

Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God

by Jonathan Edwards,
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*"Vengeance belongs to Me—I will repay! **Their foot shall slide in due time**, for their day of disaster is near, and their doom is coming quickly!"* Deuteronomy 32:35

In this verse, the *vengeance of God* is threatened on the wicked unbelieving Israelites, who were God's *visible* people—and who lived under the means of grace; but who, notwithstanding all of God's wonderful works towards them—they remained void of counsel, having no understanding in them. Under all the cultivations of God—they brought forth *bitter* and *poisonous* fruit.

The expression I have chosen for my text, *"their foot shall slide in due time,"* seems to imply the following things, relating to the *punishment* and *destruction* to which these wicked Israelites were exposed.

1. It implies, that they were *always* exposed to destruction; as one who stands or walks in *slippery places* is always exposed to fall. This is implied in the manner of their destruction coming upon them, being represented by their *foot sliding*. The same is expressed in Psalm 72:18, "Surely you set them in *slippery places*; you cast them down into *destruction*."

2. Another thing implied is—that they were always exposed to *sudden unexpected* destruction. As he who walks in slippery places is every moment liable to fall—he cannot foresee one moment whether he shall stand or fall the next. And when he does fall—he falls at once without warning. This is also expressed in Psalm 73:18,19. "Surely you did set them in slippery places; you cast them down into destruction! How are they brought into desolation as in a moment!"

3. Another thing implied is—that they are liable to fall of themselves, without being thrown down by the hand of another; as he who stands or walks on slippery ground needs nothing but his own weight to throw him down.

4. That the reason why they are not fallen already—and do not fall now—is only that *God's appointed time* has not yet come. For it is said, that when that *due time*, or *appointed time* comes—their

foot *shall* slide. Then they shall be left to fall—as they are inclined by their own weight. God will not hold them up in these slippery places any longer—but will let them go. And then, at that very instant, they shall fall into destruction; as he who stands on such slippery sloping ground, on the edge of a pit—he cannot stand alone—when he is let go, he immediately falls and is lost!

The observation from the words that I would now insist upon is this—**"There is nothing which keeps wicked men at any one moment out of hell—but the mere pleasure of God."**

By the mere pleasure of God, I mean his *sovereign* pleasure, his *arbitrary* will, restrained by no obligation, hindered by no manner of difficulty—any more than if nothing else but God's mere will had in the least degree, or in any respect whatever, any hand in the preservation of wicked men one moment. The truth of this observation may appear by the following considerations.

1. There is no lack of power in God, to cast wicked men into hell at any moment. Men's hands cannot be strong—when God rises up! The strongest have no power to resist him, nor can any deliver out of his hands! He is not only *able* to cast wicked men into hell—but he can most *easily* do it.

Sometimes an earthly prince meets with a great deal of difficulty to subdue a rebel, who has found means to fortify himself—and has made himself strong by the numbers of his followers. But it is not so with God. There is no fortress which is any defense from the power of God. Though hand join in hand—and vast multitudes of God's enemies combine and associate themselves—they are easily broken in pieces! They are as great heaps of *light chaff* before the whirlwind; or large quantities of *dry stubble* before devouring flames!

We find it easy to tread on and crush a *worm* which we see crawling on the earth; it is easy for us to cut or singe a slender *thread* that anything hangs by. It is thus easy for God, when he pleases, to cast his enemies down to hell! What are we, that we should think to stand before him—at whose rebuke the earth trembles—and before whom the rocks are thrown down!

2. They deserve to be cast into hell. Divine justice never stands in the way—it makes no objection against God's using his power at any moment to destroy them. Yes, on the contrary, justice calls aloud for an infinite punishment of their sins! Divine justice says of the tree

which brings forth such *grapes of Sodom*, "Cut it down! why does it cumber the ground!" Luke 13:7. The *sword of divine justice* is every moment brandished over their heads—and it is nothing but the hand of arbitrary mercy—and God's mere will—which holds it back.

3. They are already under a sentence of condemnation to hell.

They do not only justly deserve to be cast down there—but the sentence of the law of God, that eternal and immutable rule of righteousness which God has fixed between him and mankind—has gone out against them—and stands against them; so that they are bound over already to hell. John 3:18, "He who believes not, is condemned already." So that every unconverted man properly belongs to hell—that is his place—from thence he is, John 8:23, "You are from *beneath*!" And there he is bound; it is the place that justice—and God's Word—and the sentence of his unchangeable law—assign to him.

4. They are now the objects of that very same anger and wrath of God, that is expressed in the torments of hell. And the reason why they do not go down to hell at each moment, is not because God, in whose power they are—is not now as angry with them—as he is with many miserable creatures now tormented in hell, who there *feel* and *bear* the fierceness of his wrath. Yes, God is a great deal *more* angry with great numbers who are now on earth! Yes, doubtless, God is more angry with many who are now in this congregation, who it may be are at ease—than he is with many of those who are now in the flames of hell!

So, it is not because God is unmindful of their wickedness—and does not resent it—that he does not let loose his hand and cut them off. God is not altogether such a one as themselves, though they may imagine him to be so. The wrath of God bums against them—their damnation does not slumber! The pit is prepared, the fire is made ready, the furnace is now hot—and ready to receive them! The flames do now rage and glow. His glittering sword is sharpened—and held over them—and the pit has opened its mouth under them!

5. The devil stands ready to fall upon them—and seize them as his own—at whatever moment God shall permit him! They belong to him; he has their souls in his possession—and under his dominion. The scripture represents them as his property. The devils watch them; they are ever by them at their right hand; they stand waiting for them, like *greedy hungry lions* which seek their prey—and expect to have it—but are for the present kept back. If God should withdraw his hand, by which they are restrained—these devils would in

one moment fly upon their poor souls! The *old serpent* is gaping for them; *hell* opens its mouth wide to receive them; and if God should permit it, they would be hastily swallowed up and forever lost!

6. There are in the souls of wicked men, those *hellish principles* reigning, which would presently kindle and flame out into hell fire—if it were not for God's restraints.

There is laid in the very nature of carnal men, a foundation for the torments of hell. There are those *corrupt principles*, in reigning power in them—and in full possession of them—which are seeds of hell fire. These principles are active and powerful, exceeding violent in their nature—and if it were not for the restraining hand of God upon them, they would soon break out, they would flame out after the same manner as the same *corruptions*, as the same *enmity* does in the hearts of *damned* souls—and would beget the same torments as they do in them!

The souls of the wicked are in Scripture compared to the *troubled sea*, Isaiah 57:20. For the present, God restrains their wickedness by his mighty power, as he does the raging waves of the troubled sea, saying, "Hitherto shall you come—but no further!" But if God should withdraw his restraining power, it would soon carry all before it. Sin is the *ruin* and *misery* of the soul; it is *destructive* in its nature; and if God should leave it without restraint—there would be need of nothing else to make the soul totally miserable.

The corruption of the heart of man is boundless in its fury; and while wicked men live—it is like *fire pent up* by God's restraints, whereas if it were let loose, it would set on fire the course of nature. And as the heart is now a *sink of sin*, so if sin was not restrained, it would immediately turn the soul into fiery oven, or a furnace of fire and brimstone!

7. It is no security to wicked men for one moment—that there are no visible means of death at hand.

It is no security to a unsaved man, that he is now in health—and that he does not see which way he should now immediately go out of the world by any accident—and that there is no visible danger in any respect in his circumstances. The manifold and continual experience of the world in all ages, shows this is no evidence, that a man is not on the very brink of eternity—and that the *next step* will not be into the eternal world! The *unseen*, and *unthought* of ways and means of people going *suddenly* out of the world—are innumerable and inconceivable.

Unconverted men walk over the pit of hell on a *rotten covering*—and there are innumerable places in this covering so *weak* that they will not bear their weight—and these places are not seen! The *arrows of death* fly unseen at noon-day; the sharpest sight cannot discern them. God has so many different unsearchable ways of taking wicked men out of the world and sending them to hell—that there is nothing to make it appear, that God had need to use a *miracle*, or go out of the *ordinary course* of his providence, to destroy any wicked man, at any moment! All the means that there are of sinners going out of the world, are so in God's hands—and so universally and absolutely subject to his power and determination, that it depends only on the mere will of God—*how* and *when* sinners shall go to hell!

8. Unsaved men's prudence and care to preserve their own lives, or the care of others to preserve them—do not secure them a single moment! To this, divine providence and universal experience do also bear testimony. There is this clear evidence, that men's own wisdom is no security to them from death. If it were otherwise, we should see some difference between the wise men of the world—and others, with regard to their liableness to early and unexpected death. But how is it—in fact? "Like the *fool*, the *wise man* too must die!" Ecclesiastes 2:16.

9. All wicked men's pains and contrivances which they use to escape hell, while they continue to reject Christ—and so remain wicked men—do not secure them from hell one moment! Almost every unsaved man who hears of hell, flatters himself that *he* shall escape it. He depends upon himself for his own security; he flatters himself in what he *has* done, in what he is *now* doing, or what he *intends* to do. Every unsaved man lays out matters in his own mind—as to how he shall avoid damnation—and flatters himself that he contrives well for himself—and that his schemes will not fail.

They hear indeed that there are but *few* saved—and that the greater part of men who have died heretofore, have gone to hell; but each one imagines that *he* lays out matters better for his own escape—than others have done. He does not *intend* to come to that place of torment! He says within himself, that he intends to take great care—and to so order matters for himself—as not to fail.

But the foolish men miserably *delude themselves* in their own schemes—and in confidence in their own strength and wisdom; they trust to nothing but a *shadow*. The greater part of those who heretofore have lived under the same means of grace—and are now

dead—are undoubtedly gone to hell! And it was not because they were not as *wise* as those who are now alive. It was not because they did not lay out matters as well for themselves to secure their own escape.

If we could speak with them—and inquire of them, one by one, whether they expected, when alive—and when they used to hear about hell—ever to be the subjects of eternal misery—we doubtless, would hear one and another reply, "No, I never intended to come here! I had laid out matters otherwise in my mind! I thought my scheme for escaping hell, was good. But death came upon me unexpected! I did not look for it at that *time*—and in that *manner*; it came as a thief! Death outwitted me! God's wrath was too quick for me! Oh, my cursed foolishness! I was flattering myself—and pleasing myself with *vain dreams* of what I would do to escape hell—and when I was saying, '*Peace and safety*'—then sudden destruction came upon me!"

10. God has laid himself under no obligation, by any promise—to keep any unsaved man out of hell, for one moment! God certainly has made no promises either of eternal life, or of any deliverance or preservation from eternal death—but what are contained in the covenant of grace—the promises which are given *in Christ*. But surely they have no interest in the promises of the covenant of grace—who are not the children of the covenant, who do not believe in any of the promises—and have no saving interest in Christ, the Mediator of the covenant.

So it is plain and manifest, that whatever pains a unsaved man takes in religion, whatever prayers he makes—that until he believes in Christ—that God is under no manner of obligation to keep him for a moment from eternal destruction.

So unsaved men are held in the hand of God, over the pit of hell! They have *deserved* the fiery pit—and are *already sentenced* to it! And God is dreadfully provoked, his anger is as great towards them as to those that are actually suffering the executions of the fierceness of his wrath in hell! And they have done nothing in the least to appease or abate that anger. Neither is God in the least bound by any promise to hold them up one moment!

The devil is waiting for them! Hell is gaping for them! The flames gather and flash about them—and would gladly lay hold on them—and swallow them up! The fire pent up in their own hearts is struggling to break out! They have no saving interest in Christ the Savior; and there are no means within reach, which can be any security to them. In

short, they have no refuge—nothing to take hold of! All which preserves them every moment—is the mere arbitrary will—and unobliged forbearance of an incensed God!

APPLICATION

The use of this dreadful subject, may be for awakening unconverted people in this congregation. What you have heard, is the case of every one of you, who are out of Christ. That world of misery, that lake of burning brimstone—is extended abroad under you! There is the dreadful pit of the glowing flames of the wrath of God! There is hell's wide gaping mouth open—and you have nothing to stand upon, nor anything to take hold of! There is nothing between you and hell but the thin air! It is only the power and mere pleasure of God, which holds you up!

You probably are not sensible of this. You know that you are now kept out of hell—but do not see the hand of God in it. You look at other things, as your good health, or your care of your own life—and the means you use for your own preservation. But indeed these things avail nothing! If God should withdraw his hand, they would avail no more to keep you from falling—than the thin air could hold up a person who is suspended in it.

Your wickedness makes you as it were heavy as lead—and to tend downwards with great weight and pressure towards hell! And if God should let you go—you would immediately sink and swiftly descend and plunge into the bottomless gulf! And your good health—and your own care and prudence—and best contrivances—and all your good works—would have no more power to uphold you and keep you out of hell—than a *spider's web* would have to stop a falling rock!

Were it not for the sovereign pleasure of God—the earth would not bear you one moment! For you are a burden to it; the creation groans with you! The sun does not willingly shine upon you—to give you light to serve sin and Satan! The earth does not willingly yield her fruits to satisfy your lusts! Nor is it willingly a *stage for your wickedness* to be acted upon! The air does not willingly give you *breath*, while you spend your life in the service of God's enemies! All of God's creatures are good—and were made for men to serve God with—and do not willingly serve to any other purpose—and groan when they are abused to purposes so directly contrary to their nature and end. This world would spew you out—were it not for the sovereign hand of God!

There are the *black clouds of God's wrath* now hanging directly over your heads, full of the dreadful storm—and filled with thunder. And were it not for the *restraining hand of God*, it would immediately burst forth upon you! The sovereign pleasure of God, for the present, restrains his rough wind; otherwise it would come with fury—and your destruction would come like a whirlwind—and you would be blown to hell, like the chaff of the summer threshing floor!

The wrath of God is like great waters which are dammed up for the present; they increase more and more—and rise higher and higher, until an outlet is given. And the longer the stream is gathering, the more rapid and mighty is its course, when once it is let loose. It is true, that judgment against your evil works has not been executed hitherto; the floods of God's vengeance have been withheld; but your guilt in the mean time, is constantly increasing—and you are every day *treasuring up more wrath!* The waters are constantly rising—and waxing more and more mighty; and it is nothing but the mere pleasure of God, which holds the waters back! If God should only withdraw his hand from the flood-gate, it would immediately fly open—and the fiery floods of the fierceness and wrath of God, would rush forth with inconceivable fury—and would come upon you with omnipotent power! And if your strength were ten thousand times greater than it is, yes, ten thousand times greater than the strength of the stoutest, sturdiest devil in hell—it would be nothing to withstand or endure it!

The *bow* of God's wrath is bent—and the *arrow* made ready on the string—and *justice* bends the arrow at your heart—and strains the bow—and it is nothing but the mere pleasure of God—and that of an *angry God*, without any promise or obligation to you at all—which keeps the arrow one moment from being made drunk with your blood!

Thus all you who have never passed under a great change of heart, by the mighty power of the Spirit of God upon your souls; all you who were never born again—and made new creatures—and raised from being dead in sin—you are in the hands of an angry God! However you may have *reformed* your life in many things—and may keep up a *form of religion*—it is nothing but God's mere pleasure which keeps you from being *this moment* swallowed up in everlasting destruction!

However unconvinced you may now be of the truth of what you hear—you will *shortly* be fully convinced of it. Many of those who were in similar circumstances as yourself, have had *sudden destruction* come upon them—when they expected nothing of it—and while they were

saying, 'Peace and safety!' Now they see, that those things on which they depended for peace and safety—were nothing but thin air and empty shadows!

The God who holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a *spider*, or some *loathsome insect* over the fire—abhors you—and is dreadfully provoked! His wrath towards you burns like fire! He looks upon you as worthy of nothing else—but to be cast into the fire! He is of purer eyes than to bear to have you in his sight! You are ten thousand times more abominable in his eyes—than the most hateful venomous serpent is in ours! You have offended him infinitely more than ever a stubborn rebel did his prince; and yet it is nothing but *his hand* which holds you from falling into the eternal fire every moment!

It is to be ascribed to nothing else, that you did not go to hell the last night—that you was allowed to awaken again in this world, after you closed your eyes to sleep. And there is no other reason to be given, why you have not dropped into hell since you arose this morning—but that *God's hand* has held you up! There is no other reason to be given why you have not gone to hell, since you have sat here in the house of God, provoking his pure eyes by your sinful wicked manner of attending his solemn worship. Yes, there is nothing else that is to be given, as a reason why you do not *this very moment* drop down into hell!

O sinner! Consider the *fearful danger* you are in! It is a great furnace of wrath—a wide and bottomless pit, full of the fire of wrath—that you are held over—by the hand of that God, whose wrath is provoked and incensed as much against *you*—as against many of the damned in hell! You hang by a slender thread, with the flames of divine wrath flashing about it—and ready every moment to singe it—and burn it asunder; and you have no saving interest in Christ, the Savior—and nothing to lay hold of to save yourself—nothing to keep off the flames of wrath—nothing which you ever have done—nothing which you can do—to induce God to spare you one moment!

1. Consider more particularly—WHOSE wrath it is! It is the wrath of the *infinite God*! If it were only the wrath of *man*, though it were of the most potent prince—it would be comparatively little to be regarded. The wrath of *kings* is very much dreaded, especially of absolute monarchs, who have the possessions and lives of their subjects wholly in their power, to be disposed of at their mere will. Proverbs 20:2. "A king's wrath is like the roar of a lion; he who angers him forfeits his life." The subject that very much enrages a powerful

prince, is liable to suffer the most extreme torments that human art can invent, or human power can inflict.

But the greatest earthly potentates in their greatest majesty and strength—and when clothed in their greatest terrors—are but feeble, despicable worms of the dust—in comparison of the great and almighty Creator and King of heaven and earth! It is but little that they can do, when most enraged—and when they have exerted the utmost of their fury. All the kings of the earth, before God, are as grasshoppers; they are nothing—and less than nothing. Both their love and their hatred is to be despised. The wrath of the great King of kings, is as much more dreadful than theirs, as his majesty is greater. Luke 12:4-5, "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear Him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear Him!"

2. Consider—that is the fierceness of God's wrath, that you are exposed to! We often read of the fury of God; as in Isaiah 59:18, "According to what they have done, so will he repay fury to his enemies and retribution to his foes!" So in Isaiah 66:15, "For behold, the Lord will come with fire—and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury—and his rebuke with flames of fire." And in many other places.

So, in Revelation 19:15, we read of "the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God!" The words are exceeding dreadful! If it had only been said, "the wrath of God," the words would have implied that which is infinitely dreadful—but it is "the *fierceness* and wrath of God." The *fury* of God! the *fierceness* of Jehovah! Oh, how dreadful that must be! Who can utter or conceive what such expressions carry in them! But it is also "the fierceness and wrath of *Almighty* God." As though there would be a very great manifestation of his almighty power in what the fierceness of his wrath should inflict, as though omnipotence should be as it were, *enraged*—and exerted, as men are accustomed to exert their strength in the fierceness of their wrath.

Oh! then, what will be the consequence! What will become of the poor worms who shall suffer it! Whose hands can be strong? And whose heart can endure? To what a dreadful, inexpressible, inconceivable depth of misery—must the poor creature be sunk—who shall be the subject of this fierceness and wrath of Almighty God!

Consider this, you who are here present, who yet remain in an unregenerate state. That Almighty God will execute the fierceness of his anger—implies that he will inflict *wrath without any pity*. When God beholds the unspeakable extremity of your case—and sees your torment to be so vastly disproportioned to your strength—and sees how your poor soul is crushed—and sinks down, as it were, into an infinite gloom; he will have no compassion upon you, he will not forbear the executions of his wrath, or in the least lighten his hand! There shall be no easing or mercy—nor will God at all restrain his wrath! He will have no regard to your welfare. His only concern is that you shall not suffer beyond what *strict justice* requires. Nothing shall be withheld, because it is so hard for you to bear! Ezekiel 8:18, "Therefore, I will deal with them in fury. I will neither pity nor spare them. And though they scream for mercy, I will not listen!"

Now God stands ready to pity you; this is a *day of mercy*; you may cry now with some encouragement of obtaining mercy. But when once the *day of mercy* is past, your most lamentable and dolorous cries and shrieks will be in vain! You will be wholly lost and thrown away by God, who will have no regard to your welfare. God will have no other use to put you to—but to suffer misery! You shall be continued in being—for no other end—for you will be a *vessel of wrath* fitted to destruction! And there will be no other use of this vessel—but to be filled full of wrath! God will be so far from *pitying* you when you cry to him! "I will laugh when you are in trouble! I will mock you when disaster overtakes you—when calamity overcomes you like a storm, when you are engulfed by trouble, and when anguish and distress overwhelm you!" Proverbs 1:25, 26.

How awful are those words, Isaiah 63:3, which are the words of the great God. "In my anger I have trampled my enemies as if they were grapes. In my fury I have trampled my foes. It is their blood that has stained my clothes!" It is perhaps impossible to conceive of words which carry in them greater manifestations of these three things, namely, *contempt*—and *hatred*—and *fierceness of indignation*. If you cry to God to pity you—he will be so far from pitying you in your doleful case, or showing you the least regard or favor—that instead of that—he will only tread you under foot! And though he will know that you cannot bear the *weight of omnipotence* treading upon you, yet he will not regard that—but he will crush you under his feet without mercy! He will crush out your blood—and make it fly—and it shall be sprinkled on his garments, so as to stain all his clothes! He will not only *hate* you—but he will have you in the *utmost contempt*! No place

shall be thought fit for you—but under his feet to be trodden down as the mire of the streets!

3. Consider—that the misery you are exposed to, is that which God will inflict to that end—that he might show what His almighty wrath is. God has had it on his heart to show to angels and men, both how excellent his **love** is—and also how dreadful his **wrath** is. Sometimes earthly kings have a mind to show how terrible their wrath is, by the extreme punishments they would execute on those who provoke them. Nebuchadnezzar, that mighty and haughty monarch of the Chaldean empire, was willing to show his wrath when enraged with the three Hebrew champions; and accordingly gave orders that the burning fiery furnace should be heated seven times hotter than it was before; doubtless, it was raised to the utmost degree of fierceness that human art could raise it.

But the great God is also willing to show his wrath—and magnify his solemn majesty and mighty power—in the *extreme sufferings* of his enemies. Romans 9:22, "What if God, desiring to display His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much patience objects of wrath—prepared for destruction?" And seeing that this is his design, and what he has determined—even to show how dreadful is his unrestrained wrath, and his fury and fierceness—it will be accomplished and brought to pass.

When the great and angry God has risen up and executed his dreadful vengeance on the poor sinner—and the wretch is actually suffering the infinite weight and power of his indignation—then will God call upon the whole universe to behold that solemn majesty and mighty power that is to be seen in it! Isaiah 33:12-14, "The people will be burned up completely, like thorns cut down and tossed in a fire. Listen to what I have done, you nations far away! And you that are near, acknowledge my might! The sinners in Jerusalem shake with fear. "Which one of us," they cry, "can live here in the presence of this all-consuming fire?" Isaiah 33:12-14.

Thus it will be with you who are in an unconverted state, if you continue in it! The infinite might, and majesty, and dreadfulness of the omnipotent God—shall be magnified upon you, in the indescribable strength of your torments. You shall be tormented in the presence of the holy angels—and in the presence of the Lamb! And when you shall be in this state of suffering—the glorious inhabitants of heaven shall go forth and look on the dreadful spectacle—that they may see what the wrath and fierceness of the Almighty God is! And when they have seen

it, they will fall down and adore that great power and majesty. Isaiah 66:24, "They will see the dead bodies of those who have rebelled against Me. For the *worms* that devour them will never die, and the *fire* that burns them will never go out! All who pass by will view them with utter horror!"

4. Consider—that it is EVERLASTING wrath! It would be dreadful to suffer this fierceness and wrath of Almighty God for one moment—but you must suffer it to all eternity! There will be no end to this intensified horrible misery. When you look *forward*—you shall see a long forever, a boundless duration before you, which will swallow up your thoughts—and amaze your soul; and you will absolutely despair of ever having any deliverance, any end, any mitigation, any rest at all! You will know certainly—that you must wear out long *ages*, millions of millions of *ages*—in wrestling and conflicting with this almighty merciless vengeance! And then, when you have done so—when so many *ages* have actually been spent by you in this manner—you will know that all that—is but *one moment*—compared to what remains! So that your punishment will indeed—be *infinite*!

Oh, who can express what the state of such a soul, in such circumstances is! All that we can possibly say about it, gives but a very feeble, faint representation of it! It is inexpressible and inconceivable! For "*who knows the power of God's anger?*"

How dreadful is the state of those who are daily and hourly in the danger of this great wrath and infinite misery! But this is the dismal case of every soul in this congregation, who has not been born again—however moral and strict, sober and religious, they may otherwise be. Oh that you would consider it, whether you are young or old!

There is reason to think, that there are many in this congregation now hearing this discourse, that will actually be the subjects of this very misery to all eternity! We do not know who they are, or in what seats they sit, or what thoughts they now have. It may be, they are now at ease—and hear all these things without much disturbance—and are now flattering themselves that they are not the lost people, promising themselves that they shall escape.

If we knew that there was *one person*—and but one, in the whole congregation, that was to be the subject of this misery, what an awful thing would it be to think of! If we knew who it was, what an awful sight would it be to see such a person! How might all the rest of the congregation lift up a lamentable and bitter cry over him! But, alas!

instead of *one*—how *many* is it likely will remember this discourse in hell! And it would be a wonder, if some who are now present should not be in hell in a very short time—even before this year is out! And it would be no wonder if some people, who now sit here, in some seats of this meeting-house, in health, quiet and security—should be in hell before tomorrow morning.

Those of you who finally continue in a unsaved condition, who shall keep out of hell the longest—will be there in a *little* time! your damnation does not slumber; it will come swiftly—and, in all probability, very *suddenly* upon many of you! You have reason to wonder that you are not *already* in hell. It is doubtless the case of some whom you have seen and known, who never deserved hell more than you—and that heretofore appeared as likely to have been now alive as you. Their case is past all hope; they are crying in extreme misery and total despair; but here *you* are—in the land of the living and in the house of God—and have an opportunity to obtain salvation. What would not those *poor damned hopeless souls* give—for one day's opportunity such as you now enjoy!

And now you have an extraordinary opportunity, a day wherein Christ has thrown the door of mercy wide open—and stands calling and crying with a loud voice to poor sinners; a day wherein many are flocking to him—and pressing into the kingdom of God. Many are daily coming from the east, west, north and south; many who were very lately in the same miserable condition that *you* are in—are now in a happy state, with their hearts filled with love to him who has loved them—and washed them from their sins in his own blood—and rejoicing in hope of the glory of God. How awful is it to be left behind at such a day! To see so many others feasting—while you are pining and perishing! To see so many rejoicing and singing for joy of heart—while you have cause to mourn for sorrow of heart, and howl for vexation of spirit! How can you rest one moment in such a condition? Are not your souls as precious as the souls of others, who are flocking from day to day to Christ?

Are there not many here who have *lived long* in the world—and are not to this day born again? They have done nothing ever since they have lived—but treasure up wrath for the day of wrath! Oh, sirs, your case, in an especial manner, is extremely dangerous. Your guilt and hardness of heart is extremely great. Do you not see how generally people of your years are passed over and left—in the present remarkable and wonderful dispensation of God's mercy? You had need

to consider yourselves—and awake thoroughly out of sleep. You cannot bear the fierceness and wrath of the infinite God!

And you, *young* men and *young* women—will you neglect this precious season which you now enjoy, when so many others of your age are renouncing all youthful vanities—and flocking to Christ? You especially have now an extraordinary opportunity; but if you neglect it, it will soon be with you as with those people who spent all the precious days of youth in sin—and are now come to such a dreadful state of blindness and hardness.

And you *children*, who are unconverted—do not you know that you are going down to hell, to bear the dreadful wrath of that God, who is now angry with you every day and every night? Will you be content to be the children of the devil—when so many other children in the land are converted—and have become the holy and happy children of the King of kings?

And let everyone who is yet out of Christ—and *hanging over the pit of hell*—whether they are old men and women, or middle aged, or young people, or little children—now hearken to the loud calls of God's Word and providence. This day of such great *favor* to some—will doubtless be a day of as remarkable *vengeance* to others. Men's hearts harden—and their guilt increases apace at such a day as this, if they neglect their souls. Never was there so great danger of such people being given up to hardness of heart and blindness of mind. God seems now to be hastily gathering in his elect in all parts of the land; and probably the greater part of adult people who ever shall be saved, will be brought in shortly—and that it will be as it was on the great outpouring of the Spirit in the apostles' days—the elect will obtain salvation—and the rest will be blinded.

If this should be the case with you—you will eternally curse this day—and will curse the day that ever you was born—to see such a season of the outpouring of God's Spirit—and will wish that you had died and gone to hell before you had seen it! Now undoubtedly it is, as it was in the days of John the Baptist, the axe is in an extraordinary manner laid at the root of the trees—that every tree which does not bring forth good fruit, may be hewn down and cast into the fire!

Therefore, let everyone who is outside of Christ, now awake and flee from the wrath to come. The wrath of Almighty God is now undoubtedly hanging over a great part of this congregation. Let every

one fly out of Sodom! "Hasten and escape for your lives, look not behind you! Escape to the mountain, lest you be consumed!"