

Alarm to the Unconverted

Miseries of the Unconverted

By Joseph Alleine

1671

So unspeakably dreadful is the case of every unconverted soul, that I have sometimes thought if I could only convince men that they are still unregenerate, the work would be more than half done.

But I find by sad experience that such a spirit of sloth and slumber possesses the unsanctified that, though they are convinced that they are yet unconverted, often they carelessly sit still. Through the love of sensual pleasure—or the hurry of worldly business—or the noise and clamor of earthly cares and lusts and affections—the voice of conscience is drowned, and men go no farther than some faint wishes and general purposes of repenting and amending.

It is therefore of high necessity that I not only convince men that they are unconverted—but that I also endeavor to bring them to a sense of the fearful misery of this state.

But here I find myself aground at first setting off. What tongue can tell the heirs of hell sufficiently of their misery, unless it were Dives in that flame (Luke 16:24)? Where is the ready writer whose pen can depict the misery of those who are without God in the world? This cannot fully be done, unless we know the infinite ocean of bliss which is in perfection in God, and from which a state of sin excludes men. 'Who knows', says Moses, 'the power of your anger?' (Psalm 90:11). And how shall I tell men that which I do not know? Yet so much we know, as one would think would shake the heart of that man that had the least degree of spiritual life and sense.

But this is yet the more perplexing difficulty, that *I am to speak to those who are spiritually dead!* Alas! this is not the least part of man's misery—that he is dead, dead in trespasses and sins.

Could I bring paradise into view—or represent the kingdom of heaven to as much advantage as the tempter did the kingdoms of the world, and the glory thereof, to our Savior; or could I uncover the face of the deep and devouring gulf of Hell in all its terrors, and open the gates of the infernal furnace; alas, he has no eyes to see it! Could I paint the beauties of holiness, or the glory of the Gospel; or could I

expose to view the more than diabolical deformity and ugliness of sin; he can no more judge of the loveliness and beauty of the one, and the filthiness and hatefulness of the other, than a blind man of colors. He is alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in him because of the blindness of his heart (Eph 4:18). He neither knows nor can know—the things of God, because they are spiritually discerned (1 Cor 2:14). His eyes cannot be savingly opened but by converting grace (Acts 26:18). He is a child of darkness, and walks in darkness. Yes, the light in him is darkness.

Shall I read his eternal sentence—or sound in his ear the terrible trumpet of God's judgments, that one would think should make both his ears tingle, and strike him into Belshazzar's fit, even to change his countenance, loose his joints, and make his knees smite one against another? Alas, he perceives me not—he has no ears to hear! Or shall I call up the daughters of music, and sing the song of Moses and the Lamb? Yet he will not be stirred. Shall I allure him with the joyful sound, and lovely song, and glad tidings of the Gospel; with the most sweet and inviting calls, comforts, and cordials of the divine promises so exceedingly great and precious? It will not affect him savingly, unless I could find him ears, as well as tell him the news.

What then shall I do? Shall I show him the lake which burns with fire and brimstone; or shall I open the box of spikenard, very precious, which fills the whole house of the universe with its perfume, and hope that the savor of Christ's ointments and the smell of His garments will attract him? Alas! dead sinners are like the dumb idols; they have mouths—but they speak not; have they eyes—but they see not; they have ears—but they hear not; they have noses—but they smell not; they have hands—but they handle not; they have feet—but they walk not; neither do they speak through their throat [Psalm 115:5-7]. They are destitute of spiritual life and motion.

But let me try the sense that last leaves us, and draw the sword of the Word; yet, though I choose my arrows from God's quiver, and direct them to the heart, nevertheless he does not feel it; for how should he, being past feeling? (Eph 4:19). So that, though 'the wrath of God abides on him' [John 3:36], and the mountainous weight of so many sins—yet he goes up and down as light as if nothing ailed him. In a word, he carries a dead soul in a living body; and his flesh is but the walking coffin of a corrupt mind that is twice dead (Jude 12).

Which way then shall I come at the miserable object whom I have to deal with? Who shall make the heart of stone relent—or the lifeless carcass to feel and move? That God who is able from stones to raise up children unto Abraham, who raises the dead, and melts the mountains, and strikes water out of the flint; who loves to work beyond the hopes and belief of man, who peoples His church with dry bones—He is able to do this! Therefore I bow my knee to the most high God, and as our Savior prayed at the sepulcher of Lazarus, and the Shunammite ran to the man of God for her dead child, so your mourning minister carries you in the

arms of prayer, to that God in whom your help is found.

'O all-powerful Jehovah, who works, and none can hinder You, who has the keys of death and hell—pity the dead souls that lie here entombed, and roll away the gravestone, and say as to the dead body of Lazarus, *Come forth!* Enlighten this darkness, O inaccessible Light, and let the dayspring from on high visit the dark regions of the dead, to whom I speak; for You can open the eye that death itself has closed. You that formed the ear, can restore the hearing. Say to these ears, *Ephphatha!* and they shall be opened. Give eyes to see Your excellencies, a *taste* that may relish Your sweetness, a *scent* that may savor Your ointment, a *feeling* that may discern the privilege of Your favor, the burden of Your wrath, the intolerable weight of unpardoned sin! And give Your servant the command to prophesy to dry bones, and let the effects of this prophecy be as of Your prophet when he prophesied the valley of dry bones into a living army exceeding great!

But I must proceed, as I am able, to unfold that misery which, I confess, no tongue can unfold, no heart can sufficiently comprehend. Know therefore that while you are unconverted:

1. The infinite God is engaged against you!

It is no small part of your misery that you are without God. How does Micah run crying after the Danites, 'You have taken away my gods, and what have I more?' (Judg 18:24). Oh what a mourning then must you lift up, who are without God, who can lay no claim to Him without daring usurpation! How piercing a moan is that of Saul in his last extremity, 'The Philistines are upon me—and God is departed from me!' (1 Sam 28:15). Sinners, what will you do in the day of your visitation? Where will you flee to for help? What will you do when the Philistines are upon you; when the world shall take its eternal leave of you; when you must bid your friends, houses, and lands, farewell for evermore? What then, I say, will you do—who have not God to go to? Will you call on Him? Will you cry to Him for help? Alas, He will not own you! He will not take any notice of you—but will send you away with 'I never knew you. Depart from me, you who work iniquity!' (Matt 7:23).

Those who know what it is to have a God to go to, a God to live upon—they know a little what a fearful misery it is to be without God. This made a holy man cry out, 'Let me have God or nothing. Let me know Him and His will, and what will please Him, and how I may come to enjoy Him!'

But you are not only without God—but God is against you! Oh if God would stand neutral, though He did neither own nor help the poor sinner, his case would not be so deeply miserable. Though God should give up the poor creature to the will of his enemies, to do their worst with him; though He should deliver him over to the tormentors, that devils should tear and torture him to their utmost power and

skill—yet this were not half so fearful. But God will set Himself against the sinner; and, believe it, 'It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God' (Heb 10:31). As there is no friend like Him—so there is no enemy like Him. As much as heaven is above the earth, omnipotence above impotence, so much more terrible is it to fall into the hands of the living God, than into the paws of bears and lions, yes, furies or devils. God Himself will be your tormentor; your destruction shall come from the presence of the Lord (2 Thess 1:9).

If God be against you, who shall be for you? 'If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him: but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him?' (1 Sam 2:25). 'You, even you, are to be feared; and who shall stand in your sight when you are angry?' (Psalm 76:7). Who or what shall deliver you out of His hands? Can money? 'Riches profit not in the day of wrath' (Prov 11:4). Can kings or warriors? No; 'they shall cry to the mountains and rocks to fall on them, and hide them from the face of Him who 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?' (Rev 6:15-17).

Sinner, I think this would go like a dagger to your heart, to know that God Himself is your enemy! Oh where will you go? Where will you shelter yourself? There is no hope for you, unless you lay down your weapons and sue out your pardon, and get Christ to stand as your friend and make your peace. If it were not for this, you might go into some howling wilderness, and there pine in sorrow, and run mad for anguish of heart and horrible despair. But in Christ there is a possibility of mercy for you, yes, an offer of mercy to you, that you may have God more for you, than He is now against you. But if you will not forsake your sins, nor turn thoroughly and purposefully to God by a sound conversion, the wrath of God abides on you, and He proclaims Himself to be against you, as in the prophet: 'I myself, the Sovereign Lord, am now your enemy!' (Ezek 5:8).

[1] His FACE is against you.

'The face of the Lord is against those who do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them' (Psalm 34:16). Woe unto them whom God shall set His face against! When He did but look on the armies of the Egyptians, how terrible was the consequence! 'I will set my face against that man, and will make him a sign and a proverb, and will cut him off from the midst of my people; and you shall know that I am the Lord' (Ezek 14:8).

[2] His HEART is against you.

He hates all the workers of iniquity. Man, does not your heart tremble to think of your being an object of God's hatred? 'Though Moses and Samuel stood before me—yet my mind could not be towards this people: cast them out of my sight' (Jer 15:1). 'My soul loathed them, and their souls also abhorred me' (Zech 11:8).

[3] All His ATTRIBUTES are against you.

His JUSTICE is like a flaming sword unsheathed against you. "As surely as I live, when I sharpen My flashing sword and begin to carry out justice, I will bring vengeance on My enemies and repay those who hate Me!" (Deut 32:41-42). So exact is justice that it will by no means clear the guilty. God will not discharge you, He will not hold you guiltless—but will require the whole debt in person from you, unless you can make a Scripture claim to Christ and His satisfaction. When the enlightened sinner looks on justice, and sees the balance in which he must be weighed and the sword by which he must be executed, he feels an earthquake in his bosom; but Satan keeps this out of sight and persuades the soul, while he can, that the Lord is all made up of mercy, and so lulls it asleep in sin. Divine justice is exact; it must have satisfaction to the utmost farthing. It denounces 'indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish to every soul that does evil' (Rom 2:8-9). It 'curses every one that continues not in all things written in the book of the law to do them' (Gal 3:10).

The justice of God to the unpardoned sinner who has a sense of his guilt, is more terrible than the sight of the creditor to the bankrupt debtor, of the judge and bench to the robber—or of the irons and gibbet to the guilty murderer. When justice sits upon life and death, what dreadful work does it make with the wretched sinner! 'Bind him hand and foot; cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' 'Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire' (Matt 22:13; Matt 25:41). This is the terrible sentence that justice pronounces. Sinner, by this severe justice must you be tried; and as God lives, this killing sentence must you hear, unless you repent and be converted.

The HOLINESS of God is against you. He is not only angry with you—so He may be with His children—but He has a fixed habitual displeasure against you. God's nature is infinitely contrary to sin, and so He cannot delight in a sinner outside of Christ.

Oh what a misery is this, to be out of the favor, yes, under the hatred of God; that God, who can as easily lay aside His nature and cease to be God, as not be contrary to you and detest you, except you be changed and renewed. Oh sinner, how dare you think of the bright and radiant sun of purity—or the beauties, the glory of holiness in God? 'The stars are not pure in his sight.' 'He humbles himself to behold things that are done in heaven' (Job 25:5; Psalm 113:6). Oh those all-searching eyes of His! What do they spy in you; and have you no saving interest in Christ—that He should plead for you? I think He should hear you crying out, astonished, with the Bethshemites, 'Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?' [1 Sam 6:20]

The POWER of God is mounted like a mighty cannon against you. The glory of God's power is to be displayed in the amazing confusion and destruction of those who obey not the gospel. He will make His power known in them (Rom 9:22) how

mightily He can torment them. For this end He raises them up 'that he might make his power known' (Rom 9:17). O man, are you able to contend with your Maker?

Sinner, the power of God's anger is against you—and power and anger together make fearful work. It were better you had all the world in arms against you than to have the power of God against you. There is no escaping His hands--no breaking loose from His prison. 'The thunder of his power, who can understand?' (Job 26:14). Unhappy man—who shall understand it by feeling it! 'Who has ever challenged him successfully? Without warning, he moves the mountains, overturning them in his anger. He shakes the earth from its place, and its foundations tremble. If he commands it, the sun won't rise and the stars won't shine. He alone has spread out the heavens and marches on the waves of the sea. If he sends death to snatch someone away, who can stop him? The mightiest forces against him are crushed beneath his feet. If it is a matter of strength, look, He is the Mighty One!' (Job 9). And are you a fit match for such an antagonist? 'O consider this, you that forget God, lest he tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver' (Psalm 50:22). Submit to mercy. Let not dust and stubble battle against the Almighty. Set not briars and thorns against Him in battle, lest He go through them, and consume them together. But lay hold on His strength that you may make peace with Him (Isa 27:4-5). 'Woe to him who strives with his Maker!' (Isa 45:9).

The WISDOM of God is set to ruin you. He has ordained His arrows, and prepared instruments of death, and made all things ready (Psalm 7:11-13). His counsels are against you to contrive your destruction (Jer 18:11). He laughs in Himself to see how you will be taken and ensnared in the evil day (Psalm 37:13). 'The Lord shall laugh at him, for he sees that his day is coming.' He sees how you will come down mightily in a moment, how you will wring your hands, and tear your hair, and eat your flesh, and gnash your teeth for anguish and astonishment of heart, when you see you are fallen irremediably into the pit of destruction!

The TRUTH of God is sworn against you. If He is faithful and true, you must perish if you go on in sin. Unless He is false to His Word, you must die—unless you repent. 'If we believe not—yet he abides faithful, he cannot deny himself' (2 Tim 2:13). He is faithful to His *threatenings* as well as to His *promises*—and will show His faithfulness in our destruction, if we believe not. God has told you as plain as it can be spoken, that if He wash you not—you have no part in Him; that if you live after the flesh—you shall die; that unless you be converted—you shall never enter into the kingdom of heaven (John 13:8; Rom 8:13; Matt 18:3). Beloved, as the immutable faithfulness of God in His promise and oath affords believers strong consolation, so it is to unbelievers for strong consternation and confusion.

Oh sinner, tell me, what do you think of all the *threatenings* of God's Word, which

stand upon record against you? Do you believe they are true or not? If not, you are a wretched infidel. But, if you do believe them, O heart of adamant that you have, that you can walk up and down in quiet—when the truth and faithfulness of God are engaged to destroy you! The whole book of God testifies against you while you remain unconverted. It condemns you in every leaf, and is to you like Ezekiel's roll, written within and without with lamentation, and mourning, and woe! And all this shall surely come upon you—unless you repent. 'Heaven and earth shall pass away—but one jot or tittle of this word shall never pass away' (Matt 5:18).

Now, put all this together, and tell me if the case of the unconverted is not deplorably miserable! As we read of some people who had bound themselves by an oath and a curse to kill Paul; so you must know, O sinner, that all the attributes of the infinite God are bound by an oath to punish you. Oh man, what will you do? Where will you flee? If God's omniscience can find you—you shall not escape. If the true and faithful God will regard His oath, you must perish—unless you believe and repent. If the Almighty has power to torment you, you must be totally miserable in soul and body to all eternity, unless it be prevented by speedy conversion.

2. The whole CREATION of God is against you.

'The whole creation', says Paul, 'groans and travails in pain' (Rom 8:22). But what is it that the creation groans under? The fearful abuse it is subject to, in serving the lusts of unsanctified men. And what is it that the creation groans for? For freedom and liberty from this abuse; for the 'creature is not willingly made subject to this bondage' (Rom 8:20-21). If the irrational and inanimate creatures had speech and reason, they would cry out under it, as a bondage insufferable, to be abused by the ungodly, contrary to their natures and the ends which the great Creator made them for. It is a saying of an eminent divine, 'The liquor that the drunkard drinks, if it had reason, like a man, to know how shamefully it is abused, would groan in the barrel against him, it would groan in the cup against him, groan in his throat, in his stomach against him; it would fly in his face, if it could speak. And if God should open the mouths of His creatures, as He did the mouth of Balaam's donkey, the proud man's garment on his back would groan against him. There is not a creature, if it had reason to know how it is abused until a man is converted—but would groan against him. The land would groan to bear him, the air would groan to give him breath, their houses would groan to lodge them, their beds would groan to ease them, their food to nourish them, their clothes to cover them, and the creature would groan to give them any help and comfort, so long as they live in sin against God.'

I think this would be a terror to an unconverted soul—to think he is a burden to the creation. 'Cut it down; why does it use up the ground?' (Luke 13:7). If inanimate creatures could but speak, your food would say, 'Lord, must I nourish

such a wretch as this, and yield forth my strength for him, to dishonor You? No, I will choke him rather, if You will give commission.' The very air would say, 'Lord, must I give this man breath, to set his tongue against heaven, and scorn Your people, and vent his pride and wrath, and filthy talk, and belch out oaths and blasphemy against You? No, if You will but say the word, he shall be breathless for me.' His poor beast would say, 'Lord, must I carry him upon his wicked designs? No, I will break his bones, I will end his days—if I may have but permission from You.' A wicked man—the earth groans under him, and hell groans for him—until death satisfies both. While the Lord of hosts is against you, be sure the host of the Lord is against you, and all the creatures as it were up in arms until, upon a man's conversion, the controversy being settled between God and him, He makes a covenant of peace with the creature for him (Job 5:22-24; Hos 2:18-20).

3. SATAN has his full power over you.

You are held fast in the paw of that roaring lion who is greedy to devour (1 Pet 5:8); 'Then they may come to their senses and escape the Devil's trap, having been captured by him to do his will.' (2 Tim 2:26). This is the evil spirit who works in the children of disobedience (Eph 2:2). His drudges they are, and his lusts they do. He is the ruler of the darkness of this world (Eph 6:12), that is, of ignorant sinners who live in darkness. You pity the poor Indians who worship the devil for their god—but little think it is your own case. It is the common misery of all the unsanctified—that the devil is their god. Not that they intend to do him homage. They will be ready to defy him—but all this while they serve him, and live under his government. 'His servants you are to whom you obey' (Rom 6:16). O how many then will be found to be the real servants of the devil, who take themselves for no other than the children of God!

He can no sooner offer a sinful delight or opportunity for your unlawful advantage than you embrace it. If he suggests a lie—or prompts you to revenge, you readily obey. If he forbids you to read or pray, you hearken to him, and therefore his servants you are. Indeed, he stands behind the curtain, he acts in the dark, and sinners do not see who sets them working—but all the while he leads them. Doubtless the liar does not intend to serve Satan but his own advantage; yet it is he who stands unobserved and puts the thing into his heart. Undoubtedly Judas when he sold his Master for money, and the Chaldeans and Sabeans when they plundered Job, did not intend to do the devil a pleasure—but to satisfy their own covetous thirst; yet it was he who actuated them in their wickedness (John 13:27; Job 1:12,15,17). Men may be very slaves and common drudges for the devil and not know it; nay, they may please themselves in thoughts of liberty!

Are you yet in ignorance and not turned from darkness unto light? I fear that you are under the power of Satan. Do you live in the wilful practice of any known sin? Know that you are of the devil. Do you live in strife—or envy—or malice? Truly he

is your father. O dreadful case! However Satan may provide his slaves with various pleasures—yet it is but to draw them into endless perdition. The serpent comes with the fruit in his mouth but, like Eve--you do not see the deadly sting! He who is now your tempter--will one day be your tormentor! O that I could but make you see how bad a master you serve, how merciless a tyrant you gratify; whose pleasure is to make your perdition and damnation sure, and to heat the furnace hotter and hotter in which you must burn for millions and millions of ages!

4. The guilt of all your SINS lies like a mountain upon you.

Poor soul, you do not feel it—but this is that which seals your misery. While unconverted, none of your sins are blotted out, they are all upon record against you. Regeneration and remission of sins, are never separated; the unsanctified are unjustified and unpardoned. It is a fearful thing to be in debt—but above all, in God's debt; for there is no arrest so formidable as His, no prison so dreary as His. Look upon an enlightened sinner who feels the weight of his own guilt; oh how frightful are His looks, how fearful are his complaints! His comforts are turned into wormwood, and his moisture into drought, and his sleep is departed from his eyes. He is a terror to himself and all that are about him, and is ready to envy the very stones that lie in the street, because they are without sense and do not feel his misery, and he wishes he had been a dog rather than a man because then death had put an end to his misery; whereas now it will be but the beginning of that which will know no ending.

However you may make light of it now—you will one day find the guilt of unpardoned sin to be a heavy burden. This is a millstone that 'whoever falls upon it shall be broken; but upon whoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder' (Matt 21:44). The guilt of our sins caused the agony and death of the blessed Savior. And if it did this in the green tree, what will it do in the dry?

Oh think of your case in time. Can you think of that threat without trembling, 'You shall die in your sins!' (John 8:24). Oh, better were it for you to die in a jail, in a ditch, in a dungeon, than die in your sins. If death, as it will take away all your comforts, would take away all your sins too, it would be some mitigation; but your sins will follow you when your friends leave you, and all worldly enjoyments shake hands with you. Your sins will not die with you as a prisoner's other debts will; but they will go to judgment with you there to be your accusers; and they will go to hell with you there to be your tormentors. O the work that these will make you! O look over your debts in time; how everyone of God's commandments is ready to arrest you, and take you by the throat for the innumerable bonds it has upon you. What will you do, then, when they shall all together come in against you? Hold open the eyes of your conscience to consider this, that you may despair of yourself and be driven to Christ, and fly for refuge to lay hold on the hope that is set before you.

5. Your raging LUSTS miserably enslave you.

While unconverted you are a very servant to sin; it reigns over you, and holds you under its dominion, until you are brought within the bonds of God's covenant. There is not such another tyrant as sin. O the vile and fearful work that it engages its servants in!

Would it not pierce your heart to see a company of poor creatures drudging and toiling to carry together faggots and fuel for their own burning? This is the employment of sin's drudges.

Even while they bless themselves in their unrighteous gains, while they sing in their pleasure—they are but treasuring up vengeance for their eternal burning; they are but adding to the pile of Tophet, and flinging in oil to make the flame rage the fiercer. Who would serve such a master—whose work is drudgery—whose wages are death?

What a woeful spectacle was the poor wretch possessed with the legion of demons! Would it not have grieved your heart to see him among the tombs cutting and wounding himself? This is your case; such is your work; every stroke is a thrust at your heart. Conscience indeed is now asleep; but when death and judgment shall bring you to your senses, then will you feel the anguish in every wound.

The convinced sinner is an instance of the miserable bondage of sin. Conscience flies upon him, and tells him the end of these things; and yet he is such a slave to his lusts that on he goes, though he sees it will be his perdition. When the temptation comes, lust breaks the cords of all his vows and promises, and carries him headlong to his own destruction.

6. The furnace of ETERNAL VENGEANCE is heated ready for you.

Hell and destruction open their mouths upon you; they gape for you; they groan for you (Isa 5:14), waiting as it were with a greedy eye as you stand on the brink. If the wrath of men be 'as the roaring of a lion' (Prov 19:12), 'more heavy than the sand' (Prov 27:3), what is the wrath of the infinite God? If the burning furnace heated in Nebuchadnezzar's fiery rage, when he commanded it to be made seven times hotter, was so fierce as to burn up even those who drew near to throw the three children in—how hot is that burning of the Almighty's fury! Surely this is seventy times seven more fierce. What do you think, O man, of being a faggot in hell to all eternity? 'Can your heart endure—or can your hands be strong in the days that I shall deal with you?' (Ezek 22:14). Can you abide the everlasting burnings? Can you dwell with consuming fire, when you shall be as glowing iron in hell, and your whole body and soul shall be as fully possessed by

God's burning vengeance as the sparkling iron with fire, when heated in the fiercest furnace?

Some of the choicest servants of God, when under the hidings of His face, and dreading the effects of His displeasure, have bewailed their condition with bitter lamentations. How then will you endure when God shall pour out all His vials, and set Himself against you to torment you, when He shall make your conscience the tunnel by which He will be pouring His burning wrath into your soul forever, and when he shall fill all your pores as full of torment as they are now full of sin, when immortality shall be your misery, and to die the death of a brute, and be swallowed in the gulf of annihilation, shall be such a felicity as the whole eternity of wishes and an ocean of tears shall never purchase?

Now you can put off the evil day, and laugh and be merry, and forget the terror of the Lord. But how will you hold out—or hold up, when God casts you into a 'bed of torments' (Rev 2:22): and makes you to 'lie down in sorrow' (Isa 50:11); when roarings and blasphemies shall be your only music, and the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation, shall be your only drink! (Rev 14:10) In a word, when the smoke of your torment shall ascend forever and ever, and you shall have no rest day and night, no rest in your conscience, no ease in your bones; but you shall be an execration and astonishment, and a curse and a reproach, for evermore! (Jer 42:18)

Oh sinner, stop here, and consider. If you are a man, and not a senseless block, consider. Think where you are standing—upon the very brink of destruction. As the Lord lives, and as your soul lives, there is but a step between you and this. You do not know when you lie down to sleep tonight—but you may be in hell before morning. You do not know when you rise up this day—but you may drop in before night. Dare you make light of this? Will you go on in such a dreadful condition, as if nothing ailed you? If you put it off and say that this does not belong to you, look again over the previous chapter, and tell me the truth. Are none of those black marks found upon you? Do not blind your eyes. Do not deceive yourself. See your misery while you may prevent it. Think what it is to be a vile outcast, a lost reprobate, a vessel of wrath, into which the Lord will be pouring out His tormenting fury while He has a being. Divine wrath is a fierce, devouring, everlasting, unquenchable fire—and this must be your portion, unless you consider your ways, and speedily turn to the Lord by a sound conversion.

Sinner, it is in vain to flatter you—this would be but to draw you into the unquenchable fire. Know from the living God that here you must lie; with these burnings you must dwell until immortality dies and immutability changes, until eternity runs out and omnipotence is no longer able to punish—unless you be in good earnest renewed by sanctifying grace.

7. The LAW discharges all its threats and curses at you.

Oh how dreadfully does it thunder! It flashes devouring fire in your face. Its words are as drawn swords, and as the sharp arrows of the mighty. It demands satisfaction to the utmost, and cries, *Justice! Justice!* It speaks blood, and war, and wounds, and death, against you. O man away to your stronghold; away from your sins; haste to the sanctuary, the city of refuge—even the Lord Jesus Christ. Hide in Him—or else you are lost, without any hope of recovery.

8. The GOSPEL itself binds the sentence of eternal damnation upon you.

If you continue in your impenitent and unconverted state, know that the Gospel denounces a much sorer condemnation than ever would have been for the transgression only of the first covenant. Is it not a dreadful case to have the Gospel itself fill its mouth with threats; to have the Lord to roar from Mount Zion against you? (Joel 3:16). Hear the terror of the Lord. 'He who believes not, shall be damned.' 'Unless you repent, you shall all perish.' 'This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light.' 'He who believes not—the wrath of God abides on him.' 'If the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?' 'He who despised Moses' law died without mercy: of how much more terrible punishment shall he be thought worthy who has trodden under foot the Son of God?' (Mark 16:16; Luke 13:3; John 3:19,36; Heb 2:2-3; Heb 10:28-29).

And is this true indeed? Is this your misery? Yes, it is as true as God is. Better open your eyes and see it now while you may remedy it, than blind and harden yourself until, to your eternal sorrow, you shall *feel* what you would not believe. And if it is true, what do you mean by lingering and loitering in such a state as this?

Alas for you, poor man! How effectually has sin undone you, depraved you and despoiled you even of your reason to look after your own everlasting good! O miserable wretch! What stupidity and senselessness have surprised you! Oh let me knock and awake this sleeper! Who dwells within the walls of this flesh? Is there a soul here, a rational, understanding soul; or are you only a senseless lump?

Are you a rational soul, and yet so far brutified as to forget that you are immortal, and to think yourself to be as the beasts that perish? Having reason to understand the eternity of the future state, do you yet make light of being everlastingly miserable, which is to be so much below the brute, as it is worse to act against reason than to act without it? Oh unhappy soul—that was the glory of man, the companion of angels, and the image of God; that was God's representative in the world, and had the supremacy among the creatures, and the dominion over your Maker's works; are you now become a slave to the

world? Are you heaping together a little *refined earth*, so unsuited to your spiritual immortal nature? Oh why do you not consider where you will spend eternity? Death is at hand; the Judge is even at the door. Yet a little while, and 'time shall be no longer' [Rev 10:6]. And will you run the hazard of continuing in such a state, in which, if you are overtaken, you are irrecoverably miserable?

Come then, arise, and attend to your nearest concerns. Tell me where you are going? What! will you live in such a course, in which every act is a step to perdition; and you do not know but the next night you may make your bed in hell? Oh, if you have a spark of reason, consider, and turn and hearken to your true friend, who would show you your present misery, that you might in time make your escape, and be eternally happy.

Hear what the Lord says. 'Do you not fear Me? Do you not tremble before Me?' (Jer 5:22). O sinners, do you make light of the wrath to come? I am sure there is a time coming when you will not make light of it. Why! the very devils believe and *tremble*. What! are you more hardened than they? Will you run upon the edge of the precipice? Will you play at the hole of the asp? Will you put your hand into the cockatrice's den? Will you dally with devouring wrath as if you were indifferent whether you escape or endure it? There is no one so insane as the willful sinner, who goes on in his unconverted state without thinking—as if nothing ailed him. The man that runs into the cannon's mouth and sports with his blood—or lets out his life in a frolic, is sensible, sober, and serious, compared with him who goes on still in his trespasses. 'He shakes his fist at God and vaunts himself against the Almighty' (Job 15:25). Is it wisdom to sport with the second death—or to venture into the lake which burns with fire and brimstone? What shall I say? I can find no expression, no comparison, by which to set forth the dreadful madness of the soul that will go on in sin.

Awake! awake! O sinner, arise and take your flight. There is but one door that you may flee by, and that is the narrow door of conversion and the new birth. Unless you sincerely turn from all your sins, and come to Jesus Christ, and take Him for the Lord your righteousness, and walk in Him in holiness and newness of life; as the Lord lives, it is not more certain that you are now out of hell, than that you shall without fail be in it but a few days or nights from now! Oh set your heart to think of your case. Does not your everlasting misery or welfare deserve a little consideration? Look again over the miseries of the unconverted. If the Lord has not spoken by me, regard me not; but if it is the very word of God that all this misery lies upon you, what a state you are in! Is it for one that has his senses to live in such a condition, and not to make all possible haste to prevent his utter ruin?

O man, who has bewitched you, that in the matters of this present life you shall be wise enough to forecast your business, foresee your danger, and prevent your ruin; but in matters of everlasting consequence shall be slight and careless, as if they little concerned you? Is it nothing to you to have all the attributes of God

engaged against you? Can you live without His favor? Can you escape His hands—or endure His vengeance? Do you hear the creation groaning under you, and hell groaning for you—and yet think your case good enough? Are you under the power of corruption, in the dark, noisome prison, fettered with lusts, working out your own damnation—and is this not worth a thought? Will you make light of all the terrors of the law, of all its curses and thunders, as if they were but the threatenings of a child? Do you laugh at hell and destruction—or can you drink the envenomed cup of the Almighty's fury?

Gird up now your loins like a man, and answer me. Are you such a leviathan as that the scales of your pride should resist your Maker? Will you esteem His arrows as straw, and the instruments of death as rotten wood? Are you chief of all the children of pride, even that you should count His darts as stubble, and laugh at the shaking of His spear? Do you mock at fear, and are you not frightened, do you not turn back from God's sword when His quiver rattles against you, the glittering spear and the shield? Well, if the threats and calls of the Word will not awaken you—I am sure death and judgment will. Oh what will you do when the Lord comes forth against you, and in His fury falls upon you, and you shall *feel* what you now *read*?

If when Daniel's enemies were cast into the den of lions, both they and their wives and their children, the lions had the mastery over them and broke all their bones in pieces before they came to the bottom of the den—what shall become of you when you fall into the hands of the living God?

Oh, do not then contend with God. Repent and be converted, so none of this shall come upon you. 'Seek the Lord while He may be found; call to Him while He is near. Let the wicked one abandon his way, and the sinful one his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, so He may have compassion on him, and to our God, for He will freely forgive.' (Isa 55:6-7).

This article is provided as a ministry of [Third Millennium Ministries](#) (Thirdmill). If you have a question about this article, please [email](#) our *Theological Editor*.

Subscribe to *Biblical Perspectives Magazine*

BPM subscribers receive an email notification each time a new issue is published. Notifications include the title, author, and description of each article in the issue, as well as links directly to the articles. Like BPM itself, *subscriptions are free*. To subscribe to [BPM](#), please select this [link](#).