

shakes the rod that by timely submission we might avert the stroke. And when all methods to reclaim the sinner have proved ineffectual, with what reluctance does He execute His terrible vengeance at the last! He says: "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee Israel? Mine heart is turned within Me." "Oh, that My people had hearkened unto Me! that Israel had walked in My ways!"

Nor must we imagine that these are mere words. For, what could have been done that God has not done to give effect to His gracious designs? He has caused the Gospel to be brought to our very doors. He has instituted the ministry of the Gospel to proclaim to all the corners of the earth the glad tidings of a Saviour. And it is worthy of note how, in order that we might have the firmest persuasion of the goodness of God, He has not only given manifold declarations of His mercy, but has selected some of the most notorious offenders in all ages to be monuments of His grace, so that the vilest and worst may thus be encouraged to come to Him for pardon and salvation. God every where appears stretching forth His arms to the returning prodigal, and in all the ages His voice is heard, "Why will ye die."

If God is thus merciful, and slow to anger, all the more certain and severe must be the punishment to those who obstinately resist His will, and despise His grace. The end will be death. For though God has no pleasure in the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn and live, yet it is decreed that he that will not turn shall not live. Life and death are proposed to us as the reward of good and evil; and to the man who is fully bent upon evil death must be the reward. The wages of sin is death. God will not always strive with man. He is indeed long suffering; but there is a degree of provocation beyond His endurance—a time when the day of grace will close, and that of judgment begin; when sinners shall feel what it was to have wearied out the patient endurance of God.

It is easy for men to make plausible excuses—to complain of the difficulties in the way—of the temptations to which they are exposed. But there is no difficulty to those who seek the help of God's grace—no temptation from which God will not make a way of escape. The real difficulty is that men are not willing to give up their sins and "turn from their evil ways." Without true repentance, as well as true faith, there can be no salvation. Jesus came to save from sin as well as to save from hell. "Repentance unto life is a saving grace, whereby a sinner out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of and endeavour after new obedience."

Oh then, now, while the day of reckoning is yet delayed, while there is space given for repentance, let sinners hasten to the refuge provided against the impending storm; let them flee to that refuge set before them in the gospel, and let them do so *now*; "For now is the accepted time, now is the day of Salvation." "Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel."—*Selected.*

---

God has promised forgiveness to your repentance; but he has not promised a to-morrow to your procrastination.