

# A MEMORIAL OF THE FIRE OF THE LORD :

IN

## A SERMON,

PREACHED SEPTEMBER 2ND, 1713, BEING THE DAY OF THE COMMEMORATION  
OF THE BURNING OF LONDON, IN 1666.

AT MR. REYNOLDS'S MEETING-HOUSE, NEAR THE MONUMENT.

NUMBERS xi. 3.

*And he called the name of the place Taberah, because the fire of the Lord burnt among them.*

WE have here an account of the prudent and pious care which Moses took, to preserve the memorial of a fire which happened in the camp of Israel, by giving a new name of suitable signification to the place where it happened; which being left upon record here, in the book of God, is a monument of the fire, further visible and more durable than this pillar of stone, the monument hard by, and will outlast even the pillar of salt; for wherever, in any age, the books of Moses are read, and they shall be read in every age to the end of time, there shall this be told for a memorial; that the fire of the Lord burnt among the Israelites, and in remembrance of it, Moses called the place *Taberah*.

And thus it suits the occasion of our meeting here to-day, in communion with many religious assemblies in this city, to put ourselves and one another in mind of that *fire of the Lord*, which, in the memory of many of you, burnt among you to that degree, as to make of this city a heap, this flourishing city a ruin; a judgment which it was then thought fit, by the annual observation of this day, to transmit the remembrance of to posterity.

Now observe in the text,

1. What the judgment of God upon the camp of Israel was. *The fire of the Lord burnt among them.* It is called *the fire of the Lord*, because it fell from heaven, it came immediately from the hand of God: as that fire did, which sometimes consumed the sa-

crifices, in token of God's acceptance of them, when justly it might have consumed the sinners, and taken vengeance on them. Here it did consume the sinners, to signify, that their iniquity was such, as should not be purged with sacrifice or offering for ever;<sup>a</sup> as another time it consumed the sacrificers, when they offered strange fires.<sup>b</sup>

Lightning is the *fire of the Lord*, as thunder is the *voice of the Lord*. With that fire Job's sheep, and the servants that attended them, were burnt up.<sup>c</sup> It is heaven's fire-arms, with which sometimes dreadful execution has been done. "Fire and water," we say, "are good servants, but bad masters:" the old world was mastered and destroyed by water, and this is reserved unto fire.<sup>d</sup> God has treasures of both in his magazines, which he has laid up against the *time of trouble, the day of battle and war.*<sup>e</sup>

This fire of the Lord burnt among them, among that people whom God peculiarly favoured, when by sin they displeased him, and his anger was kindled against them.<sup>f</sup> Though the pillar of cloud and fire was over them to protect them, while they kept themselves in the love of God, that should be no security to them, when they rebelled against him. It burnt the bodies of many of them to death, they were killed with lightning; or, perhaps, it burnt their tents and goods; *It consumed*, (so the original is, v. 1.) *in the uttermost parts of the camp*, not saying whether persons or dwellings. Our translation determines it to persons, *them that dwell there*; but the *quenching of the fire*, (v. 2.) seems rather to intimate that it was the *tents* that were burnt. It kindled in the *utmost parts of the camp*, where the inferior sort were, the mixt multitude, who were

<sup>a</sup> 1 Sam. xiii. 14.

<sup>b</sup> Lev. x. 1, 2.

<sup>c</sup> Job i. 16.

<sup>d</sup> 2 Pet. iii. 6, 7.

<sup>e</sup> Job xxxviii. 23.

<sup>f</sup> Numb. xi. 1.

generally the ringleaders in every mutiny; the judgment began where the sin began. Or, it intimates that God came upon them by degrees, seizing those first who were of lower rank, that others might take warning. Or, this fire began in the utmost parts of the camp, as if it would take all before it.

Now this, among other things, happened to them for example,<sup>g</sup> and was intended to be a warning to us, that we sin not after the similitude of their transgression. The people complained; that was it that provoked God to kindle this fire among them. Let those who are of a fretful, discontented spirit, who are always complaining of their lot, complaining of every event, quarrelling with God and his providence, diminishing every mercy, and doubling every cross, see in this instance, what an exceeding sinful sin this is, and how provoking to God. Those who are always complaining for trifles, must expect to have something given them to complain of. As on the one hand nothing is more acceptable to God, than our humble acceptance of all he says and does. (*Quis Deo placuit? Cui Deus placuerit—Who pleases God? The man whom God pleases*, Aug.) so on the other hand, nothing is more displeasing to God, than our being displeased at his disposals.

2. The memorial of this judgment, to transmit a traditional knowledge of it to posterity, Moses called that place, *Taberah*, *Incendium*, *Combustio—a Burning*. The Seventy translate the Hebrew name *Ενπνευματος*. Moses knew too well how apt the people were, soon to forget the works of God, both his mercies and his judgments, and therefore was very industrious to fix in their minds the remembrance of them; and contrived means to revive the remembrance of them, when it should begin to dwindle and die. This fire of the Lord, though it burned but in the uttermost part of the camp, and was soon quenched, yet must not be forgotten; he therefore calls the place *Taberah*—Here the burning was. And if posterity ask, What burning? It will be answered, the burning of a part of the camp of the Israelites, with the fire of the Lord, for their discontent and murmuring. And we find Moses himself, near forty years after, putting the next generation in mind of this very thing, purely by the mention of this name, as he did of other the like sins and judgments, by the names he had given to other places for the same purpose: *And at Taberah, and at Massah, and at Kibroth-Hattaavah, ye provoked the Lord to wrath.*<sup>h</sup>

But by recording those things in his sacred writings, he has more effectually preserved the memorial of them, and transmitted it even to us, whose lot is cast in the ends of the earth, and upon whom the ends of the world are come.<sup>i</sup> And this is one of those passages of story, which the Psalmist would

have the fathers to make known to their children, that they may tell them to theirs; That God heard their murmurings and was wroth, *so a fire was kindled against Jacob.*<sup>k</sup>

So that hence we may gather this lesson:

*That a lasting memorial ought to be kept of the fire of the Lord, when it has at any time burned among a people.*

As the mercies of God ought to have their memorials, and used to have in the church of God *names* of remembrance, *stones* of remembrance, *songs* of remembrance, *days* of remembrance, of which it were easy to give numerous instances in Scripture; so the judgments of God too should be remembered, for they are improvable as well as his mercies, improvable not only by the sufferers themselves, and by their neighbours at the same time, but by their successors afterwards, as Shiloh's ruins were Jerusalem's instructions,<sup>l</sup> many ages afterwards. Care must therefore be taken, not only to preserve the remembrance of them in our own bosoms, but to transmit it to the generations to come, for their benefit.

For it is not enough to remember these works of God, but we must consider them,<sup>m</sup> must wisely consider<sup>n</sup> them, so as to understand them, and make a good use of our remembrance of them. As we must remember God's commandments to do them,<sup>o</sup> else we remember them to no purpose; so we must remember God's providences, not merely as matter of discourse among ourselves, or information to our children, but with suitable affections working in our spirits, and suitable impressions made upon them. *Lo, this, we have searched it, (says Eliphaz,) so it is, hear it, and know thou it for thy good.*<sup>p</sup>

(1.) We must often call to mind the personal and private rebukes of Providence, which we ourselves and our families have been under. The history of a man's own life is as useful a piece of history as any he can study; and here a man must be his own historian, and his own reader; and therefore under both characters it is to be hoped he will be careful, and faithful to himself. God's counsel to Israel is good counsel to every Israelite, *Thou shalt remember all the way in which the Lord thy God has led thee in this wilderness, how he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and chastened thee, as a man chasteneth his son.*<sup>q</sup>

We should remember what God has spoken to us, not only by his word, giving earnest heed, lest at any time we let it slip,<sup>r</sup> but by his rod, for that also has a voice, an articulate, intelligible voice, and is sent to us on an errand, and waits for an answer; and the voice of both we should now both hear for the time to come, and hear from the time past; and the repeating of the lessons we have been taught by

<sup>g</sup> 1 Cor. x. 6.

<sup>h</sup> Deut. ix. 22.

<sup>i</sup> 1 Cor. x. 11.

<sup>k</sup> Ps. lxxviii. 6, 21.

<sup>l</sup> Jer. vii. 12.

<sup>m</sup> Eccl. vii. 13.

<sup>n</sup> Ps. lxxiv. 9.

<sup>o</sup> Ps. ciii. 18.

<sup>p</sup> Job v. 6.

<sup>q</sup> Deut. viii. 2, 3, 5.

<sup>r</sup> Heb. ii. 1.

both, is confessedly necessary to our learning of them perfectly.

Apt enough we are to complain of our former afflictions, too apt to remember them, with peevish reflections upon the divine Providence, and the instruments of it, and vain boasting of what hardships we have gone through. But we should remember them, to renew our repentance for the sins that procured them, our thankfulness for the mercy that supported us under them, our patient submissions to the will of God in them, our improvements in knowledge and grace by them, and the good resolutions of better obedience we made under them; it is for this end that we are to preserve memorials of our troubles: as the lamenting church remembered the affliction and the misery, the wormwood and the gall, *My soul (says she) hath them still in remembrance, and is humbled within me.*<sup>1</sup> And as David penned many of his psalms, to keep in remembrance, and to bring to remembrance, the distresses he was in, that at the same time he might recollect, for his present benefit, the frame of his spirit, and the workings of his heart under them.

You have all found your days upon earth to be full of trouble, though not all alike so; review the troubles of your life, that what was ill done by you in the day of your affliction, may be undone by repentance; and what was well done, may be done again, may be better done, and kept always in the imagination of the thought of your heart. Let not your sicknesses and pains be forgotten; Hezekiah took care that his should not, but should be kept in remembrance by his writing, when he had been sick and was recovered.<sup>2</sup> Let not your losses in your estate, your crosses and disappointments in your affairs, be forgotten: Let not the death of your dear relations, and the breaches thereby made upon your comforts, be forgotten. Naomi took care that her complicated griefs of both those kinds should not be, when she changed her own name, *Call me not Naomi, call me Mara.*<sup>3</sup> David took care that his should not, when he penned the 39th Psalm (it should seem) upon occasion of the death of some friend who was dear to him, and left upon record his prayer under the affliction, *Lord, make me to know my end, and his promise, I will take heed to my ways.*<sup>4</sup>

By remembering your afflictions in this good manner, and for these good purposes, you may not only regain the benefit you formerly got by them, but may gain more; as having now your thoughts more cool and sedate, and under command, than they were in the hurry of the affliction. The chastening for the present is grievous, and perhaps we are under it, as Job was, *full of confusion*; but it is afterwards, when it comes to be reflected upon and reviewed, that it

yields the *peaceable fruit of righteousness*,<sup>5</sup> fruit that remains.

By a due remembrance of former convictions, if we received them aright, like the tender and tractable child, we shall be kept from returning to folly, and so prevent another correction; and, like the burnt child, dread the fire.

(2.) We must often call to mind public judgments, judgments upon the communities we are members of; upon the land and nation, God's controversies with them; upon the city, his voice that has cried to it; for as in the peace thereof we have peace, so in the trouble thereof we have trouble, and must feel it. Those are unworthy the honour of Zion's sons, who think not themselves concerned in Zion's sorrows, her past as well as present sorrows.

Though God by subsequent providences in favour of a returning people, may have superseded *the fast of the fourth month, the fast of the fifth, the fast of the seventh, the fast of the tenth*, so as to turn them into joy and gladness, and cheerful feasts;<sup>6</sup> and by the abundance of our comforts, may make us to forget our miseries, and to remember them as waters that pass away;<sup>7</sup> to forget all our toil,<sup>8</sup> as Joseph did; yet we must still remember to make a pious improvement of it; must still be sowing, sowing in the spirit, though the tears in which we sowed be in some measure wiped away: and to assist you herein, as God enables me, is my desire and endeavour at this time, that our coming together may not be in vain.

God has many ways contended with us of this nation, with you of this city; as we have been, like Israel of old, favoured with many privileges and advantages above our neighbours, both for life and godliness, whence it might justly, and with good reason, have been inferred, as it was concerning them, *Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people;*<sup>9</sup> so, being found like them, notwithstanding this, *a foolish people and unwise*, nay, *a rebellious and gainsaying people*, we have like them fallen under severe judgments: for the more rich a people's privileges are, the more provoking their sins are, and consequently the heavier are their punishments; for even in this life, especially in dealing with communities, (which as such can be dealt with in this life only,) God sometimes observes a proportion between the sins and the plagues.

Some have observed, that God's judgments upon us in this last age, have been the sorest in their kind of any other; like that concerning which the prophet appeals to the old men, and to all the inhabitants of the land, whether there had ever been the like in their days, or in the days of their fathers.<sup>10</sup> Never was there such a plague in this nation, as that

<sup>1</sup> Lam. iii. 19. 20.

<sup>2</sup> Isa. xxxviii. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Ruth i. 20.

<sup>4</sup> Ps. xxxix. 4.

<sup>5</sup> Heb. xii. 11.

<sup>6</sup> Zech. viii. 19.

<sup>7</sup> Job xi. 18.

<sup>8</sup> Gen. xli. 51.

<sup>9</sup> Deut. iv. 6.

<sup>10</sup> Joel i. 2.

in London in 1665. never such a fire as that the year after, never such a dreadful storm as that about ten years ago, as if God were heating the furnace *seven times hotter*; for he will bring greater judgments on those who are not wrought upon by lesser; and when he judgeth he will overcome.

That which I am now to confine myself to, is the fire of the Lord which was kindled in this city, this day 47 years, which in four days' time laid in ashes the richest, the oldest, and the most considerable part of this city, I mean within the walls; and I observe upon the calculation then made, that there was almost as much consumed without the walls, as was left standing within. For thus the survey stood; "373 acres burnt within the walls, and 75 left standing; but there were 63 acres burnt without the walls." You had 89 parish churches burnt, besides chapels; you had your Exchange, your Guildhall, and the halls of your companies, laid in ashes; and above thirteen thousand dwellings levelled with the ground.

Some of you can remember it, perhaps by a good token, a sad token, you were burnt out of your houses it may be, and forced to lodge in the fields. It may be some of you were great losers by it, when you were young, and setting out in the world, and it was a great while before you recovered it; it broke the measures you had laid, ruffled your affairs, and put you upon new counsels; or perhaps brought you so much to a loss, that you were at your wits' ends, and at that time knew not what to do; but have since found to your comfort, that God knew what to do for you, and has graciously helped you.

Or though you were not then so far grown up, or so far engaged in the world, as to be sufferers by it, yet you were eye-witnesses of it. You saw it rage, you saw what desolations it made; and now you are old, will say it was the most dreadful sight you ever saw. The piteous case of so many ruined families, and their doleful lamentations, could not but be yet more affecting, yet more afflicting; and made you ready to cry with the prophet in a like case, *my bowels, my bowels, I am pained at my very heart, because thou hast heard, O my soul, the alarm of fire! Fire! no less terrible than the alarm of war; Destruction upon destruction is cried.*<sup>c</sup> The destruction of the fire, upon that of the pestilence the year before. Many a melancholy story perhaps some of you have told, upon the occurrences of that time, and the impressions they made upon you.—*Quaque ipse miserrima vidi—Disastrous things have I seen.*

But there is another thing which you must give me leave to inquire, What you remember of it? The faithful ministers of Christ at that time, no doubt, laid out themselves in their preaching, to improve that providence, in dealing with you about

your souls. Something came from the press upon that occasion, by Mr. Vincent, Mr. Doolittle, and others; and much more we may well conclude by word of mouth. Now what do you remember of that? What account can you give of the sermons you heard upon that occasion, and of the good impressions they made upon you when you were young, and your hearts tender? Can you say, through grace, that your consciences were then convinced and awakened, and that when you were chastened, you were taught out of the law, and the gospel.<sup>d</sup> Happy the day, and happy you, if what you then lost by the rod of God, was made up, and more than made up to you, in what you gained by the word of God.

But the most of you were not then born, or were so young as to remember nothing of it; yet you have been told of it, perhaps you have read of it, and cannot be altogether ignorant of that event. Blessed be God, there is no occasion for such different sentiments and resentments between the old people and the young, as there were when the foundations of the second temple were laid, when the young people rejoiced to see a temple begun, but the aged wept, because it was so far inferior to the old one. No, if the young will join with you who are old, in bewailing the fall of the former city, you will join with them in celebrating the beauty of the latter;<sup>e</sup> and let both join in endeavouring to improve the remembrance of that fire of the Lord.

Nine lessons I shall recommend to you, to be learned from that fire which we are this day observing the memorial of.

I. See how terrible God is in his judgments, and fear before him. It was the fire of the Lord that burnt among you; whatever hand of man might be in it, it is certain this evil in the city was the Lord's doing; it was a consumption determined by the Lord of hosts,<sup>f</sup> and the breath of the Almighty that kindled the fire, and directed all the motions of it. It was the Light of Israel, who is and will be a rejoicing Light to his people, that was then as a fire, a *consuming fire*;<sup>g</sup> for so our God is and will be, to those who rebel against him; and the Holy One of Israel, who was then as a flame, that devoured so many churches and houses, as if they had been briars and thorns, in one day.

See how terrible God's majesty is; when he came down upon an errand of mercy, to deliver Israel out of Egypt, he appeared in a flame of fire in the bush;<sup>h</sup> and at Mount Sinai, the sight of the glory of the God of Israel, was like devouring fire in the eyes of the children of Israel;<sup>i</sup> but much more terrible is his justice to them that provoke him. If the glory of his greatness be like fire, to a people who are entering into covenant with him, much more will the

<sup>c</sup> Jer. iv. 19, 20. <sup>d</sup> Ps. xciv. 12. <sup>e</sup> Ezra iii. 11. <sup>f</sup> Isa. xxviii. 22.

<sup>g</sup> Isa. x. 16, 17.

<sup>h</sup> Exod. iii. 2.

<sup>i</sup> Exod. xxiv. 17.

terror of his wrath be so, to a people who have broken covenant with him.

Come, behold what desolations God has made, and say with Moses the man of God, upon the review of the judgments of God inflicted on Israel in the wilderness, and this at *Taberah*, among the rest, *Who knows the power of thine anger?*<sup>k</sup> Say as the men of Bethshemesh said, when there was such a slaughter made among them who looked into the ark, *Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God?*<sup>l</sup> Say as the sinners in Sion are forced at length to say, and the hypocrites when fearfulness surpriseth them, *Who among us shall dwell with the devouring flames,*<sup>m</sup> (by which some understand God himself,) *with the everlasting burning?* Say as David, *My flesh trembleth for fear of thee, and I am afraid of thy judgments:*<sup>n</sup> and conclude with the apostle, *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*<sup>o</sup>

God has all creatures at his command, and all the powers they have are derived from him, and by them he designs to keep the world in awe. The power which the fire has to consume and destroy is from him; when he pleases he can countermand it, as in the case of the three children; and when he pleases he can commission it, and enforce its operations, and direct its motions. *The voice of the Lord divides the flames of fire,*<sup>p</sup> sends one flame one way, and another flame another way, and each on its respective errand.

Let the thoughts of the fire of London fill us with a holy awe of God, and a filial fear of his wrath; that fire of the Lord, which when it is kindled but a little, much more when it is kindled to such a degree, we shall see cause to say, *Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.*<sup>q</sup> *Fear ye not me, saith the Lord,*<sup>r</sup> that with a touch, with a frown, with a look, can make the *mountains smoke?* that with one spark of fire can lay *heaps upon heaps?* Let the earth tremble at his presence, much more at his absence, and his departure in anger.

See what fools they are, who make this God their enemy by sin, and engage his power against them, and yet when they have done so, bid defiance to his justice, challenge him to do his worst, saying, *Let him make speed, and hasten his work, that we may see it.*<sup>s</sup> Is this a God to be jested with? *Be not deceived, he is not mocked.* Presumptuous sinners, who play with this fire, who *stretch out their hands against God, and strengthen themselves against the Almighty, who run upon him, even upon his neck, upon the thick bosses of his buckler,*<sup>t</sup> will find to their cost, that none ever hardened his heart against God and prospered. God has access with his flames to men's hearts, as well as to their houses, can kindle a fire in their bones, a fire in their consciences, that shall secretly waste

and exhaust their spirits, a fire not blown, not seen, that shall consume them, a fire that shall burn to the lowest hell, and never be quenched.

Give all diligence, therefore, to make your peace with this terrible God: it may be done, it shall be done, if it be not your own fault. *Fury is not in him,* and yet it is to no purpose to think of contending with him; to make opposition, is but like putting briers and thorns before a consuming fire, which, instead of stopping its progress, does but make it burn the more furiously. Let him therefore take hold on his strength, that he may make peace, *and he shall make peace.*<sup>u</sup>

And having made your peace with God, keep yourselves always in his love, and take heed of turning yourselves out of it; and while you do so, solace yourselves in his love, and believe that this God of power will be your protector, and a wall of fire round about you.

II. See what a mischievous thing sin is, which provokes God thus to be our enemy, and to fight against us. If it was God's justice that burnt London, it was man's injustice that brought fuel to the fire; for a fruitful land is never turned into barrenness, nor a flourishing city into ruins, but it is for the iniquity of them that dwell therein.<sup>v</sup> God never contends with a people, but it is sin, it is sin that is the cause of the controversy. National sins bring national judgments. The sins of a city bring misery upon it; *Jerusalem hath grievously sinned, therefore she is removed.*<sup>w</sup> When the men of Sodom were wicked, and sinners before the Lord exceedingly, it was not long ere he rained hell from heaven upon them; and when all flesh had corrupted their way, presently they were cut down out of time, and their foundation overthrown with a flood. It was the wickedness of the city, that made it combustible matter for the fire of God's wrath to fasten upon, *Iliacos intra muros peccatur et extra—Sin reigned within and without the walls.* When sin abounds both within the walls and without, no wonder if the fire prevails in both.

London was then told by the watchmen upon her walls, what the sins were that provoked God to lay it waste; they had then a loud call to show this Jerusalem her abominations, which might be read in her desolations. It was then justly observed, that for some time before the fire, the power of vice and profaneness was grown more exorbitant than ever, more daring, more threatening, that it insulted and triumphed over the restraints and checks which for some years before it had lain under, and now set them at defiance. It was observed, remember, not long since, by a venerable body, "That at that time, to avoid hypocrisy, men ran into open impiety:" and I have heard it complained of, by those who lived at

<sup>k</sup> Psal. xc. 11.    <sup>l</sup> 1 Sam. vi. 20.    <sup>m</sup> Isa. xxxiii. 14.  
<sup>n</sup> Psal. cxix. 129.    <sup>o</sup> Heb. x. 31.    <sup>p</sup> Psal. xxix. 7.    <sup>q</sup> Psal. ii. 12.

<sup>r</sup> Jer. v. 22.    <sup>s</sup> Isa. v. 19.    <sup>t</sup> Job xv. 25, 26.  
<sup>u</sup> Isa. xxvii. 4, 5.    <sup>v</sup> Psal. cvii. 34.    <sup>w</sup> Lam. i. 8.

that time, "that debauchery was made by many a test of loyalty; and a man was suspected to be disaffected to his prince, if he did not profane the name of his God." Was this the character of the times immediately preceding that desolation? And could any other be expected, but that God should visit for these things, and that his soul should be avenged on such a city, such a nation, as this?<sup>a</sup>

Sabbath-breaking is a sin for which God has particularly threatened to contend by fire: *If ye will not hearken to me, to hallow the sabbath day, I will kindle a fire in the gates of Jerusalem.* How sabbaths had been profaned in those times of licentiousness, is easy to conjecture; and if we may make remarks upon the circumstances of a judgment, in order to the improving of it, it must be taken notice of, that the fire began between one and two of the clock on a Lord's-day morning, as if God would thereby intimate, that it was kindled to avenge the quarrel of his sabbath.

How should this increase our hatred of sin, that evil and bitter thing, by which we have procured such things as these to ourselves, which has been the destruction of souls, bodies, families, cities, churches, nations, worlds; which is not only the reproach, but the ruin, of any people. What a dread should we conceive of the fatal consequences of national sins, which would fix us among those holy mourners, who sigh and cry for the abominations that are committed amongst us.<sup>b</sup> Methinks this should put life into the despised and almost deserted cause, of the reformation of manners among us, that in the prosecution of it, we not only consult the glory of God, the honour of our holy religion, and the good of precious souls, but the peace, safety, and prosperity of the communities we are members of. The surest way to prevent another fire, is, to discountenance and suppress that immorality and profaneness, for which the fire of the Lord has burnt among you.

Not that this was the only ground of God's controversy with the city. Even the professors of religion, who run not with others to an excess of riot, contributed to the guilt which kindled those flames, by their lukewarmness and indifference in religion, their pride, and vanity, and worldliness, and neglect of family worship, as they were often then told by their faithful reprovers. Under such public calamities, our business is not to judge and censure others, but each of us to take blame and shame to ourselves, and seriously to ask, *What have I done?*

And yet we must be very regardless of the work of the Lord, and the operation of his hand, if we do not observe, that London's plague and fire came but three or four years after the casting out and silencing of a great number of able, faithful ministers of Christ there, and all the nation over, because they

would not sin against their consciences. Jerusalem was burnt the first time, for misusing the messengers of the Lord;<sup>c</sup> and the second time, for laying hands on the disciples of Christ, and persecuting them;<sup>d</sup> for Christ resented what was done against them, as done against himself.

At least we must be allowed to observe, that the fire happened not six months after the commencing of the *Five-mile Act*, by which they who, but a little before, were turned out of their churches, were barbarously turned out of their houses, and not suffered to live within five miles of any corporation, or of the places where they had been ministers. It was the observation of a wise and good man at that time, "that as it was in mercy to many of the ministers, that they were removed out of the city, before that desolating judgment came; so it spoke aloud to the government, *Let my people go, that they may serve me; and if ye will not, behold, thus and thus will I do unto you.*" This he thought was the Lord's voice, then crying in the city.

III. See what an uncertain thing this world is, and all our possessions and employments in it. If men would but believe the preacher's text and doctrine, which is delivered to us, not only as the word of the Eternal God, which therefore we may venture to believe, nay, are bound to believe, but, in compassion to our infirmity, is confirmed to us by the observation and experience of the wisest of men, *All is vanity—vanity of vanities, and vexation of spirit,* and would live up to their belief of it, it would save them a great deal of trouble; for how many sore crosses and afflictions does the worldliness of our hearts need and call for, to give us a sensible demonstration, that we may come under the needful conviction of the vanity of this world, and its insufficiency to make us happy.

How plainly may we read this, by the light of London's flames! How many well-furnished houses and shops were then consumed in a little time! It is part of the lamentation of the ruin of Babylon, that *in one hour so great riches is come to nought.*<sup>e</sup> How many who were worth thousands over-night, were so impoverished by the fire, that they were worth nothing, or next to nothing, by the next morning! Like Job, whom the rising sun saw the richest of all the men of the east, and the setting sun left poor to a proverb. Our Saviour speaks of the danger we are in, of losing our treasures upon earth, by the moth that corrupts, or thieves that break through and steal;<sup>f</sup> but this loss of it by fire, is worse than either. What the moth has been in, may yet be good for something, and what the thief has stolen, may perhaps be recovered; but what the fire has consumed, is quite lost, and past retrieve.

How sudden and surprising was this desolation,

<sup>a</sup> Jer. v. 9.    <sup>γ</sup> Jer. xvii. 27.    <sup>c</sup> Ezek. ix. 4.    <sup>d</sup> Jer. xxxvi. 16.

<sup>b</sup> Luke xxi. 12.

<sup>e</sup> Rev. xviii. 17.

<sup>f</sup> Matt. vi. 19.

how little thought of and expected by the sufferers, who hoped they had goods laid up for many years, and houses that should endure to many generations, when the fire comes with a warrant to seize them this night, and to strip them of all; and thereby to teach you and me not to boast ourselves of to-morrow, since we know not what a day, what a night, what an hour, may bring forth.\* And in how little time was the desolation accomplished! Three or four days reduced to ashes buildings that had been long in rearing, and treasures that had been long in gathering.

This is a good reason why the rich man should not glory in his riches, for as the flower of the grass, which is scorched by the sun, they pass away<sup>†</sup> and are gone, and their place knows them no more; a good reason why we should not be secure in the enjoyment of our worldly possessions, nor flatter ourselves with the thought, that to-morrow must needs be as this day, and much more abundant; that we shall die in our nest, and that our mountain stands so strong, that it cannot be moved, when we know not what a great change a very little time may produce.

It is a good reason why we should not make these perishing things our portion, nor lay up our treasure in them; and why we should sit loose to them, and take our affections off from them: for shall we set our eyes and hearts upon these things that are not, that make themselves wings and flee away;‡ that are liable to a thousand destructive casualties, and are therefore unworthy of our esteem and regard, especially, when they stand in competition with the true and everlasting riches? It is therefore our wisdom to be dead to these things, because if we be, we shall the better bear the disappointment, if they should be thus taken from us, and we shall easily say, it was what we looked for. Your houses, and shops, and goods are combustible things: call them so, and put a value upon them accordingly, as you do upon paper-buildings, and give all diligence to make that sure, which will be made sure. When Jerusalem's desolation was hastening on, the inhabitants had this needful admonition given them, *Arise ye, and depart, this is not your rest, for it is polluted.*<sup>§</sup> It is true of all things here below, they are polluted with sin, and are hastening towards their ruin, and therefore cannot be the repose of our souls. What then should we do, but arise and depart from them?

Neighbourhood, which is the pleasure of cities, where houses join so close, may prove of ill consequence, and serve but to spread and propagate the flames: of that therefore, no more than of other present comforts, let us not be over-fond.

IV. See how malicious the enemies of our peace and our holy religion are, and what need we have

to stand upon our guard against them. There is a day that will bring to light the hidden works of darkness, and bring into judgment every secret thing, and to that day must be referred the full discovery of the cause of the fire of London. There was as full a demonstration given as could be, by the master of the house where the fire began, that it could not possibly be by accident, which gave abundant cause to think that it was designedly set on fire by Romish incendiaries, for the weakening of the protestant interest, which they have all along been, and still are, aiming at the destruction of.

The parliament met soon after the fire, and presently, even that House of Commons appointed a committee to inquire into the causes of the late fire; before whom abundance of informations were given in and proved, which were afterwards printed; but the parliament was prorogued before any judgment was given upon them. But it seems very evident, upon the concurring testimonies then given in, to which I refer you, that it was the execution of a popish design. One Robert Hubert, a French papist, being taken up upon suspicion, confessed that he was one of those who fired the baker's house, that was first set on fire, with a fire-ball; and he was executed for it. Many others were taken throwing fire-balls, but by some means or other made their escape, as appears by the report of that committee.

I would not be found insinuating any causeless, groundless jealousies, nor incensing men with enmities against the persons of any; our religion teaches us to forgive our enemies, and to pray to God to forgive them; we may not call for fire from heaven upon those who are set on fire of hell against us.<sup>¶</sup>

But if this be true, as we have reason to think it is, surely it cannot but confirm and increase our detestation of popery, and fill us with a holy, heavenly zeal against that strong delusion. Can that be the religion of the meek and humble Jesus, which needs, and prescribes, and uses such methods for its own propagation, as not only Christianity abhors, but even humanity startles at, and is shocked by? Our Lord Jesus would not force his way, no not to Jerusalem, by destroying a poor village, and that of Samaritans too, that opposed him, and gave this reason for it, that the Son of man *came not to destroy men's lives* and dwellings, but to *save them*?<sup>‡</sup> How far then are they from, nay, how contrary to, the spirit of Christ and his holy religion, who make no difficulty of destroying a great city, and that of Christians too, for the compassing of their design to reduce a people under the heavy yoke of their tyranny, that had happily escaped from under it. But no wonder they stumble not at heaps of ruins, when they startle not at seas of blood; but to gain their point, can wade through them without horror.

\* Prov. xxvii. 1.

† James i. 10.

‡ Prov. xxiii. 5.

§ Mic. ii. 10.

¶ James iii. 6.

‡ Luke ix. 56.

How many treasons, murders, and massacres, have not only been justified but consecrated, when they have been for the advancement of the pretended catholic cause! Instruments of cruelty are in their habitation, as in that of Simeon and Levi: *O my soul, come not thou into their secret.*<sup>1</sup>

And as it should increase our hatred of the Romish religion, so it should increase our dread of the Romish designs against us, and all that is dear to us. The extirpating of that which they call the Northern Heresy, is what they have been aiming at ever since the reformation; and we have no reason to think they have dropped the design, when not many years ago, it was carried so far, that it was next door to an accomplishment, and no less than a miracle of mercy saved our darling Isaac from being sacrificed to popish tyranny, when it lay bound upon the altar. Or, have we any reason to think that popery has altered its character? I wish we had: but the methods lately taken to root out the protestant religion in France, besides the persecution we hear of in Poland, at this time, and other instances, are sufficient to convince us, that popery is the same bloody, barbarous, inhuman thing, that ever it was, and therefore its advances towards us are to be as much dreaded as ever; that we may be quickened in our prayers to God, to fortify our bulwarks against that complication of sins and judgments, and to lift up a standard against that enemy, even when he comes in like a flood. Cry earnestly to God day and night, that he would turn all the counsels of popish Achitophels into foolishness; and I trust he will, as he has done many a time.

V. See how graciously God often remembers mercy in the midst of wrath, and in compassion takes up his controversy, when he might in justice proceed in it. You have a monument of the judgment, here where the fire began, but in every place where it stopt, the houses that escaped are so many monuments of sparing mercy. You can easily perceive, by the different materials and structure of the houses, just how far the fire proceeded: when you observe this, say, *It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed,*<sup>2</sup> that all was not consumed, that God did not make a full end, but that, when he overthrew some of you, as he overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, yet others of you were as brands plucked out of the burning.<sup>3</sup> The quenching of the fire at Taberah is here recorded with the kindling of it, that we might learn to sing of mercy and judgment, and sing unto God of both, for in both his hand is to be seen.

When God had made London as a fiery oven in the day of his wrath, and the flames went on like a mighty army, conquering and to conquer, threatening to leave neither root nor branch; then God repented himself concerning his servants, his soul was grieved for the misery of London, and he said, *How*

*shall I give thee up? How shall I deliver thee? How shall I make thee as Admah, and set thee as Zeboim? In every place whither the fire had spread, much about the same time a check was given to it, and God said to the raging fire, as he does to the raging sea, Hitherto shalt thou come and no further, here shall thy proud waves, thy proud flames, be staid.*

Let this be remembered with thankfulness to God, and to the praise of that mercy of his, which rejoiceth against judgment, and prevents its making a full end; and let us add to this, our own experience of the like seasonable interpositions of divine mercy for our relief. The earthly house of this tabernacle has perhaps been on fire with a fever, or some other wasting, consuming distemper, ready to reduce it to dust and ashes, yet God has staid the progress of it, has said unto us, Live, and the time was a time of love, not to be forgotten.

It ought to be taken notice of as an answer of prayer; we are told here, that when the fire of the Lord burnt in the camp of Israel, Moses, that great intercessor, and as such, a type of Christ, prayed unto the Lord, and then the fire was quenched. And no doubt when London was burning, there were a remnant of praying people standing in the gap, to turn away the wrath of God, who wept and made supplication, and in answer to their prayer, God spared a part of the city. The prophet Amos tells us that when, in his time, the Lord God called to contend by fire, he prayed, *O Lord God, cease I beseech thee,* and the Lord repented for this, *It shall not be, saith the Lord God.*<sup>4</sup>

Let this engage us to call upon God, and encourage us to trust in him in all our straits and difficulties, be they ever so great and threatening: he is a present help in time of need, and the necessity, as it engages his mercy, so it magnifies his power. If we can by faith depend upon him to save us, then when we think we perish, it shall be made to appear that even the winds and the seas obey him.

VI. See how wonderfully God can revive what seemed to be ruined. Now we are remembering the burning of this city, we must by no means overlook the rebuilding of it, and the raising up of another city, phoenix-like, out of the ashes of the old one. I am apt to think this seemed to them who lived then almost impracticable, and there were those who were ready to despair of it. How should they find money to rebuild their houses, and to contribute their share to the public buildings too, who had not only lost their goods in the fire, but lost in a manner their trades too, by which they and their families must subsist? and yet the Lord their God being with them, they built and prospered, and in two or three years, there scarce remained any marks or footsteps of the fire. You may easily imagine how great the destruction was, and yet you will hardly imagine it,

<sup>1</sup> Gen. xlix. 1, 2.

<sup>2</sup> Lam. iii. 22.

<sup>3</sup> Amos iv. 11.

<sup>4</sup> Numb. xl. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Amos vii. 4-6.



when you observe how magnificent the repair of it is; for surely *the glory of the latter city is far greater than the glory of the former*: I wish it were so upon the account that the glory of the latter temple so far exceeded that of the former, which was the presence of Christ in it.

When God made of this city a heap, yet he did not make it to be no city, nor say concerning it, that it should never be built again;<sup>a</sup> it was desolate, but not, as Babylon, desolate for ever; no, nor as Jerusalem, that had seventy years accomplished in her desolation:<sup>b</sup> but in a little time God had mercy on your dwelling-places, as the prophet speaks, *and the city was built again on her own heap,*<sup>c</sup> and built again with advantage, more strong, more beautiful, and more uniform than it had been before; as if it had passed through a refining fire, rather than a consuming one, and had only been melted down to be cast in a better mould. *This was the Lord's doing, for except he build the house, they labour in vain that build it;* and it may justly be *marvellous in our eyes*. God has fulfilled to you what he said of Zion and Jerusalem, *Though I was jealous against them with great fury, yet I am returned unto Zion, and will dwell in the midst of Jerusalem;* and O that the following promise to Jerusalem might be made good to London, *It shall be called a city of truth, and the mountain of the Lord of hosts, the holy mountain.*<sup>d</sup> How well were it, if the hearts of the citizens were as much improved by the fire, as their houses were!

Let this resurrection of the city out of its ashes, be to us an emblem of the state of Christ's church in the world; *it is persecuted, but not forsaken, cast down, but not destroyed;*<sup>e</sup> its desolations may sometimes be said to be universal, but they shall not be perpetual. The protestant interest in many places is brought very low, and its ruins trampled on, by the same that triumphed in the ruins of this city of our solemnities, yet we have reason to hope it shall revive, and flourish again, even where it seems razed to the very foundations. It is promised concerning the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down, that God will build again the ruins thereof,<sup>f</sup> and will set it up: when the time comes that Babylon must fall, (and fall it must sooner or later,) that promise shall be fulfilled. Let this quicken our prayers to God, for the re-establishing of the protestant religion, where it is borne down and trampled on, and let us continue instant in that prayer, and not faint, though we be sadly disappointed in the hands that we thought should have gone forward in the effecting of it; God will do his own work in his own way and time, if not by *might and power, yet by the Spirit of the Lord of Hosts*; for so Jerusalem was rebuilt, and before that Spirit the mountains of difficulty that lay in the way became plain.<sup>g</sup> Our care must

be to retain a sincere affection for our holy religion, how low soever the profession of it is, or may be brought, and not think the worse of it for its being deserted, and losing ground. It is the character of the servants of God, that when Zion is in ruins, they take pleasure even in its broken scattered stones, and favour the very dust thereof, they love the ground she stood upon; and let such assure themselves, that *the time to favour Zion, yea, the set time, will come. And when the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory,* and in doing it will put this honour upon the wrestling seed of Jacob, that therein he will regard the prayer of the destitute, and not despise their prayer.<sup>h</sup> Let Daniel's prayer therefore be ours, and his plea, that God would cause his face to shine upon the sanctuary that is desolate for the Lord's sake.<sup>i</sup>

VII. See how dangerous our condition is, who have not been reformed by the various methods God has taken with us. You have long since seen your city rebuilt, and the effects of the fire no more remaining, which may supersede the annual memorial of the judgment: but if the ends of it be not answered, there is still occasion to revive the remembrance of it; may not God justly complain of us, as he did of Israel, *You have sometimes been overthrown by signal judgments, and at other times saved by signal mercies, yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the Lord.*<sup>j</sup> And we may therefore justly fear, that for all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.<sup>k</sup> Is there any less sinning, or any more praying, in London than there was formerly? I wish there were. But we have too much reason to fear, that we come under Jerusalem's sad character, when the founder melted in vain.<sup>l</sup> Iniquity still abounds and goes barefaced, vice is as daring and threatening as ever; and what will be in the end thereof? May we not fear, lest God should send greater judgments among us, since lesser have not done their work, nor gained their point.

There are fires of another nature, which we have reason to fear the fatal effects of, both to the city, and to the land, I mean our unhappy divisions and animosities, and violent heats one against another: the sin that is in our divisions may be justly punished with the ruin that is commonly the effect of them, for a city or kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and becomes an easy prey to the common enemy, who warm their hands at those flames, and doubt not to find their account in setting us at variance one against another.

The removal of the gospel, and the taking away of our candlestick out of its place, would be a much sorer judgment than the burning of the city, and ought to be dreaded and deprecated accordingly. If papal tyranny should again take footing here, if our

<sup>a</sup> Isa. xlv. 2. <sup>b</sup> Dan. ix. 2. <sup>c</sup> Jer. xxx. 18. <sup>d</sup> Psal. cxxvii. 1.  
<sup>e</sup> Zech. viii. 2, 3. <sup>f</sup> 2 Cor. iv. 9. <sup>g</sup> Acts xv. 16.

<sup>h</sup> Zech. iv. 6, 7. <sup>i</sup> Psal. cli. 13, 14, 16, 17. <sup>j</sup> Dan. ix. 17.  
<sup>k</sup> Amos. iv. 11. <sup>l</sup> Isa. ix. 17. <sup>m</sup> Jer. vi. 29.

Bibles should be taken from us, and our ministers be banished or put to death, if the idolatrous mass should be set up in our churches and the consecrated host carried about our streets to be adored, London would look a more melancholy place than it did when it was in ashes. I hope that God, who has hitherto by miracles of mercy saved our holy religion, will still, and that that blessed light shall not die in our hands; I hope it will never come to that; yet I must say we have no reason to be secure, when we consider the desert of our sins, and the designs of our enemies, and especially when we consider the desolations of divers protestant churches abroad, that once thought themselves as safe and as likely to continue as we do. *Go see what God did to Shiloh*; what he did to the seven churches of Asia; and let us not be high-minded but fear, for are we better than they?

The cause of truth and godliness shall be victorious at last, but may meet with many a hard struggle in the mean time. What trying times may be before us we cannot tell, but I am sure it is our wisdom to be prepared for the worst, by being more and more established in the truth as it is in Jesus, by sitting loose to the world, and treasuring up such comforts and experiences, as will carry us with courage and cheerfulness through the most mournful time, to a most joyful eternity; and then welcome the will of God.

The gospel is not tied to places; its privileges are movable things. The kingdom of God may be taken from us, and given to another nation;<sup>4</sup> and what will become of us, if our glory be departed, and all our pleasant things laid waste. The most effectual course we can take to prevent it, is to make a good use of our privileges, and live up to them; as the most threatening step toward it is the corrupting the nation with the vices of its neighbours, which will be as fatal to it as the idols and idolatries of the countries round about were to Israel of old.

I would not amuse people with causeless jealousies, but awaken people to a holy fear and diligence in their duty by these suggestions. There is a startling passage in Mr. George Herbert's poem, called the *Church Militant*, written I believe about eighty years ago, which has been much taken notice of. After he had showed how the church took rise in the eastern parts of the world, and so moved more and more westerly, he goes on thus:

Religion stands on tiptoe in our land,  
Ready to pass to the American strand,  
When height of malice and prodigious lusts,  
Impudent sinnings, witchcrafts, and distrusts  
(The marks of future bane) shall fill our cup  
Unto the brim, and make our measure up;  
When Seine shall swallow Tyber, and the Thames,  
By letting in them both, pollute her streams;

When Italy of us shall have her will,  
And all her calendar of sins fulfil,  
Whereby one may foretell what sins next year  
Shall both in France and England domineer;  
Then shall religion to America flee,  
They have their times of gospel ev'n as we.

I remember I heard Dr. Tillotson (afterwards Archbishop) quote these verses of Mr. Herbert's, in a sermon on John xii. 35. *Yet a little while is the light with you*; (it is since printed in the second volume of the folio edition of his posthumous works;) and having explained the signs of the times to be this, "When the vices of Italy shall pass into France, and the vices of both shall overspread England, then the gospel will leave these parts of the world."—He makes this remark upon it, "Whether this was only the prudent conjecture and foresight of a wise man, or whether there be not something more prophetic in it, I cannot tell. But we have too much cause to apprehend, that if we do not reform and grow better, God will find some way or other to deprive us of that light, which is so abused and affronted by our wicked lives; and he seems now to say to us, as Christ did to the Jews, *yet a little while is the light with you*."

VIII. See what a necessary and constant dependence we have upon God and his providence for our safety. You have seen how great a matter a little fire kindles, and in a little time, and cannot but think how much all you have in the world lies at the mercy of that merciless element, if God should give it commission. Though you be ever so careful of fire in your own houses, how many careless people are there in the houses about you, which, if set on fire, would soon set yours on fire; so that we can be no night secure, but that we may be either burnt in our beds, or burnt out of them. There have been frequent fires in and about the city since this great one, to put you in mind of what God has done, and what he could do; and many other accidents we and our families continually lie exposed to: the dreadful wind ten years ago, showed you that God has more arrows in his quiver, and can bring another judgment without bringing another fire.

Now this should engage us all to have our eye toward the Lord, by faith to dwell in the secret place of the Most High, and abide under the shadow of the Almighty;<sup>5</sup> and by prayer every morning and every evening, to put ourselves, our houses and families, under divine protection, and to beg that the city may be the care of God's providence in a particular manner, and the charge of his angels, as Jerusalem of old was. O that this argument might prevail with you, to set up and keep up the worship of God in your families, and to make a business of it, that though I cannot assure you that it will preserve

<sup>4</sup> Matt. xxi. 43.

<sup>5</sup> Ps. xci. 1.

you from your share in common calamities of this kind, all things come alike to all, yet it is the best course you can take to be safe and easy; with what a holy security may you lie down at night, and go abroad in the morning, when you have first solemnly recommended yourselves and yours to the mercy of God, and taken the way which he has appointed to engage him for you. Such is the comfort of doing this, such the satisfaction of having done it, that we may well call it work that is its own wages. If you make your houses little churches for God, he will make them little sanctuaries to you, and create a defence upon all your glory.<sup>f</sup>

You have your engines, your watchmen, your insurances, but after all, *Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.*<sup>g</sup> It is therefore your great concern to make him your friend, and to keep yourselves in his love; to secure the favour of the Ruler of rulers, from whom every man's judgment proceeds.<sup>h</sup> He has put you into an easy way of doing this, not by costly sacrifices and offerings, but by faithful and fervent prayer, kept up in its life, and not sunk into a formality.

Neither pray ye for yourselves alone, and for your houses, but for the city, and parts adjoining, that in the safety thereof you may be safe. Thus approve yourselves true friends to the city, and seek the welfare of it. You are for conscience sake toward God, rendered incapable of serving the city in any civil offices, serve it so much the more with your prayers, serve it in sacred offices, as intercessors with God for it; and thank God you cannot be hindered from serving it in this way.

Nor is it enough to keep prayer up in your houses, but you must do what you can to keep sin out of your houses, lest that spoil the success of your prayers. *If iniquity be in thine hand, any ill-got gain, or any ill way of getting, put it far away, and let no wickedness dwell in thy tabernacles,* and then thou shalt *take thy rest in safety, thou shalt lie down, and none shall make thee afraid.*<sup>i</sup> And do what you can, in your places, to suppress wickedness in the city, and to promote the reformation of manners, that the city may be called *a city of righteousness, a faithful city,* which God may delight to dwell in.

IX. See what a dreadful day the great day of the Lord will be, when the world shall be on fire, and the earth, and all the works that are therein, shall be burnt up. If the burning of London was so terrible, what then will the burning of the world be, the whole world? *When the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and all these things shall be dissolved.*<sup>k</sup> The volcanos, or burning mountains, in Naples and Sicily, and many other places, which have been on fire as long as we have any history of those countries extant, are

sometimes very terrible, and the eruptions of fire from them very threatening: surely Providence has wisely ordered those little conflagrations of the earth, to be earnest of the general conflagration, and standing, sensible confirmations of the Scripture tradition of it; nay, some have thought, that they will be in part the means of the burning of this world; so Dr. Tho. Burnet, in that part of his "Theory of the Earth," which treats *De conflagratione mundi—Of the conflagration of the world; Externus est et visibilis apparatus ad hoc incendium, in montibus ignivomis—There is evidently a provision in the fiery mountains for this desolation.* And he quotes a remarkable passage of Pliny, (l. ii. c. 106, 107.) when he had reckoned up several burning mountains, &c. he concludes, *Excedit profecto omnia miracula, ullum diem fuisse, in quo non cuncta conflagrarent—It is a miracle that the world is not on fire every day.* Why should it seem incredible to us then, that it will be on fire shortly? Believe it, sirs, as sure as you see this day, you shall see that day. And where will all the wealth and pride of this world be then? What will become of us, if we have all our portion and happiness in it?

Think of the fire in which the Lord Jesus will be revealed in that day, the flaming fire,<sup>l</sup> the fire that will devour before him;<sup>m</sup> he will come with an innumerable company of angels, and every one of those spirits is *a flame of fire.*<sup>n</sup> What flames then will the Judge be surrounded with! Think how you will look him in the face in that great and terrible day, and how your works will abide that fire. Those who lived and died in sin, will then call in vain to rocks and mountains to hide them from the face of him that sits on the throne, and the wrath of the Lamb; but those who lived and died in Christ, will see no terror, no, not in that fire, but will then lift up their heads with joy, knowing that their redemption draws nigh.

Nay, there is a fire yet more dreadful, which you are concerned to think of. The earth, and the works that are therein, will soon be burnt up; but there is a lake of fire and brimstone, which burns eternally, and shall never be quenched, prepared indeed for the devil and his angels, but into which all the wicked and ungodly shall be cast, by the irreversible sentence of the righteous Judge, and in which they shall be tormented world without end. I am here in God's name to give you warning to flee from that wrath to come,<sup>o</sup> by fleeing from sin, by fleeing to Christ; and whether you will hear, or whether you will forbear, to testify unto you, that you come not to that place of torment; and if you hear not, if you heed not, Moses and the prophets, Christ and his ministers, giving you this warning, neither would ye be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.<sup>p</sup>

<sup>f</sup> Isa. iv. 5, 6.    <sup>g</sup> Ps. cxxvii. 1.    <sup>h</sup> Prov. xxv. 26.  
<sup>i</sup> Job xl. 14, 18, 19.    <sup>k</sup> 2 Pet. iii. 12.

<sup>l</sup> 2 Thess. i. 8.    <sup>m</sup> Ps. l. 3.    <sup>n</sup> Ps. civ. 4.  
<sup>o</sup> Matt. iii. 6.    <sup>p</sup> Luke xvi. 28, 31.