

## NATURAL MEN IN A DREADFUL CONDITION

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Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and brought them out, and said, "**Sirs what must I do to be saved?**" Acts 16:29-30

We have here and in the context and account of the conversion of the jailer, which is one of the most remarkable instances of the kind in the Scriptures. The jailer before seems not only to have been wholly insensible to the things of religion, but to have been a persecutor, and to have persecuted these very men, Paul and Silas; though he now comes to them in so earnest a manner, asking them what he must do to be saved. We are told in the context that all the magistrates and multitude of the city rose up jointly in a tumult against them, and took them, and cast them into prison, charging the jailer to keep them safely. Whereupon he thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks. And it is probable he did not act in this merely as the servant or instrument of the magistrates, but that he joined with the rest of the people in their rage against them. And that he did what he did urged on by his own will, as well as the magistrates' commands, which made him execute their commands with such rigor.

But when Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises at midnight, and there was suddenly a great earthquake, and God had in so wonderful a manner set open the prison doors, and every man's bands were loosed, he was greatly terrified. And in a kind of desperation, he was about to kill himself. But Paul and Silas crying out to him, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here," then he called for a light, and sprang in, as we have the account in the text. We may observe:

First, the objects of his concern. He is anxious about his salvation. He is terrified by his guilt, especially by his guilt in his ill treatment of these ministers of Christ. He is concerned to escape from that guilty state, the miserable state he was in by reason of sin.

Second, the sense which he has of the dreadfulness of his present state.

This he manifests in several ways.

**1. By his great haste to escape from that state.** By his haste to inquire what he must do. He seems to be urged by the most pressing concern, sensible of his present necessity of deliverance, without any delay. Before, he was quiet and secure in his natural state. But now his eyes are opened. He is in the utmost haste. If the house had been on fire over his head, he could not have asked more earnestly, or as being in greater haste. He could soon have come to Paul and Silas, to ask them what he must do, if he had only walked. But he was in too great haste to walk only, or to run; for he sprang in. He leaped into the place where they were. He fled from wrath. He fled from the fire of divine justice, and so hastened, as one that fled for his life.

**2. By his behavior and gesture before Paul and Silas.** He fell down. That he fell down before those whom he had persecuted, and thrust into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks, shows what was the state of his mind. It shows some great distress, that makes such an alteration in him, that brings him to this. He was broken down, as it were, by the distress of his mind, in a sense of the dreadfulness of his condition.

**3. His earnest manner of inquiring** of them what he shall do to escape from this miserable condition, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" So distressed, that he is brought to be willing to do anything; to have salvation on any terms, and by any means, however difficult; brought, as it were, to write a blank, and give it in to God, that God may prescribe his own terms.

**Doctrine. Those who are in a natural condition, are in a dreadful condition.**

This I shall endeavor to make appear by a particular consideration of the state and condition of all unregenerate people.

I. As to their actual condition in **this** world.

II. As to their relations to the **future** world.

**I. The condition of those who are in a natural state, is dreadful in the PRESENT world.**

**First, on account of the depraved state of their natures.** As men come into the world, their natures are dreadfully depraved. Man in his primitive state was a noble piece of divine workmanship; but by the fall it is dreadfully defaced. It is awful to think that so excellent a creature as man is, should be so ruined. The dreadfulness of the

condition, which unconverted men are in, in this respect, appears in the following things:

1. The dreadfulness of their depravity appears in that **they are so sottishly blind and ignorant**. God gave man a faculty of reason and understanding, which is a noble faculty. Herein he differs from all other creatures here below. He is exalted in his nature above them, and is in this respect like the angels, and is made capable to know God, and to know spiritual and eternal things. And God gave him understanding for this end, that he might know him, and know heavenly things and made him as capable to know these things as any others. But man has debased himself and has lost his glory in this respect. He has become as ignorant of the excellency of God, as the very beasts. His understanding is full of darkness. His mind is blind. It is altogether blind to spiritual things. Men are ignorant of God, and ignorant of Christ, ignorant of the way of salvation, ignorant of their own happiness, blind in the midst of the brightest and clearest light, ignorant under all manner of instructions. Rom. 3:17, "The way of peace they have not known." Isa. 27:11, "It is a people of no understanding." Jer. 4:22, "My people is foolish, they have not known me; they are sottish children, and have none understanding." Jer. 5:21, "Hear now this, O foolish people, and without understanding." Psalm. 95:10, 11, "It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways; unto whom I swore in my wrath, that they should not enter into my rest." 1 Cor. 15:34, "Some have not the knowledge of God; I speak this to your shame."

There is a spirit of atheism prevailing in the hearts of men; a strange disposition to doubt of the very being of God, and of another world, and of everything which cannot be seen with the bodily eyes. Psalm. 121:1, "The fool has said in his heart, there is no God." They do not realize that God sees them when they commit sin, and will call them to an account for it. And therefore, if they can hide sin from the eyes of men, they are not concerned, but are bold to commit it. Psalm. 94:7, 8, 9, "Yet they say, the Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it. Understand, you brutish among the people; and, you fools, when will you be wise? He who planted the ear, shall he not hear? He who formed the eye, shall he not see?" Psalm. 73:11, "They say, How does God know? and is there knowledge in the Most High?" So sottishly unbelieving are they of future things, of heaven and hell, and will commonly run the venture of damnation sooner than be convinced. They are stupidly senseless to the importance of eternal things. How hard to make them believe, and to give them a real conviction, that to be happy to all eternity is better than all other

good; and to be miserable forever under the wrath of God, is worse than all other evil. Men show themselves senseless enough in temporal things; but in spiritual things far more so. Luke 12:56, "You hypocrites, you can discern the face of the sky, and of the earth; but how is it that you do not discern this time?" They are very subtle in evil designs, but sottish in those things which most concern them. Jer. 4:22, "They are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge." Wicked men show themselves more foolish and senseless of what is best for them, than the very brutes. Isa. 1:3, "The ox knows his owner, and the donkey his master's crib; but Israel does not know, my people does not consider." Jer. 8:7, "Yes, the stork in the heaven knows her appointed times; and the turtle, and the crane, and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgment of the Lord."

**2. They have no goodness in them.** Rom. 7:18, "In me, that is, in my flesh, dwells no good thing." They have no principle that disposes them to anything that is good. Natural men have no higher principle in their hearts than self-love. And herein they do not excel the devils. The devils love themselves, and love their own happiness, and are afraid of their own misery. And they go no further. And the devils would be as religious as the best of natural men if they were in the same circumstances. They would be as moral, and would pray as earnestly to God, and take as much pains for salvation, if there were the like opportunity. And as there is no good principle in the hearts of natural men, so there are never any good exercises of heart, never one good thought, or motion of heart in them. Particularly, there is no love to God in them. They never had the least degree of love to the infinitely glorious Being. They never had the least true respect to the Being that made them, and in whose hand their breath is, and from whom are all their mercies. However they may seem to do things at times out of respect to God, and wear a face as though they honored him, and highly esteemed him, it is all in mere hypocrisy. Though there may be a fair outside, they are like painted sepulchers. Within, there is nothing but putrefaction and rottenness. They have no love to Christ, the glorious Son of God, who is so worthy of their love, and has shown such wonderful grace to sinners in dying for them. They never did anything out of any real respect to the Redeemer of the world since they were born. They never brought forth any fruit to that God who made them and in whom they live and move and have their being. They never have in any way answered the end for which they were made. They have hitherto lived altogether in vain, and to no purpose. They never so much as sincerely obeyed one command of

God; never so much as moved one finger out of a true spirit of obedience to him, who made them to serve him.

And when they have seemed outwardly to comply with God's commands, their hearts were not in it. They did not do it out of any spirit of subjection to God, or any disposition to obey him, but were merely driven to it by fear, or in some way influenced by their worldly interest. They never gave God the honor of one of his attributes. They never gave him the honor of his authority by obeying him. They never gave him the honor of his sovereignty by submitting to him. They never gave him the honor of his holiness and mercy by loving him. They never gave him the honor of his sufficiency and faithfulness by trusting in him. But have looked upon God as one not fit to be believed or trusted, and have treated him as if he were a liar. 1 John 5:10, "He who believes not God has made him a liar."

They never so much as heartily thanked God for one mercy they have received in their whole lives, though God has always maintained them, and they have always lived upon his bounty. They never so much as once heartily thanked Christ for coming into the world and dying to give them an opportunity to be saved. They never would show him so much gratitude as to receive him, when he has knocked at their door; but have always shut the door against him, though he has come to knock at their door upon no other ground but only to offer himself to be their Savior. They never so much as had any true desires after God or Christ in their whole lives. When God has offered himself to them to be their portion, and Christ to be the friend of their souls, they did not desire it. They never desired to have God and Christ for their portion. They had rather be without them than with them, if they could avoid going to hell without them. They never had so much as an honorable thought of God. They always have esteemed earthly things before him. And notwithstanding all they have heard in the commands of God and Christ, they have always preferred a little worldly profit or sinful pleasure before them.

### **3. Unconverted men are in a dreadful condition by reason of the dreadful wickedness which there is in them.**

**(1) Sin is a thing of a dreadful nature, and that because it is against an infinitely great and an infinitely holy God.** There is in the nature of man enmity against God, contempt of God, rebellion against God. Sin rises up as an enemy against the Most High. It is a dreadful thing for a creature to be an enemy to the Creator, or to have any such thing in his heart as enmity against him; as will be very

clear, if we consider the difference between God and the creature, and how all creatures, compared with him, are as the small dust of the balance, are as nothing, less than nothing, and vanity. There is an infinite evil in sin. If we saw the hundredth part of the evil there is in sin, it would make us sensible that those who have any sin, let it be ever so small, are in a dreadful condition.

**(2) The hearts of natural men are exceedingly full of sin.** If they had but one sin in their hearts, it would be sufficient to render their condition very dreadful. But they have not only one sin, but all manner of sin. There is every kind of lust. The heart is a mere sink of sin, a fountain of corruption, where issue all manner of filthy streams. Mark 7:21, 22, "From within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornication's, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness." There is no one lust in the heart of the devil, that is not in the heart of man. Natural men are in the image of the devil. The image of God is erased out, and the image of the devil is stamped upon them. God is graciously pleased to restrain the wickedness of men, principally by fear and respect to their credit and reputation, and by education. And if it were not for such restraints as these, there is no kind of wickedness that men would not commit, whenever it came in their way. The commission of those things, at the mention of which men are now ready to start, and seem to be shocked when they hear them read, would be common and general; and earth would be a kind of hell. What would not natural men do if they were not afraid? Mat. 7:17, "But beware of men." Men have not only every kind of lust, and wicked and perverse dispositions in their hearts, but they have them to a dreadful degree. There is not only pride, but an amazing degree of it: pride, whereby a man is disposed to set himself even above the throne of God itself. The hearts of natural men are mere sinks of sensuality. Man is become like a beast in placing his happiness in sensual enjoyments. The heart is full of the most loathsome lusts. The souls of natural men are more vile and abominable than any reptile. If God should open a window in the heart so that we might look into it, it would be the most loathsome spectacle that ever was set before our eyes. There is not only malice in the hearts of natural men, but a fountain of it. Men naturally therefore deserve the language applied to them by Christ, Mat. 3:7, "O generation of vipers;" and Mat. 23:33, "You serpents, you generation of vipers."

Men, if it were not for fear and other such restraints, would not only commit all manner of sin, but to what degree, to what length would they not proceed! What has a natural man to keep him from openly

blaspheming God, as much as any of the devils; yes, from dethroning him, if that were possible, and fear and other such restraints were out of the way? Yes, would it not be thus with many of those, who now appear with a fair face, and will speak most of God, and make many pretenses of worshiping and serving him? The exceeding wickedness of natural men appears abundantly in the sins they commit, notwithstanding all these restraints. Every natural man, if he reflects, may see enough to show him how exceedingly sinful he is. Sin flows from the heart as constantly as water flows from a fountain. Jer. 6:7, "As a fountain casts out her waters, so she casts out her wickedness." And this wickedness, that so abounds in their hearts, has dominion over them. They are slaves to it. Rom. 7:14, "Sold under sin." They are so under the power of sin, that they are driven on by their lusts in a course against their own conscience, and against their own interest. They are hurried on to their own ruin, and that at the same time their reason tells them, it will probably be their ruin. 2 Pet. 2:14, "Cannot cease from sin." On account of wicked men's being so under the power of sin, the heart of man is said to be desperately wicked. Jer. 17:9 and Eph. 2:1, "Dead in trespasses and sins."

**(3) The hearts of natural men are dreadfully hard and incorrigible.** There is nothing but the mighty power of God will move them. They will cleave to sin, and go on in sin, let what will be done with them. Pro. 27:22, "Though you should bray a fool in a mortar among wheat with a pestle, yet will not his foolishness depart from him." There is nothing that will awe our hearts; and there is nothing that will draw them to obedience: let there be mercies or afflictions, threatenings or gracious calls and invitations, frowning, or patience and long-suffering, or fatherly counsels and exhortations. Isa. 26:10, "Let favor be showed to the wicked, yet will he not learn righteousness; in the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord."

**Secondly. The relative state of those who are in an unconverted condition is dreadful.** This will appear if we consider,

1. Their relative state with respect to **GOD**; and that because,  
**(1) They are without God in the world.** They have no interest or part in God. He is not their God. He has declared he will not be their God (Hos. 1:9). God and believers have a mutual covenant relation and right to each other. They are his people, and he is their God. But he is not the covenant God of those who are in an unconverted state. There is a great alienation and estrangement between God and the wicked. He is not their Father and portion. They have nothing to

challenge of God, they have no right to any one of his attributes. The believer can challenge a right in the power of God, in his wisdom and holiness, his grace and love. All are made over to him, to be for his benefit. But the unconverted can claim no right in any of God's perfections. They have no God to protect and defend them in this evil world: to defend them from sin, or from Satan, or any evil. They have no God to guide and direct them in any doubts or difficulties, to comfort and support their minds under afflictions. They are without God in all their affairs, in all the business they undertake, in their family affairs, and in their personal affairs, in their outward concerns, and in the concerns of their souls.

How can a creature be more miserable than to be separated from the Creator and to have no God whom he can call his own God? He is wretched indeed, who goes up and down in the world, without a God to take care of him, to be his guide and protector, and to bless him in his affairs. The very light of nature teaches that a man's God is his all. Jdg. 18:24, "You have taken away my gods, and what have I more?" There is but one God, and in him they have no right. They are without that God, whose will must determine their whole well being, both here and forever. That unconverted men are without God shows that they are liable to all manner of evil. They are liable to the power of the devil, to the power of all manner of temptation, for they are without God to protect them. They are liable to be deceived and seduced into erroneous opinions, and to embrace damnable doctrines. It is not possible to deceive the saints in this way. But the unconverted may be deceived. They may become papists, or heathens, or atheists. They have nothing to secure them from it. They are liable to be given up of God to judicial hardness of heart. They deserve it. And since God is not their God, they have no certainty that God will not inflict this awful judgment upon them. As they are without God in the world, they are liable to commit all manner of sin, and even the unpardonable sin itself. They cannot be sure they shall not commit that sin. They are liable to build up a false hope of heaven, and so to go hoping to hell. They are liable to die senseless and stupid, as many have died. They are liable to die in such a case as Saul and Judas did, fearless of hell. They have no security from it. They are liable to all manner of mischief, since they are without God. They cannot tell what shall befall them, nor when they are secure from anything. They are not safe one moment. Ten thousand fatal mischiefs may befall them, that may make them miserable forever.

They, who have God for their God, are safe from all such evils. It is not possible that they should befall them. God is their covenant God,



and they have his faithful promise to be their refuge. But what mischief is there which may not befall natural men? Whatever hopes they may have may be disappointed. Whatever fair prospect there may seem to be of their conversion and salvation, it may vanish away. They may make great progress towards the kingdom of God, and yet come short at last. They may seem to be in a very hopeful way to be converted, and yet never be converted. A natural man is sure of nothing. He is sure of no good, nor is he sure of escaping any evil. It is therefore a dreadful condition that a natural man is in. They, who are in a natural state, are lost. They have wandered from God, and they are like lost sheep, that have wandered from their shepherd. They are poor helpless creatures in a howling wilderness, and have no shepherd to protect or to guide them. They are desolate, and exposed to innumerable fatal mischiefs.

(2) They are not only without God, but **the wrath of God abides upon them**. John 3:36, "He who believes not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." There is no peace between God and them, but God is angry with them every day. He is not only angry with them, but that to a dreadful degree. There is a fire kindled in God's anger; it burns like fire. Wrath abides upon them, which if it should be executed, would plunge them into the lowest hell, and make them miserable there to all eternity. They have provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger. God has been angry with them every since they began to sin. He has been provoked by them every day, every since they exercised any reason. And he is provoked by them more and more every hour. The flame of his wrath is continually burning. There are many now in hell that never provoked God more than they, nor so much as many of them. Wherever they go, they go about with the dreadful wrath of God abiding on them. They eat, and drink, and sleep under wrath. How dreadful a condition therefore are they in! It is the most awful thing for the creature to have the wrath of his Creator abiding on him. The wrath of God is a thing infinitely dreadful. The wrath of a king is as the roaring of a lion. But what is the wrath of a king, who is but a worm of the dust, to the wrath of the infinitely great and dreadful God? How dreadful is it to be under the wrath of the First Being, the Being of beings, the great Creator and mighty possessor of heaven and earth! How dreadful is it for a person to go about under the wrath of God, who gave him being, and in who he lives and moves, who is everywhere present, and without whom he cannot move a step, nor draw a breath! Natural men, inasmuch as they are under wrath, are under a curse. God's wrath and curse are continually upon them. They can have no reasonable comfort, therefore, in any of their enjoyments; for they do not know but that they are given them

in wrath, and shall be curses to them, and not blessings. As it is said in Job 18:15, "Brimstone shall be scattered upon his habitation." How can they take any comfort in their food, or in their possessions, when they do not know but all are given them to fit them for the slaughter.

2. Their relative state will appear dreadful, if we consider how they stand related to the **DEVIL**.

**(1) Those who are in a natural state are the children of the devil.** As the saints are the children of God, so the ungodly are the children of the devil. 1 John 3:10, "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil." Mat 13:38, 39, "The field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom: but the tares are the children of wicked one. The enemy that sowed them is the devil." John 8:44, "You are of your father, the devil, and the lusts of your father you will do." They are, as it were, begotten of the devil. They proceed from him. 1 John 3:8, "He who commits sin, is of the devil." As Adam begat a son in his own likeness, so are wicked men in the likeness and image of the devil. They acknowledge this relation, and own themselves children of the devil, by consenting that he should be their father. They subject themselves to him, hearken to his counsels, as children hearken to the counsels of a father. They learn of him to imitate him, and do as he does, as children learn to imitate their parents. John 8:38, "I speak that which I have seen with my Father, and you do that which you have seen with your father." How awful a state is this! How dreadful is it to be a child of the devil, the spirit of darkness, the prince of hell, that wicked, malignant, and cruel spirit! To have anything to do with him is very dreadful. It would be accounted a dreadful, frightful thing only to meet the devil, to have him appear to a person in a visible shape. How dreadful then must it be to be his child; how dreadful for any person to have the devil for his father!

**(2) They are the devil's captives and servants.** Man before his fall was in a state of liberty; but now he has fallen into Satan's hands. The devil has got the victory and carried him captive. Natural men are in Satan's possession and they are under his dominion. They are brought by him into subjection to his will, to go at his bidding, and do what he commands. 2 Tim. 2:26, "Taken captive by him at his will." The devil rules over ungodly men. They are all his slaves, and do his drudging. This argues their state to be dreadful. Men account it an unhappy state of life to be slaves; and especially to be slaves to a bad master, to one who is very hard, unreasonable, and cruel. How miserable do we look upon those people, who are taken captive by the Turks, or other such

barbarous nations, and put by them to the lowest and most cruel slavery, and treated no better than they treat their cattle! But what is this to being taken captive by the devil, the prince of hell, and made a slave to him? Had not a man better be a slave to anyone on earth than to the devil? The devil is, of all masters, the most cruel, and treats his servants the worst. He puts them to the vilest service, to that which is the most dishonorable of any in the world. No work is so dishonorable as the practice of sin. The devil puts his servants to such work as debases them below the dignity of human nature. They must make themselves like beasts to do that work to serve their filthy lusts. And besides the lowliness of the work, it is a very hard service. The devil causes them to serve him at the expense of the peace of their own conscience, and oftentimes at the expense of their reputation, at the expense of their estates, and shortening of their days. The devil is a cruel master; for the service upon which he puts his slaves is to undo themselves. He keeps them hard at work day and night, to work their own ruin. He never intends to give them any reward for their pains, but their pains are to work out their own everlasting destruction. It is to gather fuel and kindle the fire for themselves to be tormented in to all eternity.

**(3) The soul of a natural man is the habitation of the devil.** The devil is not only their father and rules over them, but he dwells in them. It is a dreadful thing for a man to have the devil near him, often coming to him. But it is a more dreadful thing to have him dwell with a man, to take up his constant abode with him; and more dreadful yet to have him dwell in him, to take up his abode in his heart. But thus it is with every natural man. He takes up his abode in his heart. As the soul of a godly man is the habitation of the Spirit of God, so is the soul of a wicked man the habitation of unclean spirits. As the soul of a godly man is the temple of God, so the soul of a wicked man is the synagogue of Satan. A wicked man's soul is in Scripture called Satan's house, and Satan's palace. Mat. 12:29, "How can one enter into a strong man's house?" meaning the devil. And Luke 11:21, "When a strong man armed keeps his palace, his goods are in peace." Satan not only lives, but reigns, in the heart of a wicked man. He has not only taken up his abode there, but he has set up his throne there. The heart of a wicked man, is the place of the devil's rendezvous. The doors of a wicked man's heart are open to devils. They have free access there, though they are shut against God and Jesus Christ. There are many devils, no doubt, that have to do with one wicked man, and his heart is the place where they meet. The soul of a wicked man is, as it was said of Babylon, the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird. Thus

dreadful is the condition of a natural man by reason of the relation in which he stands to the devil.

## **II. The state of unconverted men is very dreadful, if we consider its relation to the FUTURE world.**

Our state here is not lasting, but transitory. We are pilgrims and strangers here, and are principally designed for a future world. We continue in this present state but a short time; but we are to be in that future state to all eternity. And therefore men are to be denominated either happy or miserable, chiefly with regard to that future state. It matters but little comparatively what our state is here, but it will continue but a short time; it is nothing to eternity. But that man is a happy man who is entitled to happiness, and he is miserable who is in danger of misery, in his eternal state. Prosperity or adversity in the present state alters them but very little because this state is of so short continuance.

First, **those who are in a natural condition, have no title to any inheritance in another world.** There are glorious things in another world. There are unsearchable riches, an unspeakable and inconceivable abundance; but they have nothing to do with it. Heaven is a world of glory and blessedness. But they have no right to the least portion of those blessings. If they should die and go out of the world as they are, they would go destitute, having no inheritance, no friend, no enjoyments to go to. They will have no God to whom they may go, no Redeemer to receive their departing souls, no angel to be a ministering spirit to them, to take care of them, to guard or defend them, no interest in that Redeemer, who has purchased those blessings. What is said of the Ephesians is true of those who are in a natural condition." At that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." What a dreadful case they are in, who live in the world having no hope, without any title to any benefits hereafter, and without any ground to hope for any good in their future and eternal state!

Second, **natural men are in a dreadful condition because of the misery to which they are exposed in the FUTURE world.** This will be obvious, if we consider,

1. How great the misery is of which they are in danger.
2. How great is their danger of this misery.

**1. How great the misery is of which they are in danger.** It is great in two respects:

- (1) The torment and misery are great in themselves.
- (2) They are of endless duration.

**(1) The torment and misery**, of which natural men are in danger, **are exceedingly great in themselves.** They are great beyond any of our words or thoughts. When we speak of them, our words are swallowed up. We say they are great, and exceedingly great, and very dreadful. But when we have used all the words we can to express them, how faint is the idea that is raised in our minds in comparison with the reality! This misery will appear very dreadful if we consider what calamities meet together in it. In it the wicked are deprived of all good, separated from God and all fruits of his mercy. In this world they enjoy many of the streams of God's goodness. But in the future world they will have no more smiles of God, no more manifestations of his mercy by benefits, by warnings, by calls and invitations. He will never more manifest his mercy by the exercise of patience and long-suffering, by waiting to be gracious. No more use any forbearance with them for their good. No more exercise his mercy by strivings of his Spirit, by sending messengers and using means.

They will have no more testimonies of the fruits of God's goodness in enjoying food and clothing, and comfortable dwellings and convenient accommodations, nor any of the comforts of this life. No more manifestations of his mercy by suffering them to draw near to him with their prayers, to pray for what they need. God will exercise no pity towards them, no regard for their welfare. Cut off from all the comforts of this life, shut out of heaven, they will see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But they shall be turned away from God and from all good, into the blackness of darkness, into the pit of hell, into that great receptacle, which God has provided on purpose to cast into it the filthy, and polluted, and abominable of the universe. They will be in a most dreadful condition. They will have no friends. God will be their enemy, angels and the spirits of the just will be their enemies, devils and damned spirits will be their enemies. They will be hated with perfect hatred, will have none to pity them, none to bemoan their case, or to be any comfort to them. It appears that the state of the damned will be exceedingly dreadful in that they will suffer the wrath of God, executed to the full upon them, poured out without mixture. They shall bear the wrath of the Almighty. They shall know how dreadful the wrath of an Almighty God is.

Now none knows, none can conceive. Psalm. 90:11, "Who knows the power of your anger?" Then they shall feel the weight of God's wrath. In this world they have the wrath of God abiding on them, but then it will be executed upon them. Now they are the objects of it, but then they will be the subjects of it. Now it hangs over them, but then it shall fall upon them in its full weight without alleviation, or any moderation or restraint. Their souls and their bodies shall then be filled full with the wrath of God. Wicked men shall be as full of wrath as anything that glows in the midst of a furnace is of fire. The wrath of God is infinitely more dreadful than fire. Fire, yes the fiercest fire, is but an image and shadow of it. The vessels of wrath shall be filled up with wrath to the brim. Yes, they shall be plunged into a sea of wrath. And therefore hell is compared to a lake of fire and brimstone, because there wicked men are overwhelmed and swelled up in wrath, as men who are cast into a lake or sea, are swallowed up in water. O who can conceive of the dreadfulfulness of the wrath of an Almighty God!

Everything in God is answerable to his infinite greatness. When God shows mercy, he shows mercy like a God. His love is infinitely desirable because it is the love of God. And so when he executes wrath it is like a God. This God will pour out without mixture. Rev. 14:10, "The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb." No mixture of mercy or pity; nothing thrown into the cup of wrath to assuage or moderate it. "God shall cast upon him and not spare." (Job 27:22) They shall be cast into the wine-press of the wrath of God, where they shall be pressed down with wrath, as grapes are pressed in a wine-press. Rev. 14:19, "Cast into the great wine-press of the wrath of God." God will then make appear in their misery how terrible his wrath is, that men and angels may know how much more dreadful the wrath of God is, than the wrath of kings, or any creatures. They shall know what God can do towards his enemies, and how fearful a thing it is to provoke him to anger.

If a few drops of wrath do sometimes so distress the minds of men in this world, so as to be more dreadful than fire, or any bodily torment, how dreadful will be a deluge of wrath. How dreadful will it be, when all God's mighty waves and billows of wrath pass over them! Every faculty of the soul shall be filled with wrath, and every part of the body shall be filled with fire. After the resurrection the body shall be cast into that great furnace, which shall be so great as to burn up the whole world. These lower heavens, this air and this earth, shall all

become one great furnace, a furnace that shall burn the earth, even to its very center. In this furnace shall the bodies of the wicked lie to all eternity, and yet live, and have their sense of pain and torment not all diminished. O, how full will the heart, the vitals, the brain, the eyes, the tongue, the hands, and the feet be of fire; of this fire of such an inconceivable fierceness! How full will every member, and every bone, and every vein, and every sinew, be of this fire! Surely it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Who can bear such wrath? A little of it is enough to destroy us. Psalm. 2:12, "Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little." But how will men be overwhelmed, how will they sink, when God's wrath is executed in so dreadful a degree! The misery which the damned will endure, will be their perfect destruction. Psalm. 50:22, "Now consider this, you that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver."

In several places the wicked are compared to the stubble, and to briers and thorns before devouring flames, and to the fat of lambs, which consumes into smoke. Psalm. 37:20, "But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be as the fat of lambs; they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away." They shall be as it were ground to powder under the weight of God's wrath. Mat. 21:24. Their misery shall be perfect misery; and because damnation is the perfect destruction of a creature, therefore it is called death. It is eternal death, of which temporal death, with all its awful circumstances, is but a faint shadow of the state of the soul under the second death. How dreadful the state of the damned is, we may argue from the desert of sin. One sin deserves eternal death and damnation, which, in the least degree of it, is the total destruction of the creature. How dreadful, then, is the misery of which natural people are in danger, who have lived some time in the world, and have committed thousands and thousands of sins, and have filled up many years with a course of sinning, and have committed many great sins, with high aggravations, who have sinned against the glorious gospel of Christ, and against great light, whose guilt is far more dreadful than that of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah! How dreadful is the punishment to which they are exposed, in which all their sins shall be punished according to their desert, and the uttermost farthing shall be exacted of them! The punishment of one idle word, or sinful thought, would be more than they could bear. How then will they bear all the wrath that shall be heaped upon them for all their multiplied and aggravated transgressions? If one sin deserves eternal death and damnation, how many deaths and damnations will they have accumulated upon them at once! Such an aggravated, multiplied death must they die every

moment, and always continue dying such a death, and yet never be dead. Such misery as this may well be called the blackness of darkness. Hell may well be called the bottomless pit, if the misery is so unfathomably great.

Men sometimes have suffered extreme torment in this world. dreadful have been the sufferings of some of the martyrs. But how little those are, in comparison of the sufferings of the damned, we may learn from 1 Pet. 4:16, 17, 18, "Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on this behalf. For the time is come, that judgment must begin at the house of God. And if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of those that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and sinner appear?" The apostle is here speaking of the sufferings of Christians. And from thence he argues, that seeing their sufferings are so great, how unspeakably great will be the sufferings of the wicked! And if judgment begins with them, what shall be the end of those who obey not the gospel! As much as to say, the sufferings of the righteous are nothing to what those, who obey not the gospel, are. How dreadful, therefore, does this argue their misery to be! Well may the sinners in Zion be afraid, and fearful, and surprised. Well may the kings of the earth, and the great men, and rich men, and chief captains, and every bond man, and every free man, hide themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains, at Christ's second coming; and cry 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?" Well may there be weeping and gnashing of teeth in hell, where there is such misery. Thus the misery of those who are in a natural condition, is, in itself, exceedingly great.

**(2) It is of endless duration.** The misery is not only amazingly great, and extreme, but of long continuance; yes, of infinitely long continuance. It never will have any end. There will be no deliverance, no rest, no hope. But they will last throughout all eternity. Eternity is a thing in the thought of which our minds are swallowed up. As it is infinite in itself, so it is infinitely beyond the comprehension of our minds. The more we think of it, the more amazing will it seem to us. Eternity is a duration, to which a long period of time bears no greater proportion than a short period. A thousand years, or a thousand ages, bear no greater proportion to eternity than a minute; or which is the same thing, a thousand ages are as much less than eternity as a minute. A minute comes as near an equality to it; or you may take as many thousand ages out of eternity, as you can minutes. If a man by



the utmost skill in arithmetic, should denote or enumerate a great number of ages, and should rise by multiplication to ever so prodigious numbers, should make as great figures as he could, and rise in multiplying as fast as he could, and should spend his life in multiplying; the product of all would be no nearer equal to the duration which the wicked must spend in the misery of hell, than one minute. Eternity is that, which cannot be made less by subtraction. If we take from eternity a thousand years or ages, the remainder is not the less for it. Eternity is that which will forever be but beginning, and that because all the time which is past, let it be ever so long, is but a point to what remains. The wicked, after they have suffered millions of ages, will be, as it were, but in the first point, only setting out in their sufferings. It will be no comfort to them that so much is gone, for they will have none the less to bear. There will never a time come, when, if what is past is compared to what is to come, it will not be as a point, and as nothing.

The continuance of their torment cannot be measured out by revolutions of the sun, or moon, or stars, by centuries or ages. They shall continue suffering after these heavens and this earth shall wax old as a garment, until the whole visible universe is dissolved. Yes, they shall remain in their misery through millions of such ages as are equal to the age of the sun, and moon, and stars, and still it will be all one, as to what remains, still no nearer the end of their misery. Mat. 25:41, "Depart from me, you cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Mark 9:44, "Where their worm dies not, and the fire is not quenched." Rev. 20:10, "They shall be tormented day and night forever and ever." And 14:11, "The smoke of their torment ascends up forever and ever." The damned in hell in their misery will be in absolute despair. They shall know that their misery will have no end, and therefore they will have no hopes of it. O, who can conceive the dreadful of such despair as this in the midst of such torment! Who can express, or think anything how dreadful the thought of eternity is to them, who are under so great torment! To what unfathomable depths of woe will it sink them! With what a gloom and blackness of darkness will it fill them!

What a boundless gulf of sorrow and woe is the thought of eternity to the damned, who shall be in absolute and utter despair of any deliverance! How dreadful, then, is the condition of those who are in a natural state, who are in danger of such misery.

**2. The dreadfulness of their condition will appear by considering how great their danger is of this misery.** This will be obvious from the following things:

(1) Their danger is such, that continuing in their present state, **they will unavoidably sink into this misery.**

First, the state in which natural people now are, naturally tends to it. And this, because they are separate from God, and destitute of any spiritual good. The soul that is in a state of separation from its Creator, must be miserable because he is separate from the fountain of all good. He who is separate from God, is in great danger of ruin because he is without any defense. He who is separate from God, must perish, if he continue so, because it is from God only that he can have those supplies which can make him happy. It is with the soul as it is with the body. The body without supplies of sustenance will miserably famish and die. So the souls of natural men are in a famishing condition. They are separate from God, and therefore are destitute of any spiritual good, which can nourish the soul, or keep it alive; like one that is remote in a wilderness, where he has nothing to eat or drink, and therefore, if he continue so, will unavoidably die. So the state of natural men naturally tends to that dreadful misery of the damned in hell, because they are separate from God.

Second, they are under the power of a mortal disease, which if it not healed, will surely bring them to this death. They are under the power and dominion of sin, and sin is a mortal disease of the soul. If it is not cured, it will certainly bring them to death; namely, to that second death of which we have heard. The infection of the disease has powerfully seized their vital parts. The whole head is sick, the whole heart faint. The disease is ingrained. The infection is spread throughout the whole frame. The very nature is corrupted and ruined; and the whole must come to ruin, if God by his mighty power does not heal the disease. The soul is under a mortal wound; a wound deep and dreadfully confirmed. Its roots reach the most vital parts; yes, they are principally seated there. There is a plague upon the heart, which corrupts and destroys the source of life, ruins the whole frame of nature, and hastens an inevitable death. There is a most deadly poison, which has been infused into, and spread over, the man. He has been bitten by a fiery serpent, whose bite issues in a most tormenting death. Sin is that, which does as naturally tend to the misery and ruin of the soul, as the most mortal poison tends to the death of the body. We look upon people far gone in a consumption, or with an incurable cancer, or some malady, as in doleful circumstances. But that mortal

disease, under whose power natural men are, makes their case a thousand times more doleful. That mortal disease of natural men does, as it were, ripen them for damnation. We read of the clusters of the vine of the earth being for the wine-press of the wrath of God, Rev. 14:18, where by the clusters of the vine are meant wicked men. The wickedness of natural men tends to sink them down to hell, as the weight of a stone causes it to tend toward the center of the earth. Natural men have, as it were, the seeds of hell within their own hearts. Those principles of sin and corruption, which are in them, if they remain unmortified, will at length breed the torment of hell in them, and that necessarily, and of their own tendency. The soul that remains under the power of sin will at length take fire of itself. Hell will kindle in them.

(2) If they continue in their present state, **this misery appears to be unavoidable, if we consider the JUSTICE and TRUTH of God.**

First, if they continue in their present condition, so surely as God is just, they shall suffer the eternal misery of which we have heard. The honor of God's justice requires it, and God will not disparage his own justice. He will not deny his own honor and glory, but will glorify himself on the wicked as well as the godly. He will not lose his honor of any one of his creatures which he has made.

It is impossible that God should be frustrated or disappointed. And so surely as God will not be frustrated, so surely shall they who continue in a natural condition, suffer that eternal misery, of which we have heard. The avenging justice of God is one of the perfections of his nature. And he will glorify all his perfections. God is unalterable in this as well as his other perfections. His justice shall and must be satisfied. He has declared that he will by no means clear the guilty, Exo. 34:7. And that he will not justify the wicked, Exo. 23:7. And that he will not at all acquit the wicked, Nah. 1:3. God is a strictly just Judge. When men come to stand before him, he will surely judge them according to their works. Those who have guilt lying upon them, he will surely judge according to their guilt. The debt they owe to justice must be paid to the uttermost farthing. It is impossible that anyone, who dies in his sins, should escape everlasting condemnation and punishment before such a Judge. He will render to every man according to his deeds. Rom. 2:8, "Unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that does evil." It is impossible to influence God to be otherwise than just in judging ungodly men. There is no bribing him. He accepts not the person of princes, nor regards

the rich more than the poor. Deu. 10:17, "He regards not people, nor takes reward." It is impossible to influence him to be otherwise than strictly just, by any supplications, or tears, or cries. God is inexorably just. The cries and the moans of the malefactor will have no influence upon this Judge to pass a more favorable judgment on them, so as in any way to acquit or release them. The eternal cries, and groans, and lamentations of the wicked will have no influence upon him. Though they are ever so long continued, they will not prevail upon God.

Second, so surely as God is true, if they die in the state they are now in, they shall suffer that eternal misery. God has threatened it in a positive and absolute manner. The threatenings of the law are absolute. And they, who are in a natural state, are under the condemnation of the law. The threatening of the law takes hold upon them. And if they continue under guilt, God is obliged by his word to punish them according to that threatening. And he has often, in the most positive and absolute manner, declared that the wicked shall be cast into hell; that they who believe not shall be damned; that they shall have their portion in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone; and that their misery shall never have an end. And therefore, if there be any truth in God, it shall surely be so. It is as impossible that he who dies in a natural condition, should escape suffering that eternal misery, as that God should lie. The Word of God is stronger and firmer than mountains of brass, and shall not fail. We shall sooner see heaven and earth pass away, than one jot or tittle of all that God has said in his Word not be fulfilled. So much for the first thing, that evinces the greatness of the danger that natural men are in of hell; namely, that they will unavoidably sink into hell, if they continue in such a condition.

(3) Their danger will appear very dreadful, if we **consider how uncertain it is, whether they will ever get out of this condition.** It is very uncertain whether they will ever be converted. If they should die in their present condition, their misery is certain and inevitable. But it is very doubtful whether they will not die in such a condition, their misery is certain and inevitable. But it is very doubtful whether they will not die in such a condition. There is great danger that they will; great danger of their never being converted. And this will appear, if we consider two things.

First, they have nothing on which to depend for conversion. They have nothing in the world, by which to persuade themselves that they shall ever be converted. Left to themselves, they never will repent and turn to God. If they are ever converted, therefore, it is God who must do it.

But they have no promise of God, that they ever shall be converted. They do not know how soon they may die. God has not promised them long life; and he has not promised them that they shall be ready for death before they die. It is but a peradventure, whether God will ever give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth. 2 Tim. 2:25. Their resolutions are not to be depended on. If they have convictions, they are not to be depended on; they may lose those convictions. Their conversion depends on innumerable uncertainties. It is very uncertain, then, whether they will be converted before they die.

Second, another thing which shows the danger there is that they shall never be converted, is, that there are but few, comparatively, who are ever converted. But few of those, who have been natural people in time past, have been converted. Most of them have died unconverted. So it has been in all ages, and hence we have reason to think that but few of them, who are unconverted now, will ever be converted; that most of them will die unconverted, and will go to hell. Natural people are ready to flatter themselves, that they shall be converted. They think there are signs of it. But a man would not run the venture of so much as a sixpence in such an uncertainty as they are, about their ever being converted, or not going to hell. This shows the doleful condition of natural men, as it is uncertain whether they shall ever be converted.

Third, those who are in a natural condition are in danger of going to hell every day. Those now present, who are in a natural condition, are in danger of dropping into hell before tomorrow morning. They have nothing to depend on, to keep them out of hell one day, or one night. We know not what a day may bring forth. God has not promised to spare them one day; and he is every day angry with them. The black clouds, that are full of the thunder of God's wrath, hang over their heads every day, and they know not how soon the thunder will break forth upon their heads. Natural men are in Scripture compared to those that walk in slippery places. They know not when their feet will slip. They are continually in danger. Psalm. 73:18, "Surely you did set them in slippery places; you cast them down into destruction. How are they brought into desolation as in a moment." Natural men hang over the pit of hell, as it were, by a thread, that has a moth continually gnawing it. They know not when it will snap in twain, and let them drop. They are in the utmost uncertainty. They are not secure one moment. A natural man never goes to sleep, but that he is in danger of waking in hell. Experience abundantly teaches the matter to be so. It shows, by millions of instances, that man is not certain of life one day. And how common a thing is it for death to come suddenly and

unexpectedly! And thousands, beyond all reasonable question, are going to hell every day, and death comes upon them unexpectedly. "When they shall say, peace and safety, then sudden destruction comes upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape." It is a dreadful condition that natural people are in upon this account. And no wise person would be in their condition for a quarter of an hour for the whole world, because such is the danger that they will drop into hell before that quarter of an hour is expired.

Thus I have shown how dreadful the condition of natural men is, relatively considered. I shall mention two or three things more, which yet further make it appear how doleful their condition is.

**1. The longer it continues, the worse it grows.** This is a dreadful circumstance in the condition of a natural man. Any disease is looked upon as the more dreadful, for its growing and increasing nature. Thus a cancer and gangrene are regarded as dreadful calamities, because they continually grow and spread. And the faster they grow, the more dreadful are they accounted. It would be dreadful to be in a natural condition, if a person could continue as he is, and his condition grow no worse; if he could live in a natural condition, and never have it any more dreadful, than when he first begins to sin. But it is yet much more dreadful, when we consider that it every day becomes worse and worse. The condition of natural men is worse today than it was yesterday, and that on several accounts. The heart grows more and more polluted and hardened. The longer sin continues unmortified, the more is it strengthened and rooted. Their guilt also grows greater, and hell every day grows hotter; for they are every day adding sin to sin, and so their iniquity is increasing over their heads more and more. Every new sin adds to the guilt. Every sin deserves eternal death for its punishment. And therefore in every sin that a man commits, there is so much added to the punishment, to which he lies exposed. There is, as it were, another eternal death added to augment his damnation.

And how much is added to the account in God's book every day. How many new sins are set down, that all may be answered for; each one of which sins must be punished, that by itself would be an eternal death! How fast do wicked men heap up guilt, and treasure up wrath, so long as they continue in a natural condition! How is God more and more provoked, his wrath more and more incensed; and how does hell-fire continually grow hotter and hotter! If a man has lived twenty years in a natural condition, the fire has been increased every day since he has lived. It has been, as it were, blown up to a greater and

greater degree of fierceness. Yes, how dreadfully does one day's continuance in sin add to the heat of hell-fire!

**2. All blessings are turned into curses to those who live and die in such a condition.**

Those things which are most pleasant and comfortable, and which men esteem the blessings of life, are but curses unto such; as their food, and their drink, and their clothing. There is a curse goes with every mouthful of food, and every drop of drink, to such a person. There is a curse with his clothing which he puts on. It all contributes to his misery. Though it may please him, yet it does him no good, but he is the more miserable for it. If he has any enjoyment which is sweet and pleasant to him, the pleasure is a curse to him. He is really the more miserable for it. It is an occasion of death to him. His possessions, which he values himself upon, and sets his heart upon, are turned into a curse to him. His house has the curse of God upon it, and his table is a snare and a trap to him. Psalm. 69:22. His bed has God's curse upon it. When he lies down to sleep, a curse attends his rest; and when he goes forth to labor, he is followed with a curse on that. The curse of God is upon his fields, on his corn, and herds, and all he has. If he has friends and relations, who are pleasant and dear to him, they are no blessings to him. He receives no comfort by them, but they prove a curse to him. I say it is thus with those who live and die in a natural condition. Deu. 28:16, etc., "Cursed shall you be in the city, and cursed shall you be in the field. Cursed shall be your basket, and your store. Cursed shall be the fruit of your body, and the fruit of your land, and the increase of your kine, and the flocks of your sheep.

Cursed shall you be when you come in, and cursed shall you be when you go out. The Lord shall send upon you cursing, vexation, and rebuke, in all that you set thing hand unto for to do, until you be destroyed, and until you perish quickly; because of the wickedness of your doings, whereby you have forsaken me." Man's faculties of reason and understanding, and all his natural powers, are turned into a curse. Yes, spiritual mercies and privileges shall also be turned into a curse to those who live and die in a natural condition. A curse goes with the worship of God, and with sabbaths and sacraments, with instruction, and counsels, and warnings, and with the most precious advantages. They are all turned into a curse. They are a savor of death unto death. They do but harden the heart, and aggravate the guilt and misery, and inflame the divine wrath. Isaiah 6:9, 10. "Go, make the heart of this people fat." 2 Cor. 2:16, "To the one we are the savor of death unto death." It will only be an occasion of their misery, that God ever sent Christ into the world to save sinners. That which is

in itself so glorious a manifestation of God's mercy, so unspeakable a gift, that which is an infinite blessing to others who receive Christ, will be a curse unto them. 1 Pet. 2:8, "A stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense." The blood of Christ, which is the price of eternal life and glory to some, is an occasion of sinking them vastly the lower into eternal burnings. And that is the case of such people. The more precious any mercies are in themselves, the more of a curse are they to them. The better the things are in themselves, the more will they contribute to their misery. And spiritual privileges, which are in themselves greater mercies than any outward enjoyments, will above all other things prove a curse to them. Nothing will enhance their condemnation so much as these.

On account of these, it will be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for them. Yes, so doleful is the condition of natural men, that if they live and die in that condition, not only the enjoyments of life, but life itself, will be a curse to them. The longer they live, the more miserable will they be; the sooner they die, the better. If they live long in such a condition, and die in it at last, it would have been better for them if they had died before. It would have been far better for them to have spent the time in hell, than on earth. Yes, better for them to have spent ten thousand years in hell, instead of one on earth. When they look back, and consider what enjoyments they have had, they will wish they had never had them. Though when on earth they set their hearts on their earthly enjoyments, they will hereafter wish they had been without them; for they will see they have only fitted them for the slaughter. They will wish they never had had their houses and lands, their garments, their earthly friends, and their earthly possessions. And so they will wish that they had never enjoyed the light of the gospel, that they had been born among the heathen in some of the most dark and barbarous places of the earth. They will wish that Christ had never come into the world to die for sinners, so as to give men any opportunity to be saved. They will wish that God had cast off fallen man, as he did the fallen angels, and had never made him the offer of a Savior. They will wish that they had died sooner, and had not had so much opportunity to increase their guilt and their misery. They will wish they had died in their childhood, and been sent to hell then. They will curse the day that ever they were born, and wish they had been made vipers and scorpions, or anything, rather than rational creatures.

**3. They have no security from the most dismal horrors of mind in this life.** They have no security, but their stupidity. A natural man can have no comfort or peace in a natural condition, but that of which



blindness and senselessness are the foundation. And from what has been said, that is the very evil. A natural man can have no comfort in anything in this world any further, than thought and consideration of mind are kept down in him. As you make a condemned malefactor senseless of his misery by putting him to sleep with opium, or make him merry just before his execution by giving him something to deprive him of the use of reason, so that he shall not be sensible of his own circumstances. Otherwise, there is no peace or comfort, which a natural man can have in a natural condition. Isa. 57:21, "There is no peace, says my God, to the wicked." Job 15:20, "The wicked man travails with pain all his days. A dreadful sound is in his ears." The doleful state of a natural man appears especially from the horror and amazement to which he is liable on a death-bed. To have the heavy hand of God upon one in some dangerous sickness, which is wasting and consuming the body, and likely to destroy it, and to have a prospect of approaching death, and of soon going into eternity, there to be in such a condition as this: to what amazing apprehensions must the sinner be liable! How dismal must his state be, when the disease prevails, so that there is no hope that he shall recover, when the physician begins to give him over, and friends to despair of his life; when death seems to hasten on, and he is at the same time perfectly blind to any spiritual object, altogether ignorant of God, of Christ, and of the way of salvation, having never exercised one act of love to God in his life, or done one thing for his glory; having then every lust and corruption in its full strength; having then such enmity in the heart against God, as to be ready to dethrone him, if that were possible; having no right in God, or interest in Christ; having the terrible wrath of God abiding on him; being yet the child of the devil, entirely in his possession and under his power; with no hope to maintain him, and with the full view of never-ending misery just at the door.

What a dismal case must a natural man be in under such circumstances! How will his heart die within him at the news of his approaching death, when he finds that he must go, that he cannot deliver himself, that death stands with his grim countenance looking him in the face, and is just about to seize him, and carry him out of the world. And that he at the same time has nothing to depend on! How often are there instances of dismal distress of unconverted people on a deathbed! No one knows the fears, the exercise and torment in their hearts, but they who feel them. They are such that all the pleasures of sin, which they have had in their whole lives, will not pay them for. As you may sometimes see godly men go triumphing out of the world full of joy, with the foretastes of heaven, so sometimes wicked men, when dying, anticipate something of hell before they

arrive there. The flames of hell do, as it were, come up and reach them, in some measure, before they are dead. God then withdraws, and ceases to protect them. The tormentor begins his work while they are alive. Thus it was with Saul and Judas; and there have been many other similar instances since; and none, who are in a natural condition, have any security from it. The state of a natural man is doleful on this account, though this is but a prelude and foretaste of the everlasting misery which follows.

Thus I have, in some measure, shown in **what a doleful condition those are who are in a natural condition**. Still I have said but little. It is beyond what we can speak or think.

They who say most of the dreadfulness of a natural condition, say but little.

And they who are most sensible, are sensible of but a small part of the misery of a natural state.