He is a GOD of Truth, and will fulfill his Threatenings, by which He has denounced future Judgments, and a great Increase of Misery on them; and that He is an Almighty GOD, and able to execute his threatened Vengeance upon them.

Therefore, the DOCTRINE I infer from the Words, to make the Subject of my present Discourse, is this.

Nothing in the Mind of Man, that is of the same Nature with what the Devils experience, or are the Subjects of, is any sure Sign of saving Grace.

If there be any Thing that the Devils have, or find in themselves, which is an Evidence of the saving Grace of the Spirit of GOD, then the Apostle's Argument is not good; which is plainly this: **That which is in the Devils, or which they do, is no certain Evidence of Grace. But the Devils believe that there is one GOD. Therefore, your believing that there is one GOD, is no sure Evidence that you are gracious.** So that the whole Foundation of the Apostle's Argument, lies in that Proposition: **That which is in the Devils, is no certain Sign of Grace.**

Nevertheless, I shall mention two or three further Reasons, or Arguments of the Truth of this Doctrine.

1. The Devils have no Degree of **Holiness**: And therefore, those Things, which are Nothing beyond what they are the Subjects of, cannot be **holy Experiences**.

The Devil once was holy; but when he fell, he lost all his Holiness, and became perfectly wicked. He is the greatest Sinner, and in some Sense, the Father of all Sin. John 8:44. **You are of your Father the Devil, and the Lusts of your Father you will do. He was a Murderer from the Beginning, and abode not in the Truth; because there was no Truth in him: When he speaks a Lie, he speaks of his own; for he is a Liar, and the Father of it.** 1 John, 3:8. **He that commits Sin is of the Devil; for the Devil sins from the Beginning.** He is often spoken of, as by Way of Eminence, THE WICKED ONE. So, Matthew 13:19. **Then comes the wicked One, and catches away that which was sown in his Heart.** Verse 38. **The Tares are the Children of the wicked One.** 1 John, 2:13. **I write unto you young Men, because you have overcome**

the wicked One. Chapter 3:12. **Not as Cain, who was of that** wicked One. Chapter 5:18. **Whosoever is born of GOD—keeps himself, and that wicked One touches him not.** So the Devils are called **evil Spirits, unclean Spirits, Powers of Darkness, Rulers of the Darkness of this World, and Wickedness** itself: Ephesians 6:12. **For we wrestle not against Flesh and Blood; but against Principalities, against Powers, against the Rulers of the Darkness of this World, against spiritual Wickedness in high Places.**

Therefore, surely those Things which the Minds of Devils are the Subjects of, can have Nothing of the Nature of true Holiness in them. The Knowledge and Understanding which they have of the Things of GOD and Religion, cannot be of the Nature of divine and holy Light, nor any Knowledge that is merely of the same Kind. No such Impressions as are made on their Hearts, can be of a spiritual Nature. That Kind of Sense, which they have of divine Things, however great, cannot be a holy Sense. Such Affections as move their Hearts, however powerful, cannot be holy Affections. If there be no Holiness in them, as they are in the Devil, there can be no Holiness in them as they are in Man; unless something be added to them, beyond what is in them, or they are in the Devil. And if any Thing be added to them, then they are not the same Things; but are something beyond what Devils are the Subjects of; which is contrary to the Supposition; for the Proposition which I am upon, is, that those Things which are of the **same Nature**, and **Nothing beyond** what Devils are the Subjects of, cannot be holy Experiences. It is not the Subject that makes the Affection, or Experience, or Quality holy; but it is the Quality that makes the Subject holy.

And if those Qualities and Experiences, which the Devils are the Subjects of, have Nothing of the Nature of Holiness in them; then they can be no certain Signs, that Persons which have them, are holy or gracious. There is no certain Sign of true Grace, but those Things which are spiritual and gracious. It is GOD's Image that is his Seal and Mark, the Stamp, by which those that are his, are known. But that, which has Nothing of the Nature of Holiness, has Nothing of this Image. That, which is a sure Sign of Grace, must either be something, which has the Nature and Essence of Grace; or is flowing from, or some-way belonging to its Essence: For that, which distinguishes Things one from another, is their Essence, or something appertaining to their Essence. And therefore, that which is sometimes found wholly without the Essence of Holiness or Grace, can be no essential, sure, or distinguishing Mark of Grace.

2. The Devils are not only absolutely without all true Holiness, but they are not so much as the Subjects of any common Grace.

If any should imagine, that some Things may be Signs of Grace, which are not Grace itself, or which have nothing of the Nature and Essence of Grace and Holiness in them; yet, certainly they will allow, that the Qualifications, which are sure Evidences of Grace, must be Things that are near akin to Grace, or having some remarkable Affinity with it. But the Devils are not only wholly destitute of any true Holiness; but they are at the greatest Distance from it, and have nothing in them, in any wise akin to it.

There are many in this World, who are wholly destitute of saving Grace, who yet have common Grace: They have no true Holiness, but nevertheless, have something of that which is called **moral Virtue**; and are the Subjects of some Degree of the com-

mon Influences of the Spirit of GOD. It is so with those in general, that live under the Light of the Gospel, and are not given up to judicial Blindness and Hardness. Yea, those that are thus given up, yet have some Degree of restraining Grace, while they live in this World; without which, the Earth could not bear them, and they would in no Measure, be tolerable Members of human Society. But when any are damned, or cast into Hell, as the Devils are, GOD wholly withdraws his restraining Grace, and all merciful Influences of his Spirit whatsoever: And they have neither saving Grace, nor common Grace; neither the **Grace** of the Spirit; nor any of the common **Gifts** of the Spirit; neither true Holiness, nor moral Virtue of any Kind. Hence arises the vast Increase of the Exercise of Wickedness in the Hearts of Men, when they are damned. And herein is the chief Difference between the damned in Hell, and unregenerate and graceless Men in this World: Not that wicked Men in this World, have any more Holiness or true Virtue than the damned, or that wicked Men, when they leave this World, have any Principles of Wickedness infused into them: But when Men are cast into Hell, GOD perfectly takes away his Spirit from them, as to all its merciful common Influences, and entirely withdraws from them, all Restraints of his Spirit and good Providence.

3. It is unreasonable to suppose, that a Person's being in any Respect as the Devil is, should be a certain Sign, that he is very unlike, and opposite to him; and hereafter, shall not have his Part with him. True Saints are extremely unlike, and contrary to the Devil, both relatively and really. They are so **relatively**. The Devil is the grand Rebel; the chief Enemy of GOD and CHRIST; the Object of GOD's greatest Wrath; a condemned Malefactor, utterly rejected and cast off by him; forever shut out of his Presence; the

Prisoner of his Justice; an everlasting Inhabitant of the infernal World. The Saints, on the contrary, are the Citizens of the heavenly **Jerusalem**; Members of the Family, of the glorious KING of Heaven; the Children of GOD; the Brethren and Spouse of his dear Son; Heirs of GOD; Joint-heirs with CHRIST; Kings and Priests unto GOD. And they are extremely different **really**. The Devil, on Account of his hateful Nature, and those accursed Dispositions which reign in Him, is called **Satan**, the Adversary, **Abaddon** and **Apollyon**, the great Destroyer, **the Wolf, the roaring Lion, the great Dragon, the old Serpent**. The Saints are represented as GOD's **holy Ones**, his **anointed Ones**, **the Excellent of the Earth; the Meek of the Earth; Lambs and Doves**; CHRIST'S **little Children**; having the **Image of GOD, pure in Heart**; GOD'S **Jewels; Lilies in CHRIST'S Garden; Plants** of Paradise; **Stars of Heaven; Temples of the Living GOD**. The Saints, so far as they are Saints, are as diverse from the Devil, as Heaven is from Hell; and much more contrary than Light is to Darkness: And the eternal State that they are appointed to, is answerably diverse and contrary.

Now it is not reasonable to suppose, that a being, in any Respect, as **Satan** is, or the being the Subject of, any of the same Properties, Qualifications, Affections, or Actions, that are in Him, is any certain Evidence, that Persons are thus exceeding different from him; and in Circumstances so diverse, and appointed to an eternal State, so extremely contrary in all Respects. Wicked Men, are in Scripture, called the **Children of the Devil**. Now is it reasonable to suppose, that Men's being, in any Respect, as the Devil is, can be a certain Sign, that they are not his Children, but the Children of the infinitely Holy and Blessed GOD? We are in-

formed, that wicked Men, shall hereafter, have their Part with Devils; shall be sentenced to the same everlasting Fire, which is prepared for the Devil and his Angels. Now, can a Man's being like the Devil in any Respect, be a sure Token that he shall not have his Part with Him, but with glorious Angels, and with JESUS CHRIST, dwelling with Him, where he is, that he may behold, and partake of his Glory?

FINIS.

IMPROVEMENT



IMPROVEMENT.

The first USE may lie in several Inferences, for our **Instruction.**

First. From what has been said, it may be inferred, by Parity of Reason, that Nothing that **damned Men** do, or ever will Experience, can be any sure Sign of Grace.

Damned Men are like the **Devils**; are conformed to them in Nature and State. They have nothing better in them than the Devils; have no higher Principles in their Hearts; experience nothing, and do nothing of a more excellent Kind; As they are the Children and Servants of the Devil; and as such shall dwell with him, and be Partakers with him, of the same Misery. As Christ says, concerning the Saints, in their future State; Matthew 22:30. That **they shall be as the Angels of God in Heaven**: So it may be said concerning ungodly Men, in their future State; that they **shall be as the fallen, wicked Angels in Hell.**

Each of the forementioned Reasons, given to show the Truth of the Doctrine, with Respect to Devils, hold good with Respect to damned Men. Damned Men have no Degree of Holiness: And

therefore, those Things, which are nothing beyond what they have, cannot be holy Experiences. So it is true, that the damned Men, are not only absolutely destitute of all true Holiness, but they have not so much as any common Grace. And lastly, it is unreasonable to suppose, that a Person's being in any Respect, as the damned in Hell are, should be a certain Sign, that they are very unlike and opposite to them, and hereafter, shall not have their Portion with them.

Second. We may hence infer, that no Degree of speculative Knowledge of Things, of Religion, is any certain Sign of saving Grace. The Devil, before his Fall, was among those bright and glorious Angels of Heaven, which are represented as Morning Stars, and Flames of Fire, that excel in Strength and Wisdom. And though he be now become sinful, yet his Sin has not abolished the Faculties of the angelic Nature; as when Man fell, he did not lose the Faculties of the human Nature. Sin destroys **spiritual Principles**, but not the **natural Faculties**. It is true, Sin, when in full Dominion, entirely prevents the Exercise of the natural Faculties, in holy and spiritual Understanding; and lays many Impediments in the Way of their proper Exercise in other Respects: It lays the natural Faculty of Reason, under great Disadvantages, by the many and strong Prejudices, which the Mind is brought under the Power of: And in fallen Men, the Faculties of the Soul, are, doubtless, greatly impeded in their Exercise, through that great Weakness and Disorder of the corporeal Organ, which it is strictly united to; which is the Consequence of Sin. But there seems to be nothing in the Nature of Sin, or moral Corruption, that has any Tendency to destroy the natural Capacity; or even to diminish it, properly speaking. If Sin were of such a

Nature, as necessarily to have that Tendency and Effect; then it might be expected, that wicked Men, in a future State, where they are given up entirely to the unrestrained Exercise of their Corruptions and Lusts, and Sin is, in all Respects, brought to its greatest Perfection in them, would have the Capacity of their Souls greatly diminished: Which we have no Reason to suppose; but rather, on the contrary; that their Capacities are greatly enlarged, and that their actual Knowledge is vastly increased; and that even with Respect to the Divine Being, and the Things of Religion, and the great Concerns of the immortal Souls of Men; and that, with Regard to these Things, the Eyes of wicked Men are opened; and they, in some Respects, emerge out of Darkness into clear Light, when they go into another World.

The Greatness of the Abilities of the Devils, may be argued, from the Representation in **Ephesians 6:12**, **We wrestle not against Flesh and Blood, but against Principalities, against Powers**, etcetera. The same may also be argued, from what the Scripture says of Satan's Subtlety. **Genesis 3:1. 2 Corinthians 11:3. Acts 13:10.**

And as the Devil has a Faculty of Understanding of large Capacity, so he is capable of a great speculative Knowledge, of the Things of God, and the invisible and eternal World, as well as other Things; and must needs, actually, have a great Understanding of these Things; as these are the Things which have always been chiefly in his View; and as his Circumstances, from his first Existence, have been such as have tended chiefly to engage Him to attend to these Things. Before his Fall, he was one of those **Angels, who continually beheld the Face of the Father,**

which is in Heaven. And Sin has no Tendency to destroy the Memory: And therefore, has no Tendency to blot out of it, any speculative Knowledge that was formerly there.

As the Devil's Subtlety, shows his great Capacity; so the Way in which his Subtlety is exercised and manifested; which is principally in his artful Management, with Respect to Things of Religion; his exceeding subtle Representations, Insinuations, Reasonings, and Temptations, concerning these Things, demonstrates his great actual Understanding of them. As in order to the being a very artful Disputant in any Science, though it be only to confound and deceive such as are conversant in the Science; a Person had need to have a great and extensive Acquaintance with the Things, which pertain to that Science.

Thus the Devil has, undoubtedly a great Degree of speculative Knowledge in Divinity; having been, as it were, educated in the best Divinity School in the Universe, **namely** The Heaven of Heavens. He must needs have such an extensive and accurate Knowledge, concerning the Nature and Attributes of God, as WE, Worms of the Dust, in our present State, are not capable of. And he must have a far more extensive Knowledge of the Works of God; as of the Work of Creation in particular; for he was a Spectator of the Creation of this visible World: He was one of those **Morning-Stars** that we read of, **Job 38:4, 5, 6, 7** who **sang together**, and of those **Sons of God**, that **shouted for Joy, when God laid the Foundations of the Earth, and laid the Measures thereof, and stretched the Line upon it.** And so he must have a very great Knowledge of God's Works of Providence: He has been a Spectator of the Series of these Works from the Beginning: He has seen how God has governed the World in all Ages: He has seen

the whole Train of God's wonderful successive Dispensations of Providence towards **his Church**, from Generation to Generation. And He has not been an indifferent Spectator; but the great Opposition, which there has been between God and him, in the whole Course of those Dispensations; has necessarily, greatly engaged his Attention, in the strictest Observation of them. He must have a great Degree of Knowledge, concerning Jesus Christ, as the Saviour of Men; and the Nature and Method of the Work of Redemption, and the wonderful Wisdom of God in this Contrivance. It is that Work of God, wherein, above all others, God has acted in Opposition to him; and in which he has chiefly set himself in Opposition to God. It is with Relation to this Affair, that that mighty Warfare has been maintained, which has been carried on between **Michael** and his Angels, and the Devil and his Angels, through all Ages, from the Beginning of the World; and especially, since Christ appeared in the World. The Devil has had enough to engage his Attention, to the Steps of Divine Wisdom in this Work; for it is to that Wisdom he has opposed his Subtlety: And he has seen, and found, to his great Disappointment, and unspeakable Torment; how divine Wisdom, as exercised in that Work, has baffled and confounded his Devices. He has a great Knowledge of the Things of another World; for the Things of that World, are in his immediate View. He has a great Knowledge of Heaven; for he has been an Inhabitant of that World of Glory: And he has a great Knowledge of Hell, and the Nature of its Misery; for he is the first Inhabitant of Hell; and above all the other Inhabitants, has Experience of its Torment, and has felt them constantly, for more than Fifty-seven Hundred Years. He must have a great Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures; for it is evident, he is not hindered from

knowing what is written there, by the Use he made of the Words of Scripture, in his Temptation of our Saviour. And if he can know, he has much Opportunity to know, and must needs have a Disposition to know, with the greatest Exactness; that he may, to greater Effect, prevent and wrest the Scripture, and prevent such an Effect of the Word of God on the Hearts of Men, as shall tend to Overthrow his Kingdom. He must have a great Knowledge of the Nature of Mankind, their Capacity, their Dispositions, and the Corruptions of their Hearts; for he has had long and great Observation and Experience. The Heart of Man, is what he has had chiefly to do with, in his subtle Devices, mighty Efforts, and indefatigable Operations and Exertions of himself, from the Beginning of the World. And it is evident, that He has a great speculative Knowledge of the Nature of experimental Religion, by his being able to imitate it so artfully, and in such a Manner, as to **transform himself into an Angel of Light.**

Therefore it is manifest, from my Text and Doctrine, that no Degree of speculative Knowledge of Things of Religion, is any certain Sign of true Piety. Whatever clear Notions a Man may have of the Attributes of God, and Doctrine of the Trinity; the Nature of the two Covenants, the Economy of the Persons of the Trinity, and the Part which each Person has in the Affair of Man's Redemption; if he can Discourse never so excellently of the Offices of Christ, and the Way of Salvation by him, and the admirable Methods of divine Wisdom; and the Harmony of the various Attributes of God in that Way; if he can talk never so clearly and exactly of the Method of the Justification of a Sinner, and of the Nature of Conversion, and the Operations of the Spirit of God, in applying the Redemption of Christ; giving good Distinctions, happily solving Difficulties, and

answering Objections; in a Manner tending greatly to the enlightening the Ignorant, to the Edification of the Church of God, and the Conviction of Gainsayers; and the great Increase of Light in the World: If he has more Knowledge of this Sort than Hundreds of true Saints, of an ordinary Education, and most Divines; yet all is no certain Evidence of any Degree of saving Grace in the Heart.

It is true, the Scripture often speaks of Knowledge of divine Things, as what is peculiar to true Saints; as in John, 17. **This is eternal Life, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.** Matthew 12:27. **No man knoweth the Son but the Father; neither knoweth any Man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him.** Psalms 9:10. **They that know thy Name, will put their Trust in Thee.** Philippians 3:8. **I count all Things but Loss, for the Excellency of the Knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.** But then, we must understand it of a different Kind of Knowledge, from that speculative Understanding, which the Devil has to so great a Degree. It will also be allowed, that the spiritual saving Knowledge of God, and divine Things, greatly promotes speculative Knowledge; as it engages the Mind in its Search into Things of this Kind, and much assists to a distinct Understanding of them; so that, other Things being equal, they that have spiritual Knowledge, are much more likely than others, to have a good doctrinal Acquaintance with Things of Religion; but yet, such Acquaintance may be no distinguishing Characteristic of true Saints.

Third. It may also be inferred from what has been observed, that for Persons merely to yield a speculative Assent to the Doctrines of Religion as true, is no certain Evidence of a State of

Grace. My Text tells us, that the Devils **believe**, and as they believe that there is one God, so they believe the Truth of the Doctrines of Religion in general. The Devil is orthodox in his Faith; he believes the true Scheme of Doctrine; he is no **Deist, Socinian, Arian, Pelagian, or Antinomian**; the Articles of his Faith are all sound, and what he is thoroughly established in.

Therefore, for a Person to believe the Doctrines of Christianity, merely from the Influence of Things speculative, or from the Force of Arguments, as discerned only by Speculation, is no Evidence of Grace.

Though it is probably a very rare thing, for unregenerate men, to have a strong persuasion of the truth of the doctrines of religion, especially, such of them as are very mysterious, and much above the comprehension of reason: Yea, it is manifest, that we have no warrant to determine, that it can never be so, or to look upon such a persuasion, as an infallible evidence of grace; and that no person can safely determine his state to be good from such an evidence. Yet if he, not only himself, seems to be very confident of the truth of Christianity and its doctrines, but is able to argue most strongly for the proof of them; yet in this, he goes nothing beyond the Devil; who, doubtless, has a great knowledge of the rational arguments, by which the truth of the Christian religion, and its several principles are evinced.

And therefore, when the Scripture speaks of **believing that Jesus is the Son of God**, as a sure evidence of grace, as in 1 **John** 5:1 and other places, it must be understood, not of a mere speculative assent, but of another kind and manner of believing, which is

called the faith of God's elect. **Titus** 1:1. There is a spiritual conviction of the truth, which is, a believing with the whole heart, peculiar to true saints; of which I would speak particularly by and by.

4. It may be inferred, from the doctrine which has been insisted on, that it is no certain sign, that persons are savingly converted; that they have been subjects of very great distress and terrors of mind, through apprehensions of God's wrath, and fears of damnation.

That the devils are the subjects of great terrors, through apprehensions of God's wrath, and fears of future effects of it, is implied in my text; which speaks not only of their **believing**, but **trembling**. It must be no small degree of terror, which should make those principalities and powers, those mighty, proud and sturdy beings, to tremble.

There are many terrors, that some persons, who are concerned for their salvation, are the subjects of, which are not from any proper awakenings of conscience, or apprehensions of truth; but from melancholy, or frightful impressions on their imagination; or some groundless apprehensions, and the delusions, and false suggestions of Satan. But if they have had ever so great, and long continued terrors, from real awakenings, and convictions of truth, and views of things as they are; this is no more than what is in the devils, and will be in all wicked men, in another world. However stupid and senseless most ungodly men are now, all will be effectually awakened at last: There will be no such thing as slumbering in hell. There are many that cannot be awakened by the most solemn warnings, and awful threatenings of the word of God; the most alarming discourses from the pulpit, and the most awakening and awful providences; but all will be thoroughly awakened, by the

sound of the last trumpet, and the appearance of Christ to judgment; and all sorts will then be filled with most amazing terrors, from apprehensions of truth, and seeing things as they be; when **the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men,** (such as were the most lofty and stout-hearted, most ready to treat the things of religion with contempt) **shall hide themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains; and say to the mountains and rocks, fall on us, and hide us from the face of him, that sits on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?** Revelation 6:15, 16, 17.

Therefore, if persons have first been awakened, and then afterwards have had comfort and joy, it is no certain sign, that their comforts are of the right kind, that they were preceded by very great terrors.

5. It may be further inferred from the doctrine, that no work of the law on men's hearts, in conviction of guilt, and just desert of punishment, is a sure argument, that a person has been savingly converted.

Not only, are no awakenings and terrors, any certain evidence of this, but no mere legal work whatsoever; though carried to the utmost extent that it can be; nothing wherein there is no grace or spiritual light, but only the mere conviction of natural conscience, and those acts and operations of the mind, which are the result of this; and so are, as it were, merely forced by the clear light of conscience, without the concurrence of the heart and inclination with that light: I say these things are no certain sign of the saving grace of God, or that a person was ever savingly converted.

The evidence of this, from my text and doctrine, is demonstrative; because the devils are the subjects of these things; and all wicked men that shall finally perish, will be the subjects of the same. Natural conscience is not extinguished in the damned in hell; but on the contrary, remains, and is there in its greatest strength, and is brought to its most perfect exercise; most fully to do its proper office, as God's vicegerent in the soul, to condemn those rebels against the King of Heaven and Earth, and manifest God's just wrath and vengeance, and by that means to torment them; and be as a never-dying worm within them. Wretched men find means in this world, to blind the eyes, and stop the mouth of this vicegerent of a sin-revenging God; but they shall not be able to do it always. In another world, the eyes and mouth of conscience will be fully opened. God will hereafter, make wicked men to see and know these things, which now they industriously hide their eyes from; **Isaiah 26:10, 11. Let favour be showed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness; in the land of uprightness he will deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord. Lord, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see: But they shall see, and be ashamed for their envy at the people; yea the fire of thine enemies shall devour them.** We have this expression often annexed to God's threatenings of wrath to his enemies; **And they shall know, that I am the Lord:** This shall be accomplished by their woeful experience, and clear light in their consciences, whereby they shall be made to know, whether they will or not; how great and terrible, holy and righteous a God **JEHOVAH** is; whose authority they have despised: And they shall know, that he is righteous and holy in their destruction. This all the ungodly will be con-

vinced of, at the day of judgment, by the bringing to light all their wickedness of heart and practice; and setting all their sins, with all their aggravations, in order, not only in the view of others, even of the whole world, but in the view of their own consciences. This is threatened, **Psalm 50:21. These things you have done, and I kept silence: You thought that I was altogether such an one as yourself. But I will reprove you, and set them in order before your eyes.** Compare this with the four first verses of the Psalm. The end of the day of judgment, is not **to find out what is just**, as it is with human judgments, but it is **to manifest what is just**; to make known God's justice in the judgment which he will execute, to men's own consciences, and to the world. And therefore, that day is called **the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God. Romans 2:5.** Now sinners often cavil against the justice of God's dispensations, and particularly, the justice of the punishment, which God threatens for their sins; excusing themselves, and condemning God: But when God comes to manifest their wickedness in the light of that day, and to call them to an account, they will be speechless; **Matthew 22:11, 12. And when the King came to see the guests, he saw there, a man which had not on a wedding garment: And he says unto him, Friend, how came you in hither, not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.** When the King of Heaven and Earth comes to judgment, their consciences will be so perfectly enlightened and convinced, by the all-searching light, they shall then stand in; that their mouths will be effectually stopped, as to all excuses for them-

selves, all pleading of their own righteousness, to excuse or justify them; and all objections against the justice of their Judge; that their conscience will condemn them only, and not God.

Therefore, it follows from the doctrine, that it can be no certain sign of grace, that persons have had great convictions of sin; have had their sins of life, with their aggravations remarkably set before them, so as greatly to affect and terrify them; and withal, have had a great sight of the wickedness of their hearts, and been convinced of the greatness of the sin of unbelief, and of the inexcusableness and heinousness of their most secret spiritual iniquities; and have been brought to be convinced of the utter insufficiency of their own righteousness; and to despair of being recommended to God by it; have been as much brought off from their own righteousness, as ever any are, under a mere legal humiliation; have been convinced that they are wholly without excuse before God, and deserve damnation; and that God would be just, in executing the threatened punishment upon them, though it be so dreadful. All these things, will be in all the ungodly at the day of judgment, when they shall stand with devils, at the left hand, and shall be doomed as accursed, to everlasting fire, with them.

Indeed there will be no submission in them. Their conscience will be convinced, that God is just in their condemnation; but yet their wills will not be bowed to God's justice. There will be no acquiescence of mind, in that divine attribute; no yielding of the soul to God's sovereignty, but the highest degree of enmity and opposition. A true submission of the heart and will, to the justice and sovereignty of God, is therefore allowed to be something peculiar to true converts, being something which the devils and damned

souls are, and ever will be far from; and which a mere work of the law, and convictions of conscience, however great and clear, will never bring men to.

When sinners are the subjects of great convictions of conscience, and a remarkable work of the law; it is only a transacting the business of the day of judgment, in the conscience beforehand: God sits enthroned in the conscience, as at the last day, he will sit enthroned in the clouds of heaven; the sinner is arraigned, as it were, at God's bar; and God appears in his awful greatness, as a just and holy, sin-hating and sin-revenging God, as He will then. The sinner's iniquities are brought to light; his sins set in order before him; the hidden things of darkness, and the counsels of the heart are made manifest; as it will be then: Many witnesses do, as it were, rise up against the sinner under convictions of conscience; as they will against the wicked, at the day of judgment: And the books are opened, particularly the book of God's strict and holy law, is opened in the conscience, and its rules applied for the condemnation of the sinner; which is the book that will be opened at the day of judgment, as the grand rule of judgment, to all such wicked men as have lived under it: And the sentence of the law is pronounced against the sinner; and the justice of the sentence made manifest; as it will be at the day of judgment. The conviction of a sinner at the day of judgment, will be a work of the law, as well as the conviction of conscience in this world: And the work of the law (if the work be **merely legal**) to be sure, is never carried further in the consciences of sinners now, that it will be at that day, when its work will be perfect, in thoroughly stopping the sinner's mouth. **Romans 3:19. Now we know, that what things soever the law says, it says to them that are under the law;**

that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Every mouth shall be stopped by the law, either now or hereafter; and all the world shall become sensibly guilty before God; guilty of death, deserving of damnation. And therefore, if sinners have been the subjects of a great work of the law, and have thus become guilty, and their mouths have been stopped; it is no certain sign that ever they have been converted.

Indeed the want of a thorough sense of guilt, and desert of punishment, and conviction of the justice of GOD, in threatening damnation, is a good negative sign; it is a sign that a person **never was** converted, and truly brought, with the whole soul, to embrace CHRIST as a Savior from this punishment. For it is easily demonstrable, that there is no such thing as entirely and cordially accepting an offer from GOD, of a Savior, from a punishment that HE threatens, which we think we do not deserve. But the having such a conviction, is no certain sign, that persons have true faith, or have ever truly received CHRIST as their Savior. And if persons have great comfort, joy, and confidence, suddenly let into their minds, after great convictions, of such a kind as has been mentioned; it is no infallible evidence that their comforts are built on a good foundation.

It is manifest, therefore, that too much stress has been laid by many persons, on a great work of the law, preceding their comforts; who seem not only to have looked on such a work of the law, as necessary to precede faith, but also to have esteemed it as the chief evidence of the truth and genuineness of succeeding faith and comforts. By this means it is to be feared, very many have been deceived, and established in a false hope. And what is to be seen in

the event of things, in multitudes of instances, confirms this. It may be safely allowed, not to be so usual for great convictions of conscience, to prove abortive, and fail of a good issue, as for lesser convictions; and that more generally, when the Spirit of GOD proceeds so far with sinners, in the work of the law, as to give them a great sight of their hearts, and of the heinousness of their spiritual iniquities; and to convince them that they are without excuse and that all their righteousness can do nothing to merit GOD's favors; but that they lie justly exposed to GOD's eternal vengeance without mercy; a work of saving conversion follows. But we can have no warrant to say, it is universally so, or to lay it down as an infallible rule, that when convictions of conscience have gone thus far, saving faith, and repentance will surely follow. If any should think they have ground for such a determination, because they cannot conceive what end GOD should have, in carrying a work of conviction to such a length, and so preparing the heart for faith; and after all, never giving saving faith to the soul; I desire it may be considered, where will be the end of our doubts and difficulties, if we think ourselves sufficient to determine, so positively and particularly concerning GOD's ends and designs in what he does. It may be asked such an objector, what is GOD's end in giving a sinner **any Degree** of the strivings of his Spirit, and conviction of conscience; when he afterwards suffers it to come to nothing, and to prove in vain? If He may give some degree that may finally be in vain; who shall set the bounds, and say how great the degree shall be? Who can, on sure grounds, determine, that when a sinner has so much of that conviction, which the devils and damned in Hell have; true faith and eternal salvation, will be the certain consequence? This we may certainly determine, that, if the Apostle's ar-

gument in the text be good, not any thing whatsoever, that the devils have, is certainly connected with such a consequence. Seeing sinners, while such, are capable of the most perfect convictions, and will have them at the Day of Judgment, and in Hell; who shall say, that GOD never shall cause reprobates to anticipate the future Judgment and damnation in that respect? And if He does so, who shall say to Him, what doest Thou? Or call him to account concerning his ends in so doing. Not but that many possible wise ends might be thought of, and mentioned, if it were needful, or I had now room for it. The Spirit of GOD, is often quenched, by the exercise of the wickedness of men's hearts, after he has gone far in a work of conviction; so that their convictions never have a good issue. And who can say that sinners, by the exercise of their opposition and enmity against GOD, (which is not at all mortified by the greatest legal convictions, neither in the damned in Hell, nor sinners on Earth) may not provoke GOD to take his Spirit from them, even after He has proceeded the greatest length in a work of conviction? Who can say, that GOD never is provoked to destroy some, after he has brought them, as it were, through the wilderness, even to the edge of the land of rest? As he slew some of the **Israelites**, even in the plains of **Moab**.

And let it be considered, where is our warrant in Scripture, to make use of any legal convictions, or any method or order of successive events in a work of the law; and consequent comforts, as a sure sign of regeneration. The Scripture is abundant, in expressly mentioning evidences of grace, and of a state of favor with GOD, and characteristics of the true saints: But where do we ever find such things as these, amongst those evidences? Or where do we find any other signs insisted on, besides grace itself, its nature, ex-

ercises and fruits? These were the evidences that **Job** relied upon; These were the things that the Psalmist, everywhere insists upon, as evidences of his sincerity: And particularly in the 119th Psalm, from the beginning to the end. These were the signs that **Hezekiah** trusted to, in his sickness.

These were the characteristics given of those that are truly happy, by our Savior, in the beginning of his sermon in the mount. These are the things that CHRIST mentions, as the true evidences of being his real disciples, in his last, and dying discourse to his disciples, in the 14, 15, and 16 Chapters of **John**; and in his intercessory prayer, Chapter 17. These are the things which the Apostle **Paul**, often speaks of, as evidences of his sincerity, and sure title to a crown of glory. And these are the things he often mentions to others, in his Epistles, as the proper evidences of real Christianity; a justified state, and a title to glory. He insists on the **Fruits of the Spirit; Love, Joy, Peace, Long-suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, Temperance**, as the proper evidences of **being** CHRIST's, and **living in the Spirit**: Galatians 5:22-25. It is that **Charity**, or divine love, **which is pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy**, etc. that he insists on, as the most essential evidence of true godliness; without which, all other things are nothing. Such are the signs which the Apostle **James** insists on, as the proper evidence, of a truly wise and good man: **James 3:17. The Wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of Mercy and good Fruits, without Partiality, and without Hypocrisy**. And such are the signs of true Christianity, which the Apostle **John** insists on, throughout his Epistles. And we never have anywhere in the Bible, from the

beginning to the end of it, any other signs of godliness given, than such as these. If persons have such things as these apparently in them, it ought to be determined, that they are truly converted, without its being insisted, that it be first known, what steps or method the Spirit of GOD took, to introduce these things into the soul; which oftentimes, is altogether untraceable. All the works of GOD, are, in some respects, unsearchable: But the Scripture, often represents the works of the Spirit of GOD, as peculiarly so; **Isaiah 40:13. Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord, or being his Counsellor, hath taught Him? Ecclesiastes 11:5. As thou knowest not what is the Way of the Spirit; nor how the Bones do grow in the Womb of her that is with Child; so thou knowest not the Works of GOD, who maketh All. John 3:8. The Wind bloweth where it listeth; and thou hearest the Sound thereof; but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth; so is every One that is born of the Spirit.**

6. It follows from my text and doctrine, that it is no certain sign of grace, that persons have earnest desires and longings after salvation.

The devils, doubtless, long for deliverance from the misery they suffer, and from that greater misery which they expect. If they tremble through fear of it, they must, necessarily, earnestly desire to be delivered from it. Wicked men, are in Scripture, represented as longing for the privileges of the righteous, when the door is shut, and they are shut out from among them: They come to the door, and cry, **Lord, Lord, open to us.** Therefore, we are not to look on all desires, or all desires that are very earnest and vehement, as certain evidences of a pious heart. There are earnest de-

sires of a religious nature, which the saints have, that are the proper breathings of a new nature, and distinguishing qualities of true saints: But there are also longings, which unregenerate men may have, which are often mistaken for marks of godliness: They think they hunger and thirst after righteousness; and have earnest desires after GOD and CHRIST, and long for Heaven; when indeed, all is to be resolved into desires of salvation, from self-love; and so is a longing which arises from no higher principles, than the earnest desires of devils.

7. It may be inferred from what has been observed; that persons who have no grace, may have a great apprehension of an external glory, in things heavenly and divine; and of whatsoever is external, pertaining to things of religion.

If persons have impressed strongly on their minds, ideas of that sort, which are obtained by the external senses; whether they are of that kind that enter by the ear, as any kind of sound; whether it be the most pleasant music, or words spoken of excellent signification; words of Scripture, or any other, immediately suggested, as though they were spoken, though they seem to be never so suitable to their case, or adapted to the subject of their meditations: Or whether they are of that kind, that are obtained by the eye, as ideas of a visible beauty and glory; a shining light, an external glory of Heaven; golden streets, walls and gates of precious stone; splendid palaces; glorious inhabitants, shining forth as the Sun; a most magnificent throne, surrounded by angels and saints, in shining ranks: Or any thing external, belonging to JESUS CHRIST; either in his humbled state, as of JESUS hanging on the cross, with his crown of thorns, his wounds open, and blood trickling down; or in his glorified state, with awful majesty, or ravishing

beauty and sweetness in his countenance; his face shining above the brightness of the Sun, and the like: These things are no certain signs of grace.

Multitudes that are now in Hell, will have ideas of the external glory, that pertains to things heavenly, far beyond what ever any have in this world. They will see all that external glory and beauty, in which CHRIST will appear at the Day of Judgment, when the Sun shall be turned into darkness before him; which, doubtless, will be ten thousand times greater than ever was impressed on the imagination of either saints or sinners, in this present state, or ever was conceived by any mortal man.

8. It may be inferred from the doctrine, that persons who have no grace, may have a very great and affecting sense of many divine things on their hearts.

The Devil has not only great speculative knowledge, but he has a sense of many divine things, which deeply affects him, and is most strongly impressed on his heart. As

1. The Devils and damned souls, have a great sense of the **vast importance** of the things of another world. They are **in** the invisible world, and they see and know how great the things of that world are: Their experience teaches them in the most affecting manner. They have a great sense of the worth of salvation, and the worth of immortal souls, and the vast importance of those things, that concern men's eternal welfare. The parable in the latter end of the 16th Chapter of **Luke**, teaches this, in representing the **rich man** in Hell, as entreating that **Lazarus** might be sent **to his five brothers, to testify to them, lest they should come to that place of torment**. They who endure the torments of Hell,

have, doubtless, a most lively and affecting sense of the vastness of an endless eternity; and of the comparative momentariness of this life, and the vanity of the concerns and enjoyments of time. They are convinced effectually, that all the things of this world, even those that appear greatest and most important to the inhabitants of the earth, are despicable trifles, in comparison of the things of the eternal world. They have a great sense of the preciousness of time, and of the means of grace, and the inestimable value of the privileges which they enjoy, which live under the Gospel. They are fully sensible of the folly of those that go on in sin; neglect their opportunities; make light of the counsels and warnings of God; and bitterly lament their exceeding folly, in their own sins; by which they have brought on themselves so great and remediless misery. When sinners, by woeful experience, know the dreadful issue of their evil way; they will **mourn at the last, saying, how have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof, and have not obeyed the voice of my teachers, nor inclined my ear to them that instructed me!** Proverbs 4:11, 12, 13.

Therefore, however, true godliness is now attended with a great sense of the importance of divine things; and it is rare, that men that have no grace, do maintain such a sense, in any steady and persevering manner; yet it is manifest, those things are no certain evidences of grace. Unregenerate men may have a sense of the importance of the things of eternity, and the vanity of the things of time; the work of immortal souls; the preciousness of time and means of grace, and the folly of the ways of allowed sin: And may have such a sense of these things, as may deeply affect them, and cause them to mourn for their own sins, and be much concerned

for others. Though it be true, they have not these things in the same manner, and in all respects, from the same principles and views, as godly men have them.

2. Devils and damned men, have a strong and most affecting sense of the awful **greatness** and **majesty** of God. The awful majesty of God, is greatly made manifest in the executions of divine wrath, which they are the subjects of. The making this known, is one thing God has in design, in his vengeance on his enemies. **Romans 9:22. What, if God willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath, fitted to destruction?** The devils tremble before this **great and terrible** God, and under a strong sense of his **awful majesty**. It is greatly manifested to them, and damned souls now; but shall be manifested in a further degree, in **that day, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, in flaming fire, to take vengeance upon them;** and when they shall earnestly desire to fly, and **be hid from the face of Him that sits on the throne, (which shall be, because of the glory of His majesty.** Isaiah 2:10.) and when they **shall be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.** When Christ comes, at the last day, **in the glory of his Father, every eye shall see him** in that glory, (in this respect, that they shall see his terrible majesty) and they also that pierced Him: **Revelation 1:7.** Both those devils, and wicked men, which tormented and insulted Him, when he appeared in meanness and ignominy, shall then see him in the glory of his Father.

It is evident, therefore, that a sense of God's terrible majesty, is no certain evidence of saving grace: For we see that wicked men, and devils are capable of it: Yea, many wicked men in this world have actually had it. This is a manifestation, which God made of Himself, in the sight of that wicked congregation at **Mount Sinai**, which they saw, and were deeply affected with; **so that all the people that were in the camp trembled.**

3. Devils and damned men have some kind of conviction and sense of all the attributes of God, both natural and moral, that is strong and very affecting.

The devils know God's **almighty power**: They saw a great manifestation of it, when they saw God lay the foundation of the earth, **et cetera** and were much affected with it. And they have seen innumerable other great demonstrations of his power; as in the universal deluge, the destruction of **Sodom**, the wonders in **Egypt**, at the Red Sea, and in the wilderness; the causing the sun to stand still in **Joshua's** time; and many others. And they had a very affecting manifestation of God's mighty power on themselves, in casting all their hosts down from heaven into Hell; and have continual affecting experience of it, in God's reserving them in strong chains of darkness, and in the strong pains they feel; and will hereafter, have far more affecting experience of it, when **they shall be punished from the glory of God's power**, with that mighty destruction, which they now tremble in expectation of. So the devils have a great knowledge of the **wisdom** of God: They have had unspeakably, more opportunity and occasion to observe it, in the work of creation, and also in the works of providence, than any mortal man has ever had; and have been themselves the subjects of innumerable affecting manifestations of it, in God's dis-

appointing and confounding them in their most subtle devices, in so wonderful and amazing a manner. So they see and find the **infinite purity and holiness** of the divine nature, in the most affecting manner, as this appears in his infinite hatred of sin, in what they feel of the dreadful effects of that hatred. They know already, by what they suffer, and will know hereafter to a greater degree, and far more affecting manner, that such is the opposition of God's nature to sin, that it is like a consuming fire, that burns with infinite vehemence against it: They will feel the vehement heat of that fire, in a very dreadful manner. They also will see the holiness of God, as exercised in his love to righteousness and holiness, in what they will see of the reward of the righteousness of Christ, and the holiness of his people, in the glory of Christ and his church; which also will be very affecting to devils, and wicked men. And the **exact justice** of God, will be manifested to them in the clearest and strongest, most convincing and most affecting light, at the day of judgment. When they will also see great and affecting demonstrations of the riches of his **grace**, in the marvelous fruits of his love to the vessels of mercy; when they shall see them at the right hand of Christ, shining as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father, and shall hear the blessed sentence pronounced upon them; and will be deeply affected with it; as seems naturally implied in the 13th Chapter of **Luke**, 28, 29, verses. The devils know God's **truth**; and therefore, they believe his threatenings, and tremble in expectation of their accomplishment. And wicked men that now doubt his truth, and dare not trust his word; will hereafter, in the most convincing affecting manner, find his word to be true, in all that he has threatened; and will see that he is faithful to his promises, in

the rewards of his saints. Devils and damned men, know that God is **eternal** and **unchangeable**; and therefore, they despair of there ever being an end to their misery.

Therefore it is manifest, that merely persons having an affecting sense of some, or even of all God's attributes, is no certain sign, that they have the true grace of God in their hearts.

Objection. Here possibly, some may object against the force of the foregoing reasoning. That ungodly men in this world, are in exceeding different circumstances, from those which the devils are in; and from those which wicked men will be in, at the day of judgment. Those things which are visible and present to these, are now future and invisible to the other. And wicked men in this world, are in the body, that clogs and hinders the soul, and are encompassed with objects that blind and stupefy them. And therefore, it does not follow, that, because the wicked in another world, have a great apprehension and lively sense of such and such things, without grace, that ungodly men, in their present state may have the same.

Answer. To this I answer: It is not supposed, that ever men in this life have all those things which have been mentioned, to the same degree that the devils and damned have them. None supposes that ever any in this life have terrors of conscience to an equal degree with them. It is not to be supposed, that any mortal man, whether godly or ungodly, has an equal degree of speculative knowledge with the devil. And, as was just now observed, the wicked, at the day of judgment, will have a vastly greater idea of the external glory of Christ, than ever any have in the present state. So, doubtless, they will have a far greater sense of God's awful greatness and terrible majesty, than any could subsist under in this

frail state. So we may well conclude, that the devils, and wicked men in Hell, have a greater and more affecting sense of the vastness of eternity, and (in some respects) a greater sense of the importance of the things of another world, than any here have. And they have also longings after salvation to an higher degree than any wicked men in this world.

But yet, it is evident, that men in this world, may have things of **the same kind** with devils and damned men. The same sort of light in the understanding; the same views, and the same affections; the same sense of things, the same kind of impressions on the mind, and on the heart. If the objection is against the conclusiveness of the reasoning that has been made use of to prove this; it is against the conclusiveness of that reasoning which is the Apostle's, more properly than mine. The Apostle judged it, a conclusive argument, against such as thought their **believing there was one** God, an evidence of their being gracious; that the devils believed the same. So the argument is exactly the same, against such as think they have grace, because they believe God is a **holy** God, or because they have a sense of the **awful majesty** of God. The same may be observed of other things that have been mentioned. My text has reference not only to the act of the understandings of devils in believing, but to that affection of their hearts, which accompanies the views they have: As **trembling** is an effect of the affection of the heart. Which shows, that if men have both the same views of understanding, and also the same affections of heart, that the devils have, it is no sign of grace.

And as to the particular degree, to which these things may be carried in men, in this world, without grace; it appears not to be safe, to go about so to ascertain and fix it, as to make use of it as an

infallible rule to determine men's state. I know not where we have any rule to go by, to fix the precise degree, in which God by his providence, or his common influences on the mind, will excite in wicked men in this world, the same views and affections, which the wicked have in another world; which it is manifest, the former are capable of as well as the latter, having the same faculties and principles of soul; and which views and affections, it is evident, they often are actually the subjects of in some degree; some in a greater, and some in a less degree. The infallible evidences of grace, which are laid down in Scripture, are of another kind: They are all of a holy and spiritual nature; and therefore, things of that kind, which a heart that is wholly carnal and corrupt, cannot receive, or have any experience of. 1 **Corinthians** 2:14.

I might also here add, that observation and experience, in very many instances, seems to confirm what Scripture and reason teaches in these things.

The second USE may be of **self-examination**.

Let the Things which have been observed, put all on examining themselves, and inquiring whether they have any better Evidences of saving Grace, than such as have been mentioned.

We see how the infallible Spirit of God, in the Text, plainly represents the Things the Devils are the Subjects of, as no sure Sign of Grace. And we have now, in some Instances, observed how far the Devils, and damned Men go, and will go in their Experience, their Knowledge of divine Things, their Belief of Truth, their Awakenings and Terrors of Conscience, their Conviction of Guilt, and of the Justice of God, in their eternal dreadful Damnation, their Longings after Salvation, their Sight of the external Glory of

Christ, and heavenly Things; their Sense of the vast Importance of the Things of Religion, and another World; their Sense of the awful Greatness and terrible Majesty of God, yea, of all God's Attributes. These Things may well put us on serious Self-Examination, whether we have any Thing to Evidence our good Estate, beyond what the Devils are the Subjects of. Christ said to his Disciples, **Except your Righteousness exceed the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, you shall in no Case, enter into the Kingdom of Heaven:** So the Spirit of Christ, in his Apostle **James**, does in Effect, say, in my Text, except what you Experience in your Souls, go beyond the Experiences of Devils, you shall, in no Case, enter into the Kingdom of God.

Here, it may be, some will be ready to say, I have something besides all these Things, which have been mentioned; I have Things which the Devils have not, even **Love** and **Joy**.

I answer, you may have something **besides** the Experiences of Devils, and yet, nothing **beyond** them. Though the Experience be different, yet it may not be owing to any different Principle, but only the different Circumstances, under which these Principles are exercised. The Principles, from whence the forementioned Things in Devils and damned Men do arise, are these two, **natural Understanding**, and **Self-Love**. It is from natural Understanding or Reason, that they have such a Degree of Knowledge in divine Things, and such a Belief of them. It is from these Principles of natural Understanding and Self-Love, as exercised about their own Dispositions and Actions, and God as their Judge, that they have **natural Conscience**; and have such Convictions of Conscience, as have been spoken of. It is from these Principles, that they have such a Sense of the Importance of the

Things of Religion, and the eternal World, and such Longings after Salvation. It is for the joint Exercise of these two Principles, that they are so sensible of the awful Majesty of God, and of all the Attributes of the divine Nature, and so greatly affected with them. And it is from these Principles, joined with external Sense, the Wicked, at the Day of Judgment, will have so great an Apprehension **of**, and will be so greatly affected **by** the external Glory of Christ and his Saints. And that you have a Kind of Love or Gratitude and Joy, which Devils and damned Men have not, may possibly not arise from any other Principles in your Heart, different from these two, but only from these Principles, as exercised in different Circumstances. As for Instance; your being a Subject of the restraining Grace of God, and being under Circumstances of Hope, and the Receipt of Mercy. The natural Understanding and Self-love of Devils, possibly might affect them in the same Manner, if they were in the same Circumstances. If your Love to God, has its first Source from Nothing else than a supposed immediate divine Witness, or any other supposed Evidence, that Christ died for you in particular, and that God loves you; it springs from no higher Principles than Self-love; which is a Principle that reigns in the Hearts of Devils. Self-love is sufficient, without Grace, to cause Men to love those that love them, or that they imagine love them, and make much of them; **Luke 6:32. For if you love them which love you, what thank have you? For Sinners also love those that love them.** And would not the Hearts of Devils be filled with great **Joy**, if they, by any Means, should take up a confident Persuasion that God had pardoned them, and was become their Friend, and that they should be delivered from that Wrath which they now are in trembling Expectation of. If the

Devils go so far as you have heard, even in their Circumstances, being totally cast off, and given up to unrestrained Wickedness, being without Hope, knowing that God is, and ever will be their Enemy, they suffering his Wrath without Mercy: How far may we reasonably suppose they might go, in Imitation of Grace and pious Experience, if they had the same Degree of Knowledge, as clear Views, and as strong Conviction, under Circumstances of Hope, and Offers of Mercy; and being the Subjects of common Grace, restraining their Corruptions, and assisting and exciting the natural Principles of Reason, Conscience, **et cetera?** Such Things as Devils are the Subjects of; such great Conviction of Conscience; such a Sense of the Importance of eternal Things; such affecting Views of the awful Majesty, Greatness, Power, Holiness, Justice, and Truth of God, and such a Sense of his great Grace to the Saints, if they, or any Thing like them, should be in the Heart of a Sinner, in this World; at the same Time that he, from some strong Impression on his Imagination, of Christ appearing to him, or sweet Words spoken to him, or by some other Means, has suddenly, after great Terrors, imbibed a strong Confidence, that now, this Great God, is his Friend and Father, has released, him from all the Misery he feared, and has promised him eternal Happiness: I say, such Things would, doubtless, vastly heighten his Ecstasy of Joy, and raise the Exercise of natural Gratitude, (that Principle from whence Sinners love those that love them) and would occasion a great Imitation of many Graces, in strong Exercises. Is it any Wonder then, that Multitudes under such a sort of Affection, are deceived? Especially when they have Devils to help forward the Delusion, whose great Subtlety, has chiefly been exercised in deceiving Mankind, through all past Generations.

Enquiry. Here possibly, some may be ready to inquire, If there may be so many Things, which Men may experience from no higher Principles than are in the Minds and Hearts of Devils; what are those Exercises and Affections, that are of a higher Nature, which I must find in my Heart, and which I may justly look upon as sure Signs of the saving Grace of God's Spirit?

Answer. I answer, Those Exercises and Affections which are good Evidences of Grace, differ from all that the Devils are the Subjects of, and all that can arise from such Principles as are in their Hearts, in two Things; **namely their Foundation and their Tendency.**

1. They differ in their **Foundation**, or in that belonging to them, which is most fundamental in them, and the Foundation of all the rest, which pertains to them; **namely An Apprehension, or Sense of the supreme holy Beauty, and Comeliness of divine Things, as they are in themselves, or in their own Nature.**

This the Devils, and Damned in Hell are, and forever will be entirely destitute of. This the Devils once had, while they stood in their Integrity; but this they wholly lost, when they fell: And this is the only Thing that can be mentioned, pertaining to the Devil's Apprehension and Sense of the divine Being, that he did lose. Nothing else belonging to the Knowledge of God, can be devised, that he is destitute of. It has been observed, that there is no one Attribute of the divine Nature, but what he is sensible of, and knows, and has a strong and very affecting Conviction of; and this I think is evident, and undeniable. But the supreme Beauty of the divine Nature, he is altogether blind to: He sees no more of it, than a Man born perfectly blind does of Colours. The great Sight he has

of the Attributes of God, gives him an Idea, and strong Sense of his awful Majesty, but no Idea of his Beauty and Comeliness. Though he has seen so much of God's wonderful Works of Power, Wisdom, Holiness, Justice and Truth, and his wonderful Works of Grace to Mankind, this so many Thousand Years, and has had Occasion to observe them with the strongest Attention: Yet all serves not to give him the least Sense of his divine Beauty. And though the Devils should continue to exercise their mighty Powers of Mind, with the strongest Intention; and should take Things in all possible Views, in every Order and Arrangement; yet they never will see this. So little akin, is the Knowledge they have to this, that the great Degrees of that Knowledge, bring them no nearer to it. Yet, the more Knowledge they have of God, of that Kind, the more do they hate God. That wherein the Beauty of the divine Nature, does most essentially consist, **namely** his Holiness, or moral Excellency, appears, in their Eyes, furthest from Beauty: It is on that very Account chiefly that he appears hateful to them. The more Holiness they see in him, the more hateful he appears: The greater their Sight is of his Holiness, the higher is their Hatred of him raised. And because of their Hatred of his Holiness, they hate him the **more**, the **more** they see of his other Attributes. They would hate a holy Being, whatever his other Attributes were; but they hate such a holy Being the worse, for his being infinitely wise, and infinitely powerful, **et cetera** more than they would do, if they saw in him less Power, and less Wisdom.

The Wicked, at the Day of Judgment, will see every Thing else in Christ, but his Beauty and Amiableness. There is no one Quality or Property of his Person, that can be Thought of, but what will be set before them, in the strongest Light at that Day, but only such as

consist in this. They will see him coming in the Clouds of Heaven, **in Power, and great Glory, in the Glory of his Father.** They will have that View of his external Glory, which is vastly beyond what we can have any Imagination of: And they will have the strongest and most convincing Demonstrations of all his Attributes and Perfections. They will have a Sense of his great Majesty, that will be, as it were, infinitely affecting to them. They shall be made to know effectually, **That he is the Lord.** They shall see what he is, and what he does: His Nature and Works, shall appear in the strongest View. But his holy and infinite Beauty and Amiableness, which is all in all, and without which every other Quality and Property is Nothing, and worse than Nothing, they will see Nothing of.

Therefore, it is a Sight or Sense of this that, is the Thing, wherein does fundamentally consist, the Difference between those Things in which the saving Grace of God's Spirit consists, and the Experiences of Devils and damned Souls. This is the Foundation of every Thing else that is distinguishing in true Christian Experience. This is the Foundation of the Faith of God's Elect. This gives the Mind a saving Belief of the Truth of divine Things. It is a View of the Excellency of the Things exhibited in the Gospel, or Sense of the divine Beauty, and Amiableness of the Scheme of Doctrine there exhibited, that savingly convinces the Mind, that it is indeed divine, or of God. This Account of the Matter is plainly implied: **2 Corinthians 4:3-4. But if our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost; in whom the God of this World has blinded the Minds of them that BELIEVE NOT; lest the Light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the Image of God, should shine into them, And, verse 6. For God, who**

commanded the Light to shine out of Darkness, hath shined in our Hearts, to give the Light of the Knowledge of the Glory of God, in the Face of Jesus Christ. It is very evident that a saving Belief of the Gospel, is here spoken of by the Apostle, as arising from a View of the divine Glory or Beauty of the Things it exhibits. It is by this View, that the Soul of a true Convert is enabled savingly, to see the Sufficiency of Christ for his Salvation. He that has his Eyes opened to behold the divine superlative Beauty and Loveliness of Jesus Christ, is convinced of his Sufficiency, to stand as a Mediator between Him, a guilty Hell-deserving Wretch, and an infinitely holy God, in an exceeding different Manner than ever he can be convinced by all the Arguments that are made Use of, by the excellent Authors or Preachers.

When he once comes to see CHRIST's divine Loveliness, he wonders no more that he is thought worthy by GOD the Father, to be accepted for the vilest Sinner. Now it is not difficult for him to conceive, how the Blood of CHRIST should be esteemed by GOD so precious, as to be worthy to be accepted as a Compensation for the greatest Sins. The Soul now properly sees the Preciousness of CHRIST, and so does properly see and understand the very Ground and Reason of his Acceptableness to GOD, and the Value GOD sets on his Blood, Obedience and Intercession. This satisfies the poor guilty Soul, and gives it Rest; when the finest and most elaborate Discourses, about the Sufficiency of CHRIST, and Suitableness of the Way of Salvation, would not do it. When a Man then comes to see the proper Foundation of Faith and Affiance, with his own Eyes, then he believes savingly. **He that seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, hath everlasting Life.** John 6:40. When CHRIST thus **MANIFESTS GOD's NAME** to Men,

then **they believe that all Things whatsoever GOD has given to CHRIST are of him, and believes that CHRIST was sent of GOD.** John 17:6, 7, 8. And **they that thus know CHRIST's Name will trust in him.** Psalm 9:10. In order to true Faith in JESUS CHRIST, the Son of GOD, is REVEALED IN MEN. Galatians 1:15, 16. And 'tis this Sight of the divine Beauty of CHRIST, that bows the Wills, and draws the Hearts of Men. A Sight of the Greatness of GOD in his Attributes, may overwhelm Men, and be more than they can endure; but the Enmity and Opposition of the Heart, may remain in its full Strength, and the Will remain inflexible; whereas, one Glimpse of the moral and spiritual Glory of GOD, and supreme Amiability of JESUS CHRIST, shining into the Heart, overcomes and abolishes this Opposition, and inclines the Soul to CHRIST, as it were, by an omnipotent Power: So that now, not only the Understanding, but the Will, and the whole Soul receives and embraces the Saviour. This is most certainly the Discovery, which is the first internal Foundation of a saving Faith in CHRIST, in the Soul of the true Convert; and not on having of it immediately suggested and revealed to the Soul, by a Text of Scripture, or any immediate outward or inward Witness, that CHRIST loves **him**, or that he died for **him in particular**, and is **his** Saviour; so begetting Confidence and Joy, and a seeming Love to CHRIST, because he loves Him: By which sort of Faith and Conversion, (demonstrably vain and counterfeit) Multitudes have been deluded. The Sight of the Glory of GOD, in the Face of JESUS CHRIST, works true supreme Love to GOD: This is a Sight of the proper Foundation of supreme Love to GOD, **namely** The supreme Loveliness of his Nature; and a Love to him on this Ground, is truly above any Thing

that can come from a mere Principle of Self-love, which is in the Hearts of Devils, as well as Men. And this begets true spiritual and holy Joy in the Soul, which is indeed Joy in GOD, and glorying in him, and not rejoicing in ourselves.

This Sight of the Beauty of divine Things, will excite true Desires and Longings of Soul, after those Things; not like the Longings of Devils, or any such forced Desires, as those of a Man in great Danger of Death, after some bitter Medicine, that he hopes will save his Life; but natural free Desires, the Desires of Appetite; the Thirstings of a new Nature; as a new-born Babe desires the Mother's Breast; and as a hungry Man longs for some pleasant Food he thinks of; or as the thirsty Hart pants after the cool and clear Stream.

This Sense of divine Beauty, is the first Thing in the actual Change made in the Soul, in true Conversion, and is the Foundation of every Thing else belonging to that Change; as is evident by those Words of the Apostle, 2 **Corinthians** 3:18. **But we all with open Face, beholding as in a Glass, the Glory of the Lord, are changed into the same Image, from Glory to Glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.**

2. Truly gracious Affections and Exercises of Mind differ from such as are counterfeit, which arise from no higher Principles than are in the Hearts of Devils, in their Tendency: And that in these two Respects.

(1.) They are of a Tendency and Influence very contrary to that, which was especially the Devil's Sin, even Pride. That Pride was in a peculiar Manner the Devil's Sin, is manifest from 1 **Timothy** 3:6. **Not a Novice left, being lifted up with Pride, he fell into**

the Condemnation of the Devil. False and delusive Experiences evermore tend to this; though oftentimes under the Disguise of great and extraordinary Humility. Spiritual Pride, is the prevailing Temper, and general Character of Hypocrites, deluded with false Discoveries and Affections. They are in general, of a Disposition directly contrary to those two Things belonging to the Christian Temper, directed to by the Apostle; the One in **Romans 12:16. Be not wise in your own Conceit;** and the other in **Philippians 2:3. Let each esteem others better than themselves.** False Experience is conceited of itself, and affected with itself. Thus he that has false Humility, is much affected to think, how he is abased before GOD: He that has false Love, is affected, when he thinks of the Greatness of his Love. The very Food and Nourishment of false Experience, is to view itself, and take much Notice of itself; and its very Breath and Life is to talk much of itself, or some Way to be showing itself. Whereas truly gracious Views and Affections, are of a quite contrary Tendency: They nourish no Self-Conceit; no exalting Conceit of the Man's own Righteousness, Experience, or Privileges; no high Conceit of his Humiliations. They incline to no Ostentation, nor Self-Exaltation, under any Disguise whatsoever. But that Sense of the supreme, holy Beauty and Glory of GOD and CHRIST, which is the Foundation of them, and that only, mortifies Pride, and truly humbles the Soul. It not only cuts off some of the outermost Branches (causing many Branches to grow out, where but one was before) but it strikes at the very Root of Pride; it alters the very Nature and Disposition of the Heart. The Light of GOD's Beauty, and that alone truly shows the Soul its own Deformity, and effectually inclines it to exalt GOD, and abase itself.

(2.) These gracious Exercises and Affections, differ from the other in their Tendency, to destroy Satan's Interest. First In the Person himself, in their Tendency, to cause the Soul to **hate every Evil, and false Way**, and to produce universal Holiness of Heart and Life; disposing him to make the Service of GOD, and the promoting his Glory, and the Good of Mankind, the very Business of his Life. Whereas those false Discoveries and Affections, have not this Effect. There may indeed, be great Zeal, and a great deal of what is called Religion; but it is not a truly Christian Zeal; 'tis not a being zealous of good Works: Their Religion is not the Service of GOD; 'tis not a seeking and serving GOD; but indeed, a seeking and serving themselves. Though there may be a Change of Life, 'tis not a Change from every wicked Way, to a uniform Christian Life and Practice; but only a turning the Stream of Corruption from one Channel to another. Thus the Apostle **James** distinguishes, in our Context, a true Faith, from the Faith of Devils: James 2:19, 20. **Thou believest there is one GOD. The Devils also believe and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain Man, that Faith without Works is dead?** And thus the Apostle **John** distinguishes true Communion with GOD. 1 John 1:6, 7. **If we say that we have Fellowship with Him, and walk in Darkness, we lie, and do not the Truth. But if we walk in the Light, or he is in the Light, we have Fellowship one with another, and the Blood of CHRIST cleanseth us from all Sin.** By this he distinguishes true spiritual Knowledge, Chapter 2:3, 4. **Hereby we do know, that we know Him, that we keep his Commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his Commandments, is a Liar, and the Truth is not in him.** And hereby the same Apostle distinguishes true Love.

Chapter 3:18, 19. **Let us not love in Word and in Tongue, but in Deed, [in Work, as the Word signifies] and in Truth. And hereby we know that we are of the Truth, and shall assure our Hearts before him.**

2. Truly gracious Experiences, have a Tendency to destroy Satan's Interest in the World.

False Religion, consisting in the Counterfeits of the Operations of the Spirit of GOD, and in high **Pretences** and great **Appearances** of inward experimental Religion; when this prevails among a People, though for the present it may surprise many, and may be the Occasion of alarming and awakening some Sinners; yet in the final Issue of Things, tends greatly to wound and weaken the Cause of vital Religion, and to strengthen the Interest of Satan, desperately to harden the Hearts of Sinners, exceedingly to fill the World with Prejudice, against the Power of Godliness, to promote Infidelity, and licentious Principles and Practices, to build up, and make strong the Devil's Kingdom in the World, more than open Vice and Profaneness, or professed Atheism, or public Persecution; and perhaps, more than any Thing else whatsoever.

But it is not so with true Religion, in its genuine Beauty. That, if it prevails in great Power, will doubtless, excite the Rage of the Devil, and many other Enemies of Religion: However, it gives great Advantage to its Friends, and exceedingly strengthens their Cause; and tends to convince or confound Enemies. True Religion, is a divine Light in the Souls of the Saints; and as it shines out in the Conversation before Men, it tends to induce others to glorify GOD. There is Nothing like it, (as to Means) to awaken the Consciences of Men, to convince Infidels, and to stop the Mouths of Gainsayers.

Though Men naturally hate the Power of Godliness; yet, when they see the Fruits of it, there is a Witness in their Consciences in its Favour. **He that serveth CHRIST in Righteousness, and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghost, is acceptable to GOD, and approved of Man.** Romans 14:17, 18. The Prevailing of true Religion, ever tends to the Honour of Religion in the World; though it commonly is the Occasion of great Persecution. 'Tis a sure Thing, the more it appears, and is exemplified in the View of the World, the more will its Honour, and the Honour of its Author be advanced. Philippians 1:11. **Being filled with the Fruits of Righteousness; which are by JESUS CHRIST, unto the Glory and Praise of GOD.**

The **third** USE may be of **Exhortation**, to seek those distinguishing Qualifications and Affections of Soul, which neither the Devil, nor any unholy Being, **has**, or **can have**.

How excellent is that inward Virtue and Religion, which consists in these! Herein consists the most excellent Experiences of Saints and Angels in Heaven. Herein consists the best Experience of the Man, CHRIST JESUS; whether in his humbled, or glorified State. Herein consists the Image of GOD: Yea, this is spoken of in Scripture, as a Communication of something of GOD's own Beauty and Excellency, **a Participation of the divine Nature**; 2 Peter 1:4. **A: Partaking of his Holiness**; Hebrews 12:10. **A Partaking of CHRIST's Fulness**; John 1:16. Hereby the Saints are **filled with all the Fullness of GOD**; Ephesians 3:18, 19. Hereby they **have Fellowship with, both the Father and the Son**, (1 John 1:3.) that is, they communicate with them in their Happiness. Yea, by Means of this divine Virtue, there is a mutual

Indwelling of GOD and the Saints; 1 John 4:16. **GOD is Love; and he that dwelleth in Love, dwelleth in GOD, and GOD in him.**

This Qualification must render the Person that has it, excellent and happy indeed; and doubtless, is the highest Dignity, and Blessedness of any Creature. This is the peculiar Gift of GOD, which he bestows only on his special Favourites. As to Silver, Gold, and Diamonds, earthly Crowns and Kingdoms, He often throws them out to those that he esteems as Dogs and Swine; but this is the peculiar Blessing of his dear Children: This is what Flesh and Blood can't impart, and what all the Devils in Hell, can't work the least Degree of in any Heart; 'tis GOD alone can bestow it. This was the special Benefit, which CHRIST died to procure for his Elect, the most excellent Token of his everlasting Love; the chief Fruit of his great Labours, and the most precious Purchase of his Blood.

By this, above all other things, do men glorify God. By this, above all other things, do the saints shine as lights in the world, and are blessings to mankind. And this, above all things, tends to their own comfort; from hence arises that **peace which passeth all understanding**, and that **joy, which is unspeakable, and full of glory**. And this is that which will most certainly issue in the eternal salvation of those that have it. It is impossible, that the soul, wherein it is, should sink and perish. It is an immortal seed; it is eternal life begun; and therefore, they that have it, **can never die**. It is the dawning of the light of glory. It is **the day-star risen in the heart**, that is a sure forerunner of that sun's rising, which will bring on an everlasting day. This is that **water, which Christ gives, which is in him that drinks it, a well of water,**

springing up into everlasting life: John 4:14. It is something from heaven, is of a heavenly nature, and tends to heaven. And those that have it, however they may now wander in a wilderness, or be tossed to and fro, on a tempestuous ocean, shall certainly arrive in heaven at last, where this heavenly spark shall be increased, and perfected, and the souls of the saints, all be transformed into a bright and pure flame, and they shall shine forth as the sun, in the kingdom of their Father.

Amen.

INTRODUCTION



SINNERS In the Hands of An angry GOD.
A SERMON Preached at **Enfield, July** eighth 1741.

At a Time of great Awakenings; and attended with remarkable Impressions on many of the Hearers.

By **Jonathan Edwards**, Master of Arts Pastor of the Church of CHRIST in **Northampton**.

Amos 9. 2, 3. Though they dig into Hell, thence shall my Hand take them; though they climb up to Heaven, thence will I bring them down. And though they hide themselves in the Top of Carmel, I will search and take them out thence; and though they be hidden from my Sight in the Bottom of the Sea, thence I will command the Serpent, and he shall bite them.

The **SECOND EDITION**.

BOSTON: Printed: **NEW-YORK:** Re-printed by **James Parker**, at the **New Printing-Office** in **Beaver-Street**, 1753.

SINNERS IN THE HANDS OF AN ANGRY GOD



SINNERS IN THE HANDS OF AN ANGRY GOD.

DEUTERONOMY 32. 35.—Their Foot shall slide in due Time.—

IN this Verse is threatened the Vengeance of GOD, on the wicked unbelieving Israelites, that were GOD's visible People, and lived under Means of Grace; and that, notwithstanding all GOD's wonderful Works, that he had wrought towards that People, yet remained, as is expressed, **verse 28** void of Counsel, having no Understanding in them; and that, under all the Cultivations of Heaven, brought forth bitter and poisonous Fruit; as in the two Verses next preceding the Text.

The Expression that I have chosen for my Text, **Their Foot shall slide in due Time**; seems to imply the following Things, relating to the Punishment and Destruction that these wicked Israelites were exposed to.

1. That they were **always** exposed to Destruction; as one that stands or walks in slippery Places, is always exposed to fall. This is implied in the Manner of their Destruction's coming upon them,

being represented by their Foot's sliding; the same is expressed, Psalm 73. 18. **Surely thou didst set them in slippery Places; thou castedst them down into Destruction.**

2. It implies that they were always exposed to **sudden** unexpected Destruction. As he that walks in slippery Places is every Moment liable to fall; he can't foresee one Moment whether he shall stand or fall the next; and when he does fall, he falls at once, without Warning. Which is also expressed in that Psalm 73. 18, 19. **Surely thou didst set them in slippery Places; thou castedst them down into Destruction. How are they brought into Desolation as in a Moment?**

3. Another Thing implied is, that they are liable to fall **of themselves**, without being thrown down by the Hand of another. As he that stands or walks on slippery Ground, needs nothing but his own Weight to throw him down.

4. That the Reason why they are not fallen already, and don't fall now, is only that GOD's appointed Time is not come. For it is said, that when that due Time, or appointed Time comes, **their Foot shall slide**. Then they shall be left to fall, as they are inclined by their own Weight. GOD won't hold them up in these slippery Places any longer, but will let them go; and then, at that very Instant, they shall fall into Destruction; as he that stands in such slippery declining Ground on the Edge of a Pit that he can't stand alone, when he is let go, he immediately falls and is lost.

The Observation from the Words that I would now insist upon, is this, There is Nothing that keeps wicked Men, at any one Moment, out of Hell, but the mere Pleasure of GOD.

By the mere Pleasure of GOD, I mean his sovereign Pleasure, his arbitrary Will, restrained by no Obligation, hindered by no Manner of Difficulty, any more than if nothing else but GOD's mere Will had in the least Degree, or in any Respect whatsoever, any Hand in the Preservation of wicked Men one Moment.

The Truth of this Observation may appear by the following Considerations.

1. There is no Want of **Power** in GOD to cast wicked Men into Hell at any Moment. Men's Hands can't be strong when GOD rises up: The strongest have no Power to resist him, nor can any deliver out of his Hands.

He is not only able to cast wicked Men into Hell, but he can most **easily** do it. Sometimes an earthly Prince meets with a great deal of Difficulty to subdue a Rebel, that has found Means to fortify himself, and has made himself strong by the Numbers of his Followers. But it is not so with GOD. There is no Fortress that is any Defence from the Power of GOD. Though Hand join in Hand, and vast Multitudes of GOD's Enemies combine and associate themselves, they are easily broken in Pieces: They are as great Heaps of light Chaff before the Whirlwind; or large Quantities of dry Stubble before devouring Flames. We find it easy to tread on, and crush a Worm, that we see crawling on the Earth; so it is easy for us to cut or singe a slender Thread that any Things hangs by; thus easy is it for GOD, when he pleases, to cast his Enemies down to Hell. What are we, that we should think to stand before him, at whose Rebuke the Earth trembles, and before whom the Rocks are thrown down?

2. They **deserve** to be cast into Hell; so that divine Justice never stands in the Way, it makes no Objection against GOD's using his Power at any Moment to destroy them. Yea, on the contrary, Justice calls aloud for an infinite Punishment of their Sins. Divine Justice, says of the Tree that brings forth such Grapes of Sodom, **Cut it down, why cumbreth it the Ground**, Luke 13. 7. The Sword of divine Justice is every Moment brandished over their Heads, and it is nothing but the Hand of arbitrary Mercy, and GOD's mere Will, that holds it back.

3. They are **already** under a Sentence of Condemnation to Hell. They don't only justly deserve to be cast down thither; but the Sentence of the Law of GOD, that eternal and immutable Rule of Righteousness, that GOD has fixed between him and Mankind, is gone out against them, and stands against them; so that they are bound over already to Hell. John 3. 18. **He that believeth not is condemned already**. So that every unconverted Man properly belongs to Hell; that is his Place; from thence he is. John 8. 23. **Ye are from beneath**: And thither he is bound; it is the Place that Justice, and GOD's Word, and the Sentence of his unchangeable Law assigns to him.

4. They are now the Objects of that very **same** Anger and Wrath of GOD, that is expressed in the Torments of Hell. And the Reason why they don't go down to Hell at each Moment, is not because GOD, in whose Power they are, is not then very angry with them; as angry as he is with many of those miserable Creatures, that he is now tormenting in Hell, and do there feel and bear the Fierceness of his Wrath. Yea, GOD is a great deal more angry with great Numbers that are now on Earth; yea, doubtless, with many

that are now in this Congregation, that it may be, are at Ease and Quiet, than he is with many of those that are now in the Flames of Hell.

So that it is not because GOD is unmindful of their Wickedness, and does not resent it, that he does not let loose his Hand and cut them off. GOD is not altogether such an One as themselves, though they may imagine him to be so. The Wrath of GOD burns against them, their Damnation does not slumber, the Pit is prepared, the Fire is made ready, the Furnace is now hot, ready to receive them; the Flames do now rage and glow. The glittering Sword is whet, and held over them, and the Pit has opened her Mouth under them.

5. The **Devil** stands ready to fall upon them, and seize them as his own, at what Moment GOD shall permit him. They belong to him; he has their Souls in his Possession, and under his Dominion. The Scripture represents them as his **Goods**, Luke 11. 12. The Devils watch them; they are ever by them, at their right Hand; they stand waiting for them, like greedy hungry Lions that see their Prey, and expect to have it, but are for the Present kept back; if GOD should withdraw his Hand, by which they are restrained, they would in one Moment fly upon their poor Souls. The old Serpent is gaping for them; Hell opens its Mouth wide to receive them; and if God should permit it, they would be hastily swallowed up and lost.

6. There are in the Souls of wicked Men, those hellish **Principles** reigning, that would presently kindle and flame out into Hell Fire, if it were not for GOD's Restraints. There is laid in the very Nature of carnal Men, a Foundation for the Torments of Hell: There are those corrupt Principles, in reigning Power in

them, and in full Possession of them, that are Seeds of Hell Fire. These Principles are active and powerful, exceeding violent in their Nature, and if it were not for the restraining Hand of GOD upon them, they would soon break out, they would flame out after the same Manner as the same Corruptions, the same Enmity does in the Hearts of damned Souls, and would beget the same Torments in them as they do in them. The Souls of the Wicked, are in Scripture compared to the troubled Sea, **Isaiah** 57. 20. For the present GOD restrains their Wickedness by his mighty Power, as he does the raging Waves of the troubled Sea, saying, **Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further**; but if GOD should withdraw that restraining Power, it would soon carry all afore it. Sin is the Ruin and Misery of the Soul; it is destructive in its Nature; and if GOD should leave it without Restraint, there would need nothing else to make the Soul perfectly miserable. The Corruption of the Heart of Man is a Thing that is immoderate and boundless in its Fury; and while wicked Men live here, it is like Fire pent up by GOD's Restraints, when if it were let loose, it would set on Fire the Course of Nature; and as the Heart is now a Sink of Sin, so, if Sin was not restrained, it would immediately turn the Soul into a fiery Oven, or a Furnace of Fire and Brimstone.

7. It is no Security to wicked Men for one Moment, that there are no **visible Means** of **Death** at Hand. It is no Security to a natural Man, that he is now in Health, and that he does not see which Way he should now immediately go out of the World by any Accident, and that there is no visible Danger in any Respect in his Circumstances. The manifold and continual Experience of the World in all Ages, shows that this is no Evidence that a Man is not on the very Brink of Eternity, and that the next Step won't be into

another World. The unseen, unthought-of Ways and Means of Persons going suddenly out of the World are innumerable and inconceivable. Unconverted Men walk over the Pit of Hell on a rotten Covering, and there are innumerable Places in this Covering so weak that they won't bear their Weight, and these Places are not seen. The Arrows of Death fly unseen at Noon-Day; the sharpest Sight can't discern them. GOD has so many different unsearchable Ways of taking Wicked Men out of the World and sending them to Hell, that there is nothing to make it appear, that GOD had need to be at the Expense of a Miracle, or go out of the ordinary Course of his Providence, to destroy any wicked Man, at any Moment. All the Means that there are of Sinners going out of the World, are so in GOD's Hands, and so universally absolutely subject to his Power and Determination, that it does not depend at all less on the mere Will of GOD, whether Sinners shall at any Moment go to Hell, than if Means were never made use of, or at all concerned in the Case.

8. Natural Men's **Prudence** and **Care** to preserve their own **Lives**, or the Care of others to preserve them, don't secure them a Moment. This divine Providence and universal Experience does also bear Testimony to. There is this clear Evidence that Men's own Wisdom is no Security to them from Death; That if it were otherwise we should see some Difference between the wise and politic Men of the World, and others, with Regard to their Liableness to early and unexpected Death; but how is it in Fact? Ecclesiastes 2. 16. **How dieth the wise Man? as the Fool.**

9. All wicked Men's **Pains** and **Contrivance** they use to escape **Hell**, while they continue to reject CHRIST, and so remain wicked Men, don't secure them from Hell one Moment. Almost every natural Man that hears of Hell, flatters himself that he shall es-

cape it; he depends upon himself for his own Security; he flatters himself in what he has done, and in what he is now doing, or what he intends to do; every one lays out Matters in his own Mind how he shall avoid Damnation, and flatters himself that he contrives well for himself, and that his Schemes won't fail. They hear indeed that there are but few saved, and that the bigger Part of Men that have died heretofore are gone to Hell; but each one imagines that he lays out Matters better for his own Escape than others have done: He does not intend to come to that Place of Torment; he says within himself, that he intends to take Care that shall be effectual, and to order Matters so for himself as not to fail.

But the foolish children of men do miserably delude themselves in their own schemes, and in their confidence in their own strength and wisdom; they trust to nothing but a shadow. The bigger part of those that heretofore have lived under the same means of grace, and are now dead, are undoubtedly gone to Hell; and it was not because they were not as wise as those that are now alive; it was not because they did not lay out matters as well for themselves to secure their own escape. If it were so, that we could come to speak with them, and could enquire of them, one by one, whether they expected when alive, and when they used to hear about Hell, ever to be the subjects of that misery, we doubtless should hear one and another reply, No, I never intended to come here; I had laid out matters otherwise in my mind; I thought I should contrive well for myself; I thought my scheme good; I intended to take effectual care; but it came upon me unexpected; I did not look for it at that time, and in that manner; it came as a thief; Death outwitted me; God's wrath was too quick for me; O my

cursed foolishness! I was flattering myself, and pleasing myself with vain dreams of what I would do hereafter, and when I was saying peace and safety, then sudden destruction came upon me.

10. God has laid himself under **no obligation**, by any promise, to keep any natural man out of Hell one moment. God certainly has made no promises either of eternal life, or of any deliverance or preservation from eternal death, but what are contained in the Covenant of Grace, the promises that are given in Christ, in whom all the promises are Yea and Amen. But surely they have no interest in the promises of the Covenant of Grace, that are not the children of the Covenant, and that don't believe in any of the promises of the Covenant, and have no interest in the **Mediator** of the Covenant.

So that whatever some have imagined and pretended about promises made to natural men's earnest seeking and knocking, it is plain and manifest, that whatever pains a natural man takes in religion, whatever prayers he makes, till he believes in Christ, God is under no manner of obligation to keep him a **moment** from eternal destruction.

So that thus it is, that natural men are held in the hand of God over the pit of Hell; they have deserved the fiery pit, and are already sentenced to it. And God is dreadfully provoked, his anger is as great towards them as to those that are actually suffering the executions of the fierceness of his wrath in Hell, and they have done nothing in the least, to appease or abate that anger, neither is God in the least bound by any promise to hold them up one moment. The Devil is waiting for them, Hell is gaping for them, the flames gather and flash about them, and would fain lay hold on them, and swallow them up. The fire pent up in their own hearts is struggling

to break out; and they have no interest in any Mediator, there are no means within reach that can be any security to them. In short, they have no refuge, nothing to take hold of, all that preserves them every moment is the mere arbitrary will, and uncovenanted unobliged forbearance of an incensed God.

Finis.

APPLICATION



APPLICATION.

The USE may be of **Awakening** to unconverted Persons in this Congregation. This that you have heard is the Case of every one of you that are out of Christ. That World of Misery, that Lake of burning Brimstone is extended abroad under you. **There** is the dreadful Pit of the glowing Flames of the Wrath of GOD; there is Hell's wide gaping Mouth open; and you have nothing to stand upon, nor any Thing to take hold of: there is nothing between you and Hell but the Air; it is only the Power and mere Pleasure of GOD that holds you up.

You probably are not sensible of this; you find you are kept out of Hell, but don't see the Hand of GOD in it, but look at other Things, as the good State of your bodily Constitution, your Care of your own Life, and the Means you use for your own Preservation. But indeed these Things are nothing; if GOD should withdraw his Hand, they would avail no more to keep you from falling, than the thin Air to hold up a Person that is suspended in it.

Your Wickedness makes you as it were heavy as Load, and to tend downwards with great Weight and Pressure towards Hell; and if GOD should let you go, you would immediately sink and

swiftly descend and plunge into the bottomless Gulf, and your healthy Constitution, and your own Care and Prudence, and best Contrivance, and all your Righteousness, would have no more Influence to uphold you and keep you out of Hell, than a Spider's Web would have to stop a falling Rock. Were it not, that so is the sovereign Pleasure of GOD, the Earth would not bear you one Moment; for you are a Burden to it; the Creation groans with you; the Creature is made subject to the Bondage of your Corruption, not willingly; the Sun doesn't willingly shine upon you to give you Light to serve Sin and Satan; the Earth doesn't willingly yield her Increase to satisfy your Lusts; nor is it willingly a Stage for your Wickedness to be acted upon; the Air doesn't willingly serve you for Breath to maintain the Flame of Life in your Vitals, while you spend your Life in the Service of GOD's Enemies. GOD's Creatures are good, and were made for Men to serve GOD with, and don't willingly subserve to any other Purpose, and groan when they are abused to Purposes so directly contrary to their Nature and End. And the World would spew you out, were it not for the sovereign Hand of him who has subjected it in Hope. There are the black Clouds of GOD's Wrath now hanging directly over your Heads, full of the dreadful Storm, and big with Thunder; and were it not for the restraining Hand of GOD, it would immediately burst forth upon you. The sovereign Pleasure of GOD, for the present, stays his rough Wind; otherwise it would come with Fury, and your Destruction would come like a Whirlwind, and you would be like the Chaff of the Summer threshing Floor.

The Wrath of GOD is like great Waters that are dammed for the Present; they increase more and more, and rise higher and higher, till an Outlet is given, and the longer the Stream is stopped,

the more rapid and mighty is its Course, when once it is let loose. It is true, that Judgment against your evil Works, has not been executed hitherto; the Floods of GOD's Vengeance have been withheld; but your Guilt in the mean Time is constantly increasing, and you are every Day treasuring up more Wrath; the Waters are continually rising, and waxing more and more mighty; and there is Nothing but the mere Pleasure of GOD, that holds the Waters back, that are unwilling to be stopped, and press hard to go forward; if GOD should only withdraw his Hand from the Flood-Gate, it would immediately fly open, and the fiery Floods of the Fierceness and Wrath of GOD, would rush forth with inconceivable Fury, and would come upon you with omnipotent Power; and if your Strength were ten Thousand Times greater than it is, yea, ten thousand Times greater than the Strength of the stoutest, sturdiest Devil in Hell, it would be Nothing to withstand or endure it.

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 Obligation at all, that keeps the Arrow one Moment from being made drunk with your Blood.

Thus are all you that never passed under a great Change of Heart, by the mighty Power of the SPIRIT of GOD upon your Souls; all that were never born again, and made new Creatures, and raised from being dead in Sin, to a State of new, and before altogether unexperienced Light and Life, (however you may have reformed your Life in many Things, and may have had religious Affections, and may keep up a Form of Religion in your Families and Closets, and in the Houses of GOD, and may be strict in it,)

you are thus in the Hands of an angry GOD; it is Nothing but his mere Pleasure, that keeps you from being this Moment swallowed up in everlasting Destruction.

However unconvinced you may now be of the Truth of what you hear, by and by you will be fully convinced of it. Those that are gone from being in the like Circumstances with you, see that it was so with them; for Destruction came suddenly upon most of them, when they expected Nothing of it, and while they were saying, **Peace and Safety:** Now they see, that those Things that they depended on for Peace and Safety, were Nothing but thin Air and empty Shadows.

The GOD that holds you over the Pit of Hell, much as one holds a Spider, or some loathsome Insect, over the Fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked; his Wrath towards you burns like Fire; he looks upon you as worthy of Nothing else, but to be cast into the Fire; he is of purer Eyes than to bear to have you in his Sight; you are ten thousand Times so abominable in his Eyes, as the most hateful venomous Serpent is in ours. You have offended him infinitely more than ever a stubborn Rebel did his Prince: And yet, it is Nothing but his Hand that holds you from falling into the Fire every Moment: It is to be ascribed to Nothing else, that you did not go to Hell the last Night; that you were suffered to awake again in this World, after you closed your Eyes to sleep: And there is no other Reason to be given, why you have not dropped into Hell since you arose in the Morning, but that GOD's Hand has held you up: There is no other Reason to be given why you haven't gone to Hell, since you have sat here in the House of GOD, provoking his

pure Eyes by your sinful wicked Manner of attending his solemn Worship: Yea, there is Nothing else that is to be given as a Reason why you don't this very Moment drop down into Hell.

O Sinner! Consider the fearful Danger you are in: It is a great Furnace of Wrath, a wide and bottomless Pit, full of the Fire of Wrath, that you are held over in the Hand of that GOD, whose Wrath is provoked and incensed as much against you, as against many of the Damned in Hell: You hang by a slender Thread, with the Flames of divine Wrath flashing about it, and ready every Moment to singe it, and burn it asunder; and you have no Interest in any Mediator, and Nothing to lay hold of to save yourself, Nothing to keep off the Flames of Wrath, Nothing of your own, Nothing that you ever have done, Nothing that you can do, to induce GOD to spare you one Moment.

And consider [reconstructed: here] more particularly several Things concerning that Wrath that you are in such Danger of.

1. **Whose** Wrath it is: It is the Wrath of the infinite GOD. If it were only the Wrath of Man, though it were of the most potent Prince, it would be comparatively little to be regarded. The Wrath of Kings is very much dreaded, especially of absolute Monarchs, that have the Possessions and Lives of their Subjects wholly in their Power, to be disposed of at their mere Will. Proverbs 20:2. **The Fear of a King is as the Roaring of a Lion: Whoso provokes him to Anger, sins against his own Soul.** The Subject that very much enrages an arbitrary Prince, is liable to suffer the most extreme Torments, that human Art can invent, or human Power can inflict. But the greatest earthly Potentates, in their greatest Majesty and Strength, and when clothed in their greatest Terrors, are but feeble despicable Worms of the Dust, in

Comparison of the great and almighty Creator and King of Heaven and Earth: It is but little that they can do, [reconstructed: whom] most enraged, and when they have exerted the utmost of their Fury. All the Kings of the Earth before GOD, are as Grasshoppers, they are Nothing, and less than Nothing: Both their Love and their Hatred is to be despised. The Wrath of the great King of Kings, is as much more terrible than theirs, as his Majesty is greater. Luke 12:4-5. **And I say unto you my Friends, be not afraid of them that kill the Body, and after that have no more that they can do: But I will forewarn you whom you shall fear; fear him, which after he has killed, has Power to cast into Hell; yea, I say unto you, fear him.**

2. It is the **Fierceness** of his Wrath that you are exposed to. We often read of the **Fury** of GOD; as in Isaiah 59:18. **According to their Deeds, accordingly he will repay Fury to his Adversaries.** So Isaiah 66:15. **For behold, the Lord will come with Fire, and with Chariots, like a Whirlwind, to render his Anger with Fury, and his Rebukes with Flames of Fire.** And so in many other Places. So we read of GOD's **Fierceness.** Revelation 19:15. There we read of **the Wine-Press of the Fierceness and Wrath of Almighty GOD.** The Words are exceeding terrible. If it had only been said, **the Wrath of GOD,** the Words would have implied that which is infinitely dreadful: But it is not only said so, but **the Fierceness and Wrath of GOD:** The Fury of GOD! the Fierceness of Jehovah! Oh how dreadful must that be! Who can utter or conceive what such Expressions carry in them! But it is not only said so, but **the Fierceness and Wrath of ALMIGHTY GOD.** As though there would be a very great Manifestation of his almighty Power, in what the Fierceness

of his Wrath should inflict, as though Omnipotence should be as it were enraged, and exerted, as Men were wont to exert their Strength in the Fierceness of their Wrath. Oh! then what will be the Consequence! What will become of the poor Worm that shall suffer it! Whose Hands can be strong? And whose Heart endure? To what a dreadful, inexpressible, inconceivable Depth of Misery must the poor Creature be sunk who shall be the Subject of this!

Consider this, you that are here present, that yet remain in an unregenerate State. That GOD will execute the Fierceness of his Anger, implies, that he will inflict Wrath without any Pity: When GOD beholds the ineffable Extremity of your Case, and sees your Torment to be so vastly disproportioned to your Strength, and sees how your poor Soul is crushed and sinks down, as it were into an infinite Gloom; he will have no Compassion upon you, he will not forbear the Executions of his Wrath, or in the least lighten his Hand; there shall be no Moderation or Mercy, nor will GOD then at all stay his rough Wind; he will have no Regard to your Welfare, nor be at all careful lest you should suffer too much, in any other Sense, than only that you shall not suffer beyond what strict Justice requires: Nothing shall be withheld, because it is so hard for you to bear. Ezekiel 8:18. **Therefore will I also deal in Fury; mine Eye shall not spare, neither will I have Pity; and though they cry in mine Ears with a loud Voice, yet I will not hear them.** Now GOD stands ready to pity you; this is a Day of Mercy; you may cry now with some Encouragement of obtaining Mercy: But when once the Day of Mercy is past, your most lamentable and dolorous Cries and Shrieks will be in vain; you will be wholly lost and thrown away of GOD as to any Regard to your Welfare; GOD will have no other Use to put you to, but only to suf-

fer Misery; you shall be continued in being to no other End; for you will be a Vessel of Wrath fitted to Destruction; and there will be no other Use of this Vessel but only to be filled full of Wrath: GOD will be so far from pitying you when you cry to him, that it is said he will only **Laugh and Mock**, Proverbs 1:25, 26, etc.

How awful are those Words, Isaiah 63:3, which are the Words of the great GOD, **I will tread them in mine Anger, and will trample them in my Fury, and their Blood shall be sprinkled upon my Garments, and I will stain all my Raiment.** It is perhaps impossible, to conceive of Words that carry in them greater Manifestations of these three Things namely, **Contempt**, and Hatred, and Fierceness of Indignation. If you cry to GOD to pity you, he will be so far from pitying you in your doleful Case, or showing you the least Regard or Favour, that instead of that, he will only tread you under Foot: And though he will know, that you cannot bear the Weight of Omnipotence treading upon you, yet he will not Regard that, but he will crush you under his Feet without Mercy; He will crush out your Blood, and make it fly, and it shall be sprinkled on his Garments, so as to stain all his Raiment. He will not only hate you, but he will have you in the utmost Contempt; no Place shall be thought fit for you, but under his Feet, to be trodden down as the Mire of the Streets.

3. The Misery you are exposed to, is that which GOD will inflict to that End, that he might show what that **Wrath** of JEHOVAH is. GOD hath had it on his Heart to show to Angels and Men, both how excellent his Love is, and also how terrible his Wrath is. Sometimes earthly Kings have a Mind to show how terrible **their** Wrath is, by the extreme Punishments they would execute on those that provoke them. **Nebuchadnezzar**, that mighty and

haughty Monarch of the **Chaldean** Empire, was willing to show **his Wrath**, when enraged with **Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego**; and accordingly gave Order, that the burning fiery Furnace should be heated seven Times hotter than it was before; doubtless, it was raised to the utmost Degree of Fierceness, that human Art could raise it: But the great GOD is also willing to show **his Wrath**, and magnify his awful Majesty and mighty Power in the extreme Sufferings of his Enemies. Romans 9:22. **What if God willing to show HIS Wrath, and to make his Power known, endured with much Long-suffering, the Vessels of Wrath fitted to Destruction?** And seeing this is his Design and what he has determined, to show how terrible the unmixed, unrestrained Wrath, the Fury and Fierceness of JEHOVAH is, he will do it to Effect. There will be something accomplished and brought to pass, that will be dreadful with a Witness. When the great and angry GOD, hath risen up and executed his awful Vengeance on the poor Sinner; and the Wretch is actually suffering the infinite Weight and Power of his Indignation, then will GOD call upon the whole Universe to behold that awful Majesty and mighty Power, that is to be seen in it. Isaiah 33:12, 13, 14. **And the People shall be as the burning of Lime, as Thorns cut up shall they be burnt in the Fire. Hear ye that are far off, what I have done; and ye that are near, acknowledge my Might. The Sinners in Zion are afraid, Fearfulness hath surprised the Hypocrites, etc.**

Thus it will be with you that are in an unconverted State, if you continue in it; the infinite Might, and Majesty and Terribleness of the OMNIPOTENT GOD shall be magnified upon you, in the inefable Strength of your Torments: You shall be tormented in the

Presence of the holy Angels, and in the Presence of the Lamb; and when you shall be in this State of Suffering, the glorious Inhabitants of Heaven shall go forth and look on the awful Spectacle, that they may see what the Wrath and Fierceness of the Almighty is, and when they have seen it, they will fall down and adore that great Power and Majesty. Isaiah 66:23, 24. **And it shall come to pass, that from one new Moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, shall all Flesh come to Worship before me, saith the Lord; and they shall go forth and look upon the Carcasses of the Men that have transgressed against me; for their Worm shall not die, neither shall their Fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring unto all Flesh.**

4. It is **everlasting** Wrath. It would be dreadful to suffer this Fierceness and Wrath of Almighty GOD one Moment; but you must suffer it to all Eternity: There will be no End to this exquisite horrible Misery: When you look forward, you shall see a long Forever, a boundless Duration before you, which will swallow up your Thoughts, and amaze your Soul, and you will absolutely despair of ever having any Deliverance, any End, any Mitigation, any Rest at all; you will know certainly, that you must wear out long Ages, Millions of Millions of Ages, in wrestling and conflicting with this almighty merciless Vengeance, and then, when you have so done, when so many Ages have actually been spent by you in this Manner, you will know, that all is but a Point to what remains. So that your Punishment will indeed be infinite. Oh who can express what the State of a Soul in such Circumstances is! All that we can

possibly say about it, gives but a very feeble faint Representation of it; it is inexpressible and inconceivable: For **who knows the Power of GOD's Anger?**

How dreadful is the State of those that are daily and hourly in Danger of this great Wrath, and infinite Misery! But this is the dismal Case of every Soul in this Congregation, that has not been born again, however moral and strict, sober and religious they may otherwise be. Oh that you would consider it, whether you be Young or Old. There is Reason to think, that there are many in this Congregation now hearing this Discourse, that will actually be the Subjects of this very Misery to all Eternity. We know not who they are, or in what Seats they sit, or what Thoughts they now have: It may be, they are now at Ease, and hear all these Things without much Disturbance, and are now flattering themselves that they are not the Persons, promising themselves that they shall escape. If we knew that there was one Person, and but one, in the whole Congregation, that was to be the Subject of this Misery, what an awful Thing would it be to think of! If we knew who it was, what an awful Sight would it be to see such a Person! How might all the Rest of the Congregation lift up a lamentable and bitter Cry over him! But alas! instead of one, how many is it likely, will remember this Discourse in Hell? And it would be a Wonder, if some that are now present, should not be in Hell in a very short Time, before this Year is out. And it would be no Wonder if some Persons, that now sit here in some Seats of this Meeting-House in Health, and quiet and secure, should be there before To-morrow Morning. Those of you that finally continue in a natural Condition, that shall keep out of Hell longest, will be there in a little Time! Your Damnation does not slumber; it will come swiftly, and in all Probability, very sud-

denly upon many of you. You have Reason to wonder, that you are not already in Hell. It is doubtless the Case of some that heretofore you have seen and known, that never deserved Hell more than you, and that heretofore, appeared as likely to have been now alive as you: Their Case is past all Hope; they are crying in extreme Misery and perfect Despair; but here you are in the Land of the Living, and in the House of GOD, and have an Opportunity to obtain Salvation. What would not those poor damned hopeless Souls, give for one Day's such Opportunity as you now enjoy!

And now you have an extraordinary Opportunity, a Day wherein CHRIST has flung the Door of Mercy wide open; and stands in the Door, calling and crying with a loud Voice to poor Sinners; a Day wherein many are flocking to him, and pressing into the Kingdom of GOD; many are daily coming from the East, West, North and South; many that were very lately in the same miserable Condition that you are in, are now in an happy State, with their Hearts filled with Love to Him, that has loved them, and washed them from their Sins in his own Blood, and rejoicing in Hope of the Glory of GOD. How awful is it to be left behind at such a Day! To see so many others feasting, while you are pining and perishing! To see so many rejoicing and singing for Joy of Heart, while you have Cause to mourn for Sorrow of Heart, and howl for Vexation of Spirit! How can you rest one Moment in such a Condition? Are not your Souls as precious as the Souls of the People at **Suffield**, where they are flocking from Day to Day to Christ?

Are there not many here that have lived **long** in the World, that are not to this Day born again, and so are Aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel, and have done Nothing ever since they

have lived, but treasure up Wrath against the Day of Wrath? Oh Sirs, your Case in an especial Manner is extremely dangerous; your Guilt and Hardness of Heart is extremely great. Do you not see how generally Persons of your Years are passed over and left, in the present remarkable and wonderful Dispensation of GOD's Mercy? You had need to consider yourselves, and wake thoroughly out of Sleep; you cannot bear the Fierceness and Wrath of the infinite GOD.

And you that are **young Men**, and **young Women**, will you neglect this precious Season that you now enjoy, when so many others of your Age are renouncing all youthful Vanities, and flocking to CHRIST? You especially have now an extraordinary Opportunity; but if you neglect it, it will soon be with you, as it is with those Persons that spent away all the precious Days of Youth in Sin, and are now come to such a dreadful Pass in Blindness and Hardness.

And you **Children**, that are unconverted, do you not know that you are going down to Hell, to bear the dreadful Wrath of that GOD, that is now angry with you every Day, and every Night? Will you be content to be the Children of the Devil, when so many other Children in the Land are converted, and are become the holy and happy Children of the King of Kings?

And let everyone that is yet out of Christ, and hanging over the pit of hell, whether they be old men and women, or middle-aged, or young people, or little children, now hearken to the loud calls of God's Word and Providence. This acceptable year of the Lord, that is a day of such great favor to some, will doubtless be a day of as remarkable vengeance to others. Men's hearts harden, and their guilt increases apace at such a day as this, if they neglect their

souls. And never was there so great danger of such persons being given up to hardness of heart, and blindness of mind. God seems now to be hastily gathering in his Elect in all parts of the land; and probably the greater part of adult persons that ever shall be saved, will be brought in now in a little time, and that it will be as it was on the great outpouring of the Spirit upon the **Jews** in the Apostles' days, the Election will obtain, and the rest will be blinded. If this should be the case with you, you will eternally curse this day, and will curse the day that ever you were born, to see such a season of the pouring out of God's Spirit; and will wish that you had died and gone to hell before you had seen it. Now undoubtedly it is, as it was in the days of **John the Baptist**, the axe is in an extraordinary manner, laid at the root of the trees, that every tree that brings not forth good fruit, may be hewn down, and cast into the fire.

Therefore, let everyone that is out of Christ, now awake and fly from the wrath to come. The wrath of Almighty God is now undoubtedly hanging over a great part of this congregation. Let everyone fly out of **Sodom: Haste and escape for your lives, look not behind you, escape to the mountain, lest you be consumed.**

THANKS FOR READING



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