

Alarm to the Unconverted

The Necessity of Conversion

By [Joseph Alleine](#)

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It may be you are ready to say, 'What does all this stir mean?' and are apt to wonder why I follow you with such earnestness, still ringing the same lesson in your ears—that you should repent and be converted. But I must say to you, as Ruth to Naomi, 'Entreat me not to leave you, or to return from following after you.' [Ruth 1:16] Were it a matter of indifference, might you be saved as you are, I would gladly let you alone; but would you not have me concerned for you, when I see you ready to perish? As the Lord lives, before whom I am—I *have not the least hope of seeing your face in heaven, except you be converted*. I utterly despair of your salvation, except you will be prevailed with thoroughly to turn and give up yourself to God in holiness and newness of life.

Jesus said, 'I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again' [John 3:3], and yet do you wonder why your ministers labor so earnestly for you? Do not think it strange that I am earnest with you to follow after holiness, and long to see the image of God upon you. Never did any, nor shall any, enter into heaven by any other way but this! The conversion described, is not a high attainment of some advanced Christians—but every soul that is saved undergoes this change.

What is it that you count necessary? Is your bread necessary? Is your breath necessary? Then your conversion is much more necessary. Indeed, this is the one thing necessary. Your *possessions* are not necessary; you may sell all for the pearl of great price, and yet be a gainer by the purchase. Your *life* is not necessary; you may part with it for Christ, to infinite advantage. Your *reputation* is not necessary; you may be reproached for the name of Christ, and yet be happy; yes, you may be much more happy in reproach than in repute. But your *conversion* is necessary; your salvation depends upon it; and is it not needful in so important a matter to take care? On this one point depends your making or marring to all eternity.

But I shall more particularly show the necessity of conversion, in five things—

1. Without conversion, your BEING is in vain.

Is it not a pity, that you should be good for nothing—an unprofitable burden of the earth—a mere wart in the body of the universe? Thus you are, while unconverted, for you cannot answer the end of your being. Is it not for the divine pleasure that you are and were created? Did not God make you for Himself? Are you a man—and have you reason? Then, think how you came into being and why you exist. Behold God's workmanship in your body, and ask yourself for what purpose did God construct this fabric? Consider the noble faculties of your heaven-born soul. To what end did God bestow these excellencies? Was it to no other end than that you should please yourself, and gratify your senses? Did God send men into the world, only like the swallows, to gather a few sticks and mud, and build their nests, and raise up their young, and then die away? The very heathen could see farther than this. Are you so 'fearfully and wonderfully made' [Psalm 139:14], and do you not yet reason with yourself, 'Surely, I was made for some noble and exalted end!'

O man! set your reason a little in the chair. Is it not a pity such a goodly fabric should be raised in vain? Truly you are in vain, except you are for God. It were better you had no being—than not be for Him. Would you serve your end? You must repent and be converted; without this you are to no purpose; indeed, to bad purpose.

You are to NO purpose. Unconverted man is like a choice instrument, which has every string broken or out of tune. The Spirit of the living God must repair and tune it by the grace of regeneration, and sweetly move it by the power of actuating grace, or else your prayers will be but howlings, and all your service will make no music in the ears of the Most Holy. All your powers and faculties are so corrupt in your natural state that, except you be purged from dead works, you cannot serve the living God.

An unsanctified man cannot work the work of God—

[1] He has no SKILL in it.

He is altogether as unskillful in the *work*, as in the *word* of righteousness. There are great mysteries in the *practice*, as well as in the *principles* of godliness. Now the unregenerate do not know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven. You may as well expect him to read—who never learned the alphabet; or look for goodly music on the lute—from one that never set his hand to an instrument; as that a natural man should do the Lord any pleasing service. He must first be taught of God (John 6:45), taught to pray (Luke 11:1), taught to profit (Isa 48:17), taught to go (Hos 11:3), or else he will be utterly at a loss.

[2] He has no STRENGTH for it.

How weak is his heart! (Ezek 16:30). He is soon tired. The Sabbath, what a

weariness is it! (Mal 1:13). He is without strength (Rom 5:6), yes, dead in sin (Eph 2:5).

[3] He has no MIND to it.

He desires not the knowledge of God's ways (Job 21:14). He does not know them, and he does not care to know them (Psalm 82:5). He knows not, neither will he understand.

[4] He has neither due INSTRUMENTS nor MATERIALS for it.

A man may as well hew the marble without tools, or paint without colors or brushes, or build without materials—as perform any acceptable service without the graces of the Spirit, which are both the materials and instruments in the work. *Almsgiving* is not a service of God but of vainglory—if it does not spring from love to God. What is the *prayer* of the lips without grace in the heart—but the carcass without life? What are all our *confessions*—unless they are exercises of godly sorrow and sincere repentance? What are our *petitions*—unless animated with holy desires and faith in the attributes and promises of God? What are our *praises* and *thanksgivings*—unless they spring from the love of God, and a holy gratitude and sense of God's mercies in the heart? So that a man may as well expect that trees should speak, or look for motion from the dead, as look for any service, holy and acceptable to God, from the unconverted. When the tree is evil, how can the fruit be good?

Also, without conversion you live to BAD purpose. The unconverted soul is a very cage of unclean birds (Rev 18:2), a sepulcher full of corruption and rottenness (Matt 23:27), a loathsome carcass full of crawling worms, and sending forth a most noxious stench in the nostrils of God (Psalm 14:3). O dreadful case! Do you not yet see a change to be needful? Would it not have grieved one to see the golden consecrated vessels of God's temple turned into quaffing bowls of drunkenness, and polluted with the idol's service? (Dan 5:2-3). Was it such an abomination to the Jews when Antiochus set up the picture of a swine at the entrance of the temple? How much more abominable, then, would it have been to have had the very temple itself turned into a stable or a pig sty; and to have had the holy of holies served like the house of Baal! This is just the case of the unregenerate. All your members are turned into instruments of unrighteousness, servants of Satan, and your inmost heart into a receptacle of uncleanness. You may see what kind of inhabitants are within—by what come out; for, 'out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies' (Matt 15:19). This black troop shows what a hell there is within!

O abuse insufferable! to see a heaven-born soul abased to such vileness; to see the glory of God's creation, the chief of the works of God, the Lord of this lower world, eating husks with the prodigal! Was it such a lamentation to see those

nobles—sit desolate in the streets; and the precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, esteemed as earthen pitchers; and those who were clothed in scarlet embrace dunghills? (Lam 4:2,5). And is it not much more fearful to see the only being that has immortality in this lower world and carries the stamp of God, become as a vessel wherein is no pleasure, and be put to the most sordid use? O intolerable indignity! Better you were dashed in a thousand pieces, than continue to be abased to so vile a service!

2. Not only man—but the whole visible CREATION is in vain without conversion.

God has made all the visible creatures in heaven and earth for the service of man, and man only is the spokesman for all the rest. Man is, in the world, like the tongue to the body, which speaks for all the members. The other creatures cannot praise their Maker, except by dumb signs and hints to man that he should speak for them. Man is, as it were, the high priest of God's creation, to offer the sacrifice of praise for all his fellow-creatures. The Lord God expects a tribute of praise from all His works. Now, all the rest do bring in their tribute to man, and pay it by his hand. So then, if a man is false, and faithless, and selfish—God is robbed of all, and has no active glory from His works.

O dreadful thought! that God should build such a world as this, and lay out such infinite power, and wisdom, and goodness thereupon, and all in vain! And that man should be guilty, at last, of robbing and spoiling Him of the glory of all! O think of this. While you are unconverted, all the offices of the creatures are in vain to you. Your food nourishes you in vain. The sun holds forth its light to you in vain. Your clothes warm you in vain. Your horse carries you in vain. In a word, the unwearied labor and continued travail of the whole creation—so far as you are concerned—are in vain. The service of all the creatures which drudge for you, and yield forth their strength unto you, with which you should serve their Maker—is all but lost labor. Hence, 'the whole creation groans' (Rom 8:22) under the abuse of unsanctified men who pervert all things to the service of their lusts, quite contrary to the very end of their being.

3. Without conversion, your RELIGION is vain.

All your religious performances will be but lost; for they can neither please God nor save your soul, which are the very ends of religion (Rom 8:8; 1 Cor 13:2-3). Be your services ever so costly—yet God has no pleasure in them (Isa 1:14; Mal 1:10). Is not that man's case dreadful, whose sacrifices are as murders, and whose prayers are a breath of abomination? (Isa 66:3; Prov 28:9). Many under conviction think they will set upon mending, and that a few prayers and alms will set all right again; but alas, sirs, while your hearts remain unsanctified your duties will not be accepted. How punctilious was Jehu! and yet all was rejected because

his heart was not upright (2 Kings 10 with Hos 1:4). How blameless was Paul! and yet, being unconverted, all was but loss (Phil 3:6-7). Men think they do much in attending to God's service, and are ready to set Him down as their debtor; whereas their persons being unsanctified, their duties cannot be accepted.

O soul! do not think when your sins pursue you, that a little praying and reforming your ways will pacify God. You must begin with your heart. If that is not renewed, you can no more please God than one who, having unspeakably offended you, should bring you the most loathsome thing to pacify you; or having fallen into the mire, should think with his filthy embraces to reconcile you.

It is a great misery to labor in the fire. The poets could not invent a worse hell for Sisyphus than to be ever toiling to get the stone up the hill, and then that it should presently roll down again and renew his labor. God threatens it as the greatest temporal judgments, that they should build and not inhabit, plant and not gather, and that their labors should be eaten up by strangers (Deut 28:30,38-41). Is it so great a misery to lose our common labors, to sow in vain, and to build in vain? How much more to lose our pains in religion—to pray, and hear, and fast in vain! This is an undoing and eternal loss.

Be not deceived; if you go on in your sinful state, though you should spread forth your hands—God will hide His eyes; though you make many prayers—He will not hear (Isa 1:15). If a man without skill set about our work, and spoil it in the doing, though he take much pains, we give him but small thanks. God will be worshiped after the due order. If a servant does our work—but quite contrary to our order, he shall have stripes rather than praise. God's work must be done according to God's mind, or He will not be pleased; and this cannot be, except it be done with a holy heart.

4. Without true conversion your HOPES are in vain.

'The hope of the hypocrite shall perish' (Job 8:12-13). 'The Lord has rejected your confidences' (Jer 2:37).

[1] The hope of comfort here is vain.

It is not only necessary for the *safety*—but the *comfort* of your condition, that you be converted. Without this, you shall not know peace (Isa 59:8). Without the fear of God you cannot have the comfort of the Holy Spirit (Acts 9:31). God speaks peace only to His people and to His saints (Psalm 85:8). If you have a false peace continuing in your sins, it is not of God's speaking, and therefore you may guess the author. Sin is a real sickness (Isa 1:5), yes, the worst of sickness; it is a leprosy in the head (Lev 13:44); the plague in the heart (1 Kings 8:38); it is brokenness in the bones (Psalm 51:8); it pierces, it wounds, it racks, it torments (1 Tim 6:10). A man may as well expect ease when his diseases are in their full

strength, or his bones out of joint, as true comfort while in his sins.

O wretched man, that can have no ease in this case but what comes from the deadliness of the disease! You shall have the poor sick man saying in his wildness, *he is well*; when you see death in his face, he would be up and about his business, when the very next step is likely to be to his grave. The unsanctified often see nothing amiss; they think themselves whole, and cry not for the physician; but this only shows the danger of their case.

Sin naturally breeds diseases and disturbances in the soul. What a continual tempest is there in a discontented mind! What a corroding evil is inordinate care! What is passion—but a very fever in the mind? What is lust—but a fire in the bones? What is pride—but a deadly dropsy? What is covetousness—but an insatiable and insufferable thirst? What is malice and envy—but venom in the very heart? Spiritual sloth is but a scurvy in the mind, and carnal security a mortal lethargy. How can that soul have true comfort which is under so many diseases? But converting grace cures, and so eases the mind, and prepares the soul for a settled, standing, immortal peace. 'Great peace have those who love your law, and nothing shall offend them' (Psalm 119:165). They are the ways of wisdom, which afford pleasure and peace (Prov 3:17). David had infinitely more pleasure in the Word, than in all the delights of his court (Psalm 119:103,127). The conscience cannot be truly pacified until soundly purified (Heb 10:22). Cursed is that peace which is maintained in a way of sin (Deut 29:19-20). Two sorts of peace are more to be dreaded than all the troubles in the world—peace *with* sin—and peace *in* sin.

[2] The hope of salvation hereafter is in vain.

This hope is most injurious to God, most pernicious to yourself. There is death, despair, and blasphemy in this hope.

There is DEATH in it. Your confidence shall be rooted out of your tabernacles, God will destroy it—root and branch; it will bring you to the king of terrors (Job 18:14). Though you may lean upon this house, it will not stand—but will prove like a ruinous building which, when a man trusts to it, falls down about him (Job 8:15).

There is DESPAIR in it. 'Where is the hope of the hypocrite when God takes away his soul?' (Job 27:8). Then there is an end forever of his hope. Indeed, the hope of the righteous has an end—but it is not a destructive—but a perfective end. His hope ends in fruition, others in frustration. The godly may say at death, 'It is finished'; but the wicked, 'It is perished', and may earnestly bemoan himself, as Job did, though mistakenly, in his case, 'Where now is my hope? He has destroyed me; I am gone, and my hope is removed like a tree' (Job 19:10). 'The righteous has hope in his death' (Prov 14:32). When the body is dying, his hopes are living; when his body is languishing, his hopes are flourishing; his hope is a

living hope—but others a dying, yes, a damning, soul-undoing hope.

'When a wicked man dies, his expectation shall perish; and the hope of unjust men perishes' (Prov 11:7). It shall be cut off and prove like a spider's web (Job 8:14) which he spins out of his own bowels; but then comes death and destroys all, and so there is an eternal end of his confidence in which he trusted. 'The eyes of the wicked shall fail and their hope shall be as the giving up of the spirit' (Job 11:20). Wicked men are fixed in their carnal hope, and will not be beaten out of it; they hold it fast, they will not let it go—but death will knock off their fingers. Though we cannot undeceive them, death and judgment will. When death strikes his dart through your liver, it will ruin your soul and your hopes together. The unsanctified have hope only in this life, and therefore are of all men most miserable. When death comes, it lets them out into the amazing gulf of endless despair.

There is BLASPHEMY in it. To hope we shall be saved, though continuing unconverted, is to hope that we shall prove God to be a liar. He has told you that, merciful and compassionate as He is, He will never save you notwithstanding, if you go on in a course of ignorance or unrighteousness. In a word, He has told you that whatever you are or do, nothing shall avail you to salvation unless you become new creatures. Now, to say God is merciful and to hope that He will save us without conversion, is in effect to say, 'We hope that God will not do as He says.' We must not set God's attributes at variance. God has resolved to glorify His mercy—but not to the prejudice of His truth, as the presumptuous sinner will find to his everlasting sorrow.

Objection: But we hope in Jesus Christ, we put our whole trust in God, and therefore do not doubt that we shall be saved.

Answer: This is not hope in Christ—but hope against Christ. To hope to see the kingdom of God without being born again, to hope to find eternal life in the *broad way*—is to hope Christ will prove a false prophet. David's plea is, 'I hope in your word' (Psalm 119:81). But this hope is against God's Word. Show me a word of Christ for your hope that He will save you in your ignorance or profane neglect of His service, and I will never try to shake your confidence.

God rejects this hope with abhorrence. Those condemned by the prophet went on in their sins; yet, says the prophet, 'will they lean upon the Lord' (Mic 3:11). *God will not endure to be made a prop to men in their sins.* The Lord rejected those presumptuous sinners who went on still in their trespasses and yet would stay themselves on Israel's God—as a man would shake off the briars that cleave to his garment.

If your hope is worth anything, it will purify you from your sins (1 John 3:3)—but cursed is that hope which cherishes men in their sins.

Objection: Would you have us despair?

Answer: You must despair of ever coming to heaven as you are, that is, while unconverted. You must despair of ever seeing the face of God without holiness. But you must by no means despair of finding mercy upon your thorough repentance and conversion. Neither may you despair of attaining to repentance and conversion in the use of God's means.

5. Without conversion all that Christ has done and suffered will be, so far as it concerns you, in vain.

That is, it will in no way avail you to salvation. Many urge this as a sufficient ground for their hope, that Christ died for sinners; but I must tell you, Christ never died to save impenitent and unconverted sinners, so continuing. A great divine was accustomed in his private dealings with souls to ask two questions. What has Christ done for you? What has Christ wrought in you? Without the application of the Spirit in regeneration, we have no saving interest in the benefits of redemption. I tell you from the Lord, that Christ Himself cannot save you if you go on in this state.

[1] To save men in their sins would be against His trust.

The Mediator is the servant of the Father, shows His commission from Him, acts in His name, and pleads His command for His justification (John 10:18,36; John 6:38,40). God has committed all things to Him, entrusted His own glory and the salvation of His elect with Him (Matt 11:27; John 17:2). Accordingly, Christ gives His Father an account of both parts of His trust before He leaves the world (John 17). Now Christ would quite thwart His Father's glory, tarnish His greatest trust, if He would save men in their sins: for this would overturn all His counsels, and offer violence to all His attributes.

It would overturn all God's counsels, of which this is the order, that men should be brought to salvation through sanctification (2 Thess 2:13). He has chosen them that they should be holy (Eph 1:4). They are elected to pardon and life through sanctification (1 Pet 1:2). If you can repeal the law of God's immutable counsel, or corrupt Him whom the Father has sealed to go directly against His commission, then, and not otherwise, you may get to heaven in this condition. To hope that Christ will save you while unconverted, is to hope that Christ will prove false to His trust. He never did, nor ever will save one soul but whom the Father has given Him in election, and drawn to Him in effectual calling (John 6:37,44). Be assured, Christ will save none in a way contrary to His Father's will.

[2] To save men in their sins, would offer violence to all the ATTRIBUTES of God.

To His JUSTICE. The righteousness of God's judgment lies in rendering to all according to their works. Now, should men sow to the flesh, and yet of the Spirit reap everlasting life—where would the glory of divine justice be?

To His HOLINESS. If God should not only save sinners—but save them in their sins, His most pure and strict holiness would be exceedingly defaced. The unsanctified, in the eyes of God's holiness—are worse than a swine or viper! It would be offering the extreme violence to the infinite purity of the divine nature to have such dwell with Him. They cannot stand in His judgment: they cannot abide His presence. If holy David would not endure such in his house, no, nor in his sight (Psalm 101:3,7), can we think God will? Should He take men as they are, from the mire of their filthiness—to the glory of heaven, the world would think that God was at no such great distance from sin, nor had any such dislike to it as we are told He has. They would be ready to conclude that God was altogether such an one as themselves, as some of old wickedly did, from the forbearance of God (Psalm 50:21).

To His VERACITY. God has declared from heaven that if any says he shall have peace, though he should go on in the imagination of his heart—that His wrath shall smoke against that man (Deut 29:19-20). He has declared that they alone, who confess and forsake their sins, shall find mercy (Prov 28:13). He has declared that they that shall enter into His holy hill must be of clean hands and a pure heart (Psalm 24:3-4). Where would God's truth be, if, notwithstanding all this—He should bring unconverted men to heaven? O desperate sinner, who dares to hope that Christ will make His Father a liar and nullify His word—to save the unconverted!

To His WISDOM. This were to throw away the choicest of mercies on those who would not value them, nor were any way suited to them.

They would not VALUE them. The unsanctified sinner puts but little value upon God's great salvation. He thinks no more of Christ, than those who are whole, do of the physician. He prizes not His balm, values not His cure—but tramples on His blood. Now, would it stand with wisdom to force pardon and life upon those who would return no thanks for them? Will the all-wise God, when He has forbidden us to do it, throw His holy things to dogs and His pearls to swine—who would, as it were—but turn again and rend Him? This would make mercy to be despised indeed. Wisdom requires that life be given in a way suitable to God's honor, and that God provide for the securing of His own glory, as well as man's felicity. It would be dishonorable to God to bestow His choicest riches, on those who have more pleasure in their sins—than in the heavenly delights which He offers. God would lose the praise and glory of His grace, if He would cast it away upon those who were not only unworthy but unwilling.

Also, the mercies of God are no way SUITED to the unconverted. God's wisdom is seen in suiting things to each other, the means to the end, the object to the

faculty, the quality of the gift to the capacity of the receiver. Now, if Christ should bring the unregenerate sinner to heaven, he could take no more felicity there than a beast would, if you should bring it into a beautiful room to the society of learned men; whereas the poor thing had much rather be grazing with his fellows in the field. Alas, what could an unholy man do in heaven? He could not be content there because nothing suits him. The place does not suit him; he would be quite out of his element, a fish out of water. The company does not suit him; what communion has darkness with light? corruption with perfection? vileness and sin with glory and immortality? The employment does not suit him; the anthems of heaven do not fit his mouth, do not suit his ear. Can you charm a donkey with music; or will you bring him to your organ and expect that he should make melody, or keep time with the tuneful choir? Had he skill, he would have no will, and so could find no pleasure in it. Spread your table with delicacies before a languishing patient, and it will be but an offence. Alas, if the ungodly man thinks a sermon long and say of a Sabbath-day, 'What a weariness is it!' how miserable would he think it to be engaged in an everlasting Sabbath!

To His IMMUTABILITY, or else to His OMNISCIENCE or OMNIPOTENCE. It is enacted in heaven, and enrolled in the decree of the court above, that none but the pure in heart shall see God (Matt 5:8). Now, if Christ brings any to heaven unconverted, either He must get them in without His Father's knowledge—and then where is His omniscience? or against His will—and then where were His omnipotence? or He must change His will—and then where were His immutability?

Sinner, will you not give up your vain hope of being saved in this condition? Bildad says, 'Shall the earth be forsaken for you; or the rocks be moved out of their place?' (Job 18:4). May I not much more reason with you? Shall the laws of heaven be reversed for you? Shall the everlasting foundations be overturned for you? Shall Christ put out the eye of His Father's omniscience, or shorten the arm of His eternal power—for you? Shall divine justice be violated for you; or the brightness of His holiness be blemished for you? O the impossibility, absurdity, blasphemy, of such a confidence! To think Christ will ever save you in this condition, is to make the Savior become a sinner, and do more wrong to the infinite Majesty than all the wicked on earth or devils in hell ever did, or ever could do; and yet will you not give up such a blasphemous hope?

[3] To save men in their sins would be against the WORD of Christ.

We need not say, 'Who shall ascend into heaven, to bring down Christ from above? Or, who shall descend into the deep, to bring up Christ from beneath? The word is near us' (Rom 10:6-8). Are you agreed that Christ shall end the controversy? Hear then His own words: 'Except you be converted, you shall never enter into the kingdom of heaven.' 'You must be born again.' 'If I wash you not, you have no part in me.' 'Unless you repent, you shall perish' (Matt 18:3; John 3:7; John 13:8; Luke 13:3). One word, one would think, were enough from

Christ; but how often and earnestly does He reiterate it: 'Truly, truly, unless a man be born again, he shall not see the kingdom of God' (John 3:3). Yes, He not only asserts but proves the necessity of the new birth from the carnality and sinfulness of man from his first birth, by reason of which man is no more fit for heaven than the beast is for the chamber of the king. And will you yet rest in your own presumptuous confidence, directly against Christ's words? He must go quite against the law of His kingdom and rule of His judgment, to save you in this state.

[4] To save men in their sins would be against the OATH of Christ.

He has lifted up His hand to heaven, He has sworn that those who remain in unbelief and know not His ways (that is, are ignorant of them, or disobedient to them) shall not enter into His rest (Heb 3:18). And will you not yet believe, O sinner, that He is earnest? The covenant of grace is confirmed by an oath and sealed by blood; but all must be made void, and another way to heaven found out—if you be saved, living and dying unsanctified. God is come to His last terms with man, and has condescended as far as in honor He could. Men cannot be saved while unconverted, except they could get another covenant made, and the whole frame of the Gospel, which was established forever with such dreadful solemnities, quite altered. And must not they be demented who hope that they shall?

[5] To save men in their sins would be against His HONOR.

God will so show His love to the sinner—and at the same time show His hatred to sin. Therefore, he who names the name of Jesus must depart from iniquity and deny all ungodliness; and he who has hope of life by Christ, must purify himself as He is pure, otherwise Christ would be thought a favorer of sin (2 Tim 2:19; Titus 2:12; 1 John 3:3). The Lord Jesus would have all the world know, that though He pardons sin, He will not protect it. If holy David says, 'Depart from me, all you workers of iniquity' (Psalm 6:8), and shuts the doors against them (Psalm 101:7), shall we not much more expect it from Christ's holiness? Would it be for His honor, to have the *dogs* at His table, or to lodge the *swine* with His children, or to have Abraham's bosom to be a nest of vipers?

[6] To save men in their sins would be against His offices.

God has exalted Him to be a *Prince* and a *Savior* (Acts 5:31). He would act against both, should He save men in their sins. It is the office of a king to be a terror to evildoers, and a praise to those who do well. 'He is a minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath on him who does evil' (Rom 13:4). Now, should Christ favor the ungodly, so continuing, and take those to reign with Him who would not have Him reign over them, this would be quite against His office. He therefore reigns that He may put His enemies under His feet. Now, should He lay them in His bosom, He would frustrate the end of His regal power. It belongs to Christ, as a King, to subdue the hearts and slay the lusts of His chosen (Psalm 45:5; Psalm

110:3). What king would take rebels in open hostility, into his court? What were this but to betray life, kingdom, government, and all together? If Christ is a King, He must have honor, homage, subjection. Now, to save men while in their natural enmity—would be to obscure His dignity, lose His authority, bring contempt on His government, and sell His dear-bought rights for naught.

Again, as Christ would not be a Prince, so neither a Savior, if He would do this; for His salvation is spiritual. He is called Jesus because He saves His people *from* their sins (Matt 1:21). So that, should He save them *in* their sins, He would be neither Lord nor Jesus. To save men from the *punishment* of sin—and not from the *power* of sin—would be to do His work by halves, and be an imperfect Savior. His office as the Deliverer is to turn ungodliness from Jacob (Rom 11:26). He is sent to bless men, in turning them from their iniquities (Acts 3:26), to make an end of sin (Dan 9:24). So that He would destroy His own designs, and nullify His offices—to save men in their unconverted state.

Arise then! What do you mean, O sleeper? Awake, O secure sinner, lest you be consumed in your iniquities! Say, as the lepers, 'If we sit here, we shall die!' (2 Kings 7:3-4). Truly, it is not more certain that you are now out of hell, than that you shall speedily be in it—unless you repent and be converted. There is but this one door for you to escape by. Arise then, O sluggard, and shake off your excuses; how long will you slumber and fold your hands to sleep? Will you lie down in the midst of the sea, or sleep on the top of a mast? (Prov 23:34). There is no remedy—but you must either turn or burn! There is an unchangeable necessity of the change of your condition, unless you have resolved to abide the worst of it, and fight it out with the Almighty. If you love your life, O man, arise and come away. I think I see the Lord Jesus laying the merciful hands of a holy violence upon you; I think He acts like the angels to Lot: "Hurry," they said to Lot. "Take your wife and your two daughters who are here. Get out of here right now, or you will be caught in the destruction of the city." When Lot still hesitated, the angels seized his hand and the hands of his wife and two daughters and rushed them to safety outside the city, for the Lord was merciful. "Run for your lives!" the angels warned. "Do not stop anywhere in the valley. And don't look back! Escape to the mountains, or you will die." Genesis 19:15-17 (Gen 19:15-17).

O how dreadful will your destruction be, if you should yet harden yourself in your sinful state! But none of you can say that you have not had fair warning. Yet I cannot leave you so. It is not enough for me to have delivered my own soul. What! shall I go away without my errand? Will none of you arise and follow me? Have I been all this while speaking to the wind? Have I been charming the deaf adder, or allaying the restless ocean with argument? Do I speak to the trees and rocks—or to men? to the tombs and monuments of the dead—or to the living? If you are men and not senseless stocks, stop and consider where you are going! If you have the reason and understanding of men, do not dare to run into the flames, and fall into hell with your eyes open! Stop and think, and set about the work of repentance. What, men? and yet run into the pit, when the very beasts

will not be forced in? What, endowed with reason? and yet trifle with death and hell, and the vengeance of the Almighty? Are men only distinguished from brutes in that these, having no foresight, have no care to provide for the things to come, and will you, who are warned, not hasten your escape from eternal torments? O show yourselves men, and let reason prevail with you!

Is it a reasonable thing for you to contend against the Lord your Maker, or to harden yourselves against His word, as though the Strength of Israel would lie? (Isa 45:9; Job 9:4; 1 Sam 15:29). Is it reasonable that an understanding creature should lose; yes, live quite against the very end of his being? Is it reasonable that the only being in this world that God has made capable of knowing His will and bringing Him glory, should yet live in ignorance of his Maker, and be unserviceable to His use, yes, should be engaged *against* Him, and spit his venom in the face of his Creator? Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth, and let the creatures without sense judge if this be reason, that man whom God has nourished and brought up, should rebel against Him? Judge in your own selves. Is it a reasonable undertaking for briars and thorns to set themselves in battle against the devouring fire? or for the potsherd of the earth to strive with its Maker? You will say, 'This is not reason'; or surely the eye of reason is quite put out. And, if this is not reason, then there is no reason that you should continue as you are—but there is every reason in the world that you should immediately turn and repent.

What shall I say? I could spend myself in this argument. O that you would only hearken to me; that you would now set upon a new course! Will you not be made clean? When shall it once be? Reader, will you sit down and consider the forementioned argument, and debate it whether it be not best to turn? Come, and let us reason together. Is it good for you to be here? Is it good for you to try whether God will be as good as His word, and to harden yourself in a conceit that all is well with you, while you remain unsanctified?

Alas, for such sinners! must they perish at last by hundreds? What course shall I use with them that I have not tried? 'What shall I do for the daughter of my people?' (Jer 9:7).

'O Lord God, help. Alas, shall I leave them thus? If they will not hear me—yet may You hear me. O that they might live in Your sight! Lord, save them—or they perish. My heart would melt to see their houses on fire when they were fast asleep in their beds; and shall not my soul be moved within me to see them falling into endless perdition? Lord, have compassion, and save them out of the burning. Put forth Your divine power—and the work will be done!'

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