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The Eternity of Hell Torments.

A
S E R M O N

Preached at

SAVANNAH in GEORGIA,

BY

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TO THE
INHABITANTS
OF
SAVANNAH in GEORGIA.

My DEAR FRIENDS,

THO' the following Ser-
mon has been preach-
ed elsewhere, yet as
the Occasion of my preaching it
among you was particular, as
you seemed to give an uncommon
Attention to it in publick, and
afterwards expressed your Sa-
tisfaction in it to me when I
came

came to visit you in your own private Houses, I thought proper to offer it to you.

And here I cannot but bless GOD for the general Dislike of Heretical Principles that I have found among you; as also for your Zeal, and Approbation of my Conduct, when the Glory of GOD and your Welfare have obliged me to resent and publickly declare against the Antichristian Tenets of some lately under my Charge.

*I need only exhort you to beg of GOD to give you a true
Faith*

*Faith, and to add to your
Faith Virtue, that you may
adorn the Gospel of our Lord
JESUS CHRIST in all
Things.*

*Your constant daily Atten-
dancè upon Publick Worship,
the Gladness wherewith you
have received me into your
Houses, the Mildness where-
with you have submitted to my
Reproofs, more especially the
great (tho' unmerited) Concern
you shew'd at my Departure,
induce me to hope this will be
your Endeavour.*

*How long GOD of his good
Providence will keep me from
you,*

you, I know not. However you may assure yourselves I will return according to my Promise as soon as I have received Imposition of Hands and completed the other Business that called me hither.

In the mean while accept of this, as a Pledge of the undissembled Love of

Your affectionate, tho'

unworthy Pastor,

London,
1738.

G. WHITEFIELD.



MATT. XXV. 46.

*These shall go away into Everlasting
Punishment.*



THE Excellency of the Gospel Dispensation is evidenced by nothing more, than those Sanctions of Rewards and Punishments, which it offers to the Choice of all its Professors, in order to invite or *compel* them to be obedient to its Precepts.— For it promises no less than Eternal Happiness to the Good, and denounces no slighter a Punishment than Everlasting Misery against the Wicked.— On the one Hand, “ it is a Saviour of Life “ unto Life,” on the other, “ a Saviour
B “ of

“ of Death unto Death ” — And tho’ one would imagine the bare mentioning of the former would be sufficient to draw Men to their Duty, yet Ministers in all Ages have found it necessary frequently to remind their People of the latter, and to set before them the Terrors of the LORD, as so many powerful Diffuasives from Sin.

BUT whence is it that Men are so disingenuous? — Why, the Reason seems to be this. — The Promise of Eternal Happiness on our well-doing, is so agreeable to the Inclinations and Wishes of Mankind, that all that call themselves Christians universally and willingly subscribe to the Belief of it. — But then there is something so shocking in the Consideration of Eternal Torments, and seemingly such an infinite Disproportion between an endless Duration of Pain, and a short Life spent in Pleasure, that Men (some at least of them) can scarcely be brought to confess it as an Article of their Faith, that an Eternity of Misery awaits the wicked in a future State.

I SHALL therefore *at this Time beg Leave,*
to insist on the Proof of this Part of one
of

of the Articles of our Creed; and endeavour
to make good what our Blessed LORD has
 here threatned in the Words of the Text,
*that these, that is, the Wicked shall go
 away into Everlasting Punishment.*

ACCORDINGLY without considering the
 Words as they stand in Relation to the
 Context, I shall resolve all I have to say
 into this one general Proposition.—“ That
 “ the Torments reserved for the Wicked
 “ hereafter are eternal.”

BUT before I proceed to make good
 this, I must inform you that I take it for
 granted,

ALL here present stedfastly believe, “ they
 “ have something within them; which we
 “ call a Soul; and which is capable of
 “ surviving the Dissolution of the Body;
 “ and of being miserable or happy to all
 “ Eternity.”

I TAKE it for granted further, that “ you
 “ believe a divine Revelation, that those
 “ Books, emphatically call'd the Scriptures,
 “ were written by the Inspiration of God,
 “ and that the Things therein contained,
 “ are founded upon Eternal Truth.”

I TAKE it for granted lastly, that “ you
 “ believe, that the Son of GOD came down
 “ to die for Sinners; that there is but
 “ one Mediator between GOD and Man,
 “ even the Man CHRIST JESUS.

THESE Things being granted, (and they were necessary to be premised,) proceed we now *to make good* the one general Proposition mentioned before, and asserted in the Words of the Text, that “ The Torments reserved for the Wicked hereafter, “ are Eternal.”—— *These*, says our Blessed LORD, *shall go away into Everlasting Punishment.*

THE first Argument I shall advance to prove that the Torments reserved for the Wicked hereafter are Eternal, (for I have taken it for granted, that you believe those Books emphatically called *the Scriptures*, were written by the Inspiration of GOD, and that the Things contained therein are founded upon Eternal Truth,) is, That the Word of GOD himself, assures us, Line upon Line, that it will be so.

To quote all the Texts that might be produced in Proof of this, would be endless.—

less.—Let it suffice to instance only in a few.—In the *Old Testament*, in the Book of *Daniel*, Chap. xii. v. 2. we are told, that *Some shall awake to Everlasting Life, and others to Everlasting Contempt.*—In the Book of *Isaiab*, it is said, that *The Worm of those that have transgressed GOD's Law shall not dye, nor their Fire be quenched.*—And in another Place, the Holy Prophet, struck no Doubt with Astonishment and Horror at the Prospect of the Continuance of the Torments of the Damned, breaks out into this moving Expostulation, *Who can dwell with Everlasting Burnings?*

THE *New Testament* is still fuller as to this Point, it being a Revelation which brought this and such-like Particulars to a clearer Light.—The Apostle *Jude* tells us of the Prophane Despisers of Dignities in his Days, that *for them was reserved the Blackness of Darknes for ever.*—And in the Book of the *Revelations* it is written, that *the Smoke of the Torments of the Wicked ascendeth for ever and ever.*—And if we believe the Witness of Men inspired, the Witness of the Son of God, who had the Spirit given him, as he was a Mediator, without

without Measure is still far greater.— And he in St. *Mark's* Gospel, repeats this solemn Declaration three several Times,— *It is better for thee to enter into Life maimed; that is, it is better to forego the Gratification of thy Lust, or incur the Displeasure of a Friend, which may be as dear to thee as a Hand, or as useful as a Foot, than having two Hands and Feet, that is, for indulging the one, or disobeying God to oblige the other, to be cast into Hell, where the Worm dieth not, and the Fire is not quenched.*

AND here again in the Words of the Text, *These*, that is, the Wicked, says he, *shall go away into Everlasting Punishment.*

I KNOW it has been objected by some who have denied the Eternity of Hell Torments, “ that the Words *Everlasting* and “ *Ever and Ever*, are often used in the “ Holy Scriptures, (especially in the *Old* “ *Testament*,) when they signify not an endless Duration, but a limited Term of “ *Time.*”

AND this we readily grant. But then we reply, “ That when the Words are “ used with this Limitation, they either “ manifestly appear to be used so from the
“ Con-

“Context” — or are put in Opposition to some occasional Types which God gave his People on some special Occasions, as when it is said, it shall be a perpetual or everlasting Statute, or a Statute for ever, that is, a standing Type, and not merely transient or occasional, as was the *Pillar of Cloud*, the *Manna*, or such like. — Or lastly, they have a relation to that Covenant God made with his spiritual *Israel*, which, if understood in a spiritual Sense, will be everlasting, tho’ the Ceremonial Dispensation be abolished.

BESIDES, it ought to be observed, that, some of the Passages just now referred to, have neither of these Words so much as mentioned in them, and cannot possibly be interpreted so as to denote only a limited Term of Years.

BUT let that be as it will, it is evident even to a Demonstration, that the Words of the Text however, will not admit of such a restrained Signification, as appears from their being directly opposed to the Words immediately following, *viz. That the Righteous shall go into Life eternal.* — From which Words, all are ready to grant, that the Life promised to the Righteous will be
 Eternal

Eternal, and why the Punishment threatened to the Wicked should not be understood to be Eternal likewise, when the very same Word in the Original, is used to express the Duration of each, no Shadow of a Reason can be given.

BUT Secondly, There cannot be one Argument urged, why God should reward his Saints with everlasting Happiness, which will not equally prove that he ought to punish Sinners with Eternal Misery.

FOR, since we know nothing (at least for a Certainty) how he will deal with either, but by a Divine Revelation, and since as was proved by the foregoing Argument, he hath as positively threatened eternally to punish the Wicked, as to reward the Good; it follows that his Truth will be as much impeached and called in Question, did he not inflict his Punishments, as it would be, if he did not confer his Rewards.

To this also it has been objected,
 “ That tho’ God is obliged by his Promise
 “ to give his Rewards, yet his Veracity
 “ could not be called in Question, suppo-
 “ sing He should not execute his Threat-
 “ nings

“nings; as He actually did not in the Case
 “of *Nineveh*, which God expressly declared
 “by his Prophet *Jonah*, *should be destroyed*
 “*in forty Days*; notwithstanding the Se-
 “quel of the Story informs us, that *Ni-*
 “*neveh* was spared.”

BUT in answer to this Objection we af-
 firm, “That God’s Threatnings as well as
 “Promises are without Repentance” —
 And for this Reason, because they are both
 founded on the eternal Laws of right Rea-
 son. — Accordingly we always find that
 where the Conditions were not performed,
 on the Non-performance of which the
 Threatnings were denounced, God always
 executed the Punishment threatned — The
 driving *Adam* out of *Eden*, — The De-
 struction of the Old World by a Deluge of
 Water, and the Overthrow of *Sodom* and
Gomorrhah, are, and will be always so ma-
 ny standing Monuments of God’s exe-
 cuting his Threatnings when denounced,
 tho’ to our weak Apprehensions, the Pu-
 nishment may seem far to exceed the
 Crime.

It is true, God did spare *Nineveh*, and
 that because the Inhabitants did actu-
 ally repent, and therefore performed the
 C Condi-

Conditions upon which it was supposed by the Prophet's being sent to warn them the threatned Punishment should be withheld.

AND so likewise in respect to Gospel Threatnings. If Men will so far consult their own Welfare as to live up to the Gospel Terms, God certainly will not punish them, but on the contrary confer upon them his Rewards, — But to affirm that He will not punish, and that eternally too, impenitent, obstinate Sinners according as He hath threatned, if they do not perform the Terms of the Gospel, what is it, in Effect, but to make God like a Man that He should lye, or the Son of Man that He should repent?

BUT the Absurdity of such an Opinion will appear still more evident from

The next and *Third* Argument I shall offer to prove, *that the Torments reserved for the Wicked hereafter are eternal, viz.* From the Nature of the Christian Covenant.

AND here I must again observe, that it was taken for granted at the Beginning of
this

this Discourse; that, “ You believe the Son
 “ of God came down to save Sinners;
 “ that there is but one Mediator between
 “ God and Man even the Man *CHRIST*
 “ *JESUS.*”

AND here I take it for granted further
 (unless you believe the absurd and unwar-
 rantable Doctrine of Purgatory) that you
 are fully persuaded, that this Life is the
 only Time allotted by Almighty God for
 working out our Salvation, and that after
 a few Years are passed over, there will re-
 main no more Sacrifice for Sin.

AND if this be granted (and who dares
 deny it;) it follows that if a wicked Man
 dieth in his Wickedness, and under the
 Wrath of God, he must continue in that
 State to all Eternity. — For, since there is
 no Possibility of his being delivered out of
 such a Condition but by and thro’ *CHRIST*,
 and since at the Hour of Death, the time
 of *CHRIST*’s Mediation and Intercession for
 him is irrecoverably gone, the same Reason
 that may be given why God should punish
 a Sinner that dieth under the Guilt of his
 Sins for a single Day, will equally hold
 good, why he should continue to punish
 him for a Year, an Age, nay, to all Eter-
 nity.

BUT I hasten to the *Fourth* and last Argument, to prove, *That the Torments reserved for the Wicked hereafter are Eternal, viz. Because the Devil's Punishment is to be so.*

THAT there is such a Being whom we call the *Devil*; that he was once an Angel of Light, but for his Pride and Rebellion against God was cast down from Heaven, and is now permitted with the rest of his spiritual Wickednesses, to walk too and fro seeking whom they may devour, — That there is a Place of Torment reserved for them, or, to use the Apostle's Words, *that they are reserved in everlasting Chains under Darkness, unto the Judgment of the Great Day*, are Truths all here present were supposed to be convinced of, when it was taken for granted under the second Proposition at the Beginning of this Discourse, that you believed the *Holy Scriptures* to be written by the Inspiration of God, wherein these Truths are delivered.

BUT then, if we allow all this, and think it no Injustice in God to punish those Glorious Spirits for their Rebellion, how can we think it unjust in Him, to punish
wicked

wicked Men for their Impenitency to all Eternity?

You will say perhaps, that they have sinned against greater Light and therefore deserve a greater Punishment. And so we grant that the Punishment of the Fallen Angels may be greater as to Degree, than that of wicked Men. But then we affirm it will be equal as to the Eternal Duration of it. For in that Day, as the lively Oracles of God informs us, shall the Son of Man say to them on his left Hand, *Depart from me ye Cursed into Everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels.*—

Where we find that impenitent Sinners are to be cast into the same *Everlasting Fire*, with the *Devil* and his Angels, — And that too very justly. — For tho' they may have sinned against greater Light, yet *Christians* sin against greater Mercy. — Since CHRIST took not hold of, did not die for the Fallen Angels, but of the Seed of *Abraham*, for Men and for our Salvation. So that if God spared not those Excellent Beings, assure thyself, O obstinate Sinner, whoever thou art, He will by no means spare thee.

FROM what then has been said it plainly appears, that verily *the Torments reserved*
for

for the Wicked hereafter are Eternal.—

And if so, Brethren, how holy ought we to be in all manner of Conversation and Godliness, that we may be accounted worthy to escape this Wrath to come!

BUT before I proceed to a practical Exhortation, permit me to draw an Inference or two from what has been said.

And First, *If the Torments reserved for the Wicked hereafter are Eternal*, what shall we say to those, who make an open Profession in their Creed to believe a Life Everlasting, *i.e.* a Life of Happiness as well as Misery, and yet dare to live in the actual Commission of those Sins which will unavoidably, without Repentance, bring them into that Place of Torment?— Thou believest the Punishments of the impenitently wicked in another Life, are Eternal: Thou dost well, *The Devils also believe and tremble*. But know, O vain Man, unless this Belief doth influence thy Practice, and makes thee bid Adieu to thy Sins, every Time thou repeatest thy Creed, thou dost in Effect say, I believe I shall be undone for ever.

BUT Secondly, if the Torments reserved for the Wicked hereafter are Eternal, then
let

let this serve as a Caution to such Persons, (and it is to be fear'd there are some such) who go about to dissuade others from the Belief of such an important Truth. There being no surer Way in all Probability to encourage and promote Infidelity, and Prophaneness than the broaching or maintaining such an unwarrantable Doctrine.—For, if the positive Threats of God concerning the Eternity of Hell Torments are already found insufficient to deter Men from Sin, what a higher Pitch of Wickedness may we imagine they will quickly arrive at, when they are taught to entertain any Hopes of a future Recovery out of them; or, what is still worse, that their Souls are hereafter to be annihilated, and become like the Beasts that perish? — But Woe unto such blind Leaders of the Blind. No Wonder if they both fall into the Ditch.—And let such Corrupters of God's Word know, that I testify unto every Man that heareth me this Day, that if any one shall add unto, or take away from the Words that are written in the Book of God; God shall take away his Part out of the Book of Life, and shall add unto him all the Plagues that are written in that Book.

Thirdly and Lastly, if the Torments reserved

served for the Wicked hereafter are Eternal, then this may serve as a Reproof for those who quarrel with God, and say it is inconsistent with his Justice, to punish a Person to all Eternity, only for enjoying the Pleasures of Sin for a Season. But such Persons must be told, that it is not their thinking or calling God unjust, will make him so, no more than a condemn'd Prisoner's saying the Law or Judge is unjust, will render either duly chargeable with such an Imputation.— But knowest thou, O Worm, what Blasphemy thou art guilty of, in charging God with Injustice?— Shall the Thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? And wilt thou presume to arraign the Almighty at the Bar of thy shallow Reasoning? And call him unjust, for punishing thee Eternally, only because thou wishest it may not be so? But hath God said it; and shall he not do it? He hath said it: — And let God be true, tho' every Man be a Liar.— *Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right?* Assuredly he will. And if Sinners will not own his Justice in his Threatnings here, they will be compell'd ere long to own and feel them when tormented by him hereafter.—

BUT

BUT to come to a more practical Application of what has been deliver'd.

You have heard, Brethren, the Eternity of Hell Torments plainly proved, from the express Declarations of Holy Scriptures, and Consequences naturally drawn from them.—And now there seems to need no great Art of Rhetorick to persuade any understanding Person to avoid and abhor those Sins, which without Repentance will certainly plunge him into this Eternal Gulph.—The Disproportion between the Pleasure and the Pain, (if there be any Pleasure in Sin,) is so infinitely great, that supposing it was only possible, tho' not certain, that the Wicked would be everlastingly punished, no one that has the Reason of a Man, for the enjoying a little momentary Pleasure, would, one would imagine, run the Hazard of enduring Eternal Pain.—But since the Torments of the Damned are not only possible, but certain (since God himself who cannot lye, has told us so) for Men, notwithstanding to persist in their Disobedience, and then flatter themselves that God will not make Good his Threatnings, is a most egregious Instance of Folly and Presumption.

D

DIVES

DIVES himself supposed, that if one rose from the Dead, his Brethren would amend their Lives, but Christians, it seems, will not repent, tho' the Son of God has dyed and rose again, and told them what they must expect, if they still continue obstinate in Evil Doing.

WOULD we now and then draw off our Thoughts from sensible Objects, and by Faith meditate a while on the Miseries of the Damned, I doubt not but we should, as it were, hear many an unhappy Soul venting his fruitless Sorrows in some such piteous Moans as these.

“ O WRETCHED Man that I am, who
 “ shall deliver me from this Body of Death!
 “ O foolish Mortal that I was, thus to bring
 “ myself into these never-ceasing Tortures,
 “ for the transitory Enjoyment of a few
 “ short-lived Pleasures, which scarcely af-
 “ forded me any Satisfaction, even when I
 “ most indulged myself in them. — Alas!
 “ are these the Wages, these the Effects of
 “ Sin? — Are all the Grand Deceiver's in-
 “ viting Promises come to this? — O dam-
 “ ned Apostate! First to delude me with
 “ pretended Promises of Happiness, and after
 “ several

“ several Years Drudgery in his Service,
 “ thus to involve me in Eternal Woe.—
 “ Oh that I had never hearken’d to his be-
 “ guiling Insinuations! Oh that I had re-
 “ jected his very first Suggestions with the
 “ utmost Detestation and Abhorrence! Oh,
 “ that I had taken up my Cross and fol-
 “ lowed CHRIST! Oh, that I had never
 “ ridiculed serious Godliness, and out of a
 “ false Politeness, condemned the truly pi-
 “ ous, as too Severe, Enthusiastick, or Su-
 “ perstitious! For I then had been happy
 “ indeed, happy beyond Expression, happy
 “ to all Eternity, yonder in those Blessed
 “ Regions where they sit, cloathed with un-
 “ speakable Glory, and chanting forth their
 “ Seraphick Hallelujahs to the Lamb that
 “ sitteth upon the Throne, for ever.— But,
 “ alas! these Reflections come now too
 “ late: These Wishes now are vain and
 “ fruitless. I have not suffered, and there-
 “ fore must not reign with them.— I have
 “ in Effect denied the Lord that bought me,
 “ and therefore justly am I now denied by
 “ him.”

“ BUT must I live for ever tormented in
 “ these Flames? — Must this Body of mine
 “ which not long since lay in State, was
 “ cloathed in Purple and fine Linnen, and

“ fared sumptuously every Day, must this
 “ be here eternally confin’d, and made the
 “ Mockery of insulting Devils? Oh, Eter-
 “ nity! that Thought fills me with Despair.
 “ *I cannot, will not*, yet I must be miserable
 “ for ever.”

COME then, all ye self-deluding, self-de-
 luded Sinners, and imagine yourselves for
 once in the Place of that truly wretched
 Man I have been here describing. — Think,
 I beseech you by the Mercies of GOD in
 CHRIST JESUS, think with yourselves, how
 racking, how unsupportable the never dying
 Worm of a self-condemning Conscience
 will hereafter be to you — Think how im-
 possible it will be for you *to dwell with*
everlasting Burnings.

COME, all ye *Christians* of a Lukewarm
Laodicean Spirit, ye *Gallio's* in Religion,
 who care a little, but not enough for the
 Things of GOD, O think, think with your-
 selves how deplorable it will be to lose
 the Enjoyment of Heaven, and run into
 endless Torments, merely because you will
 be content to be almost, and will not strive
 to be altogether *Christians.* — Consider, I
 beseech you, consider, how you will rave,
 and curse that fatal Stupidity, that made
 you

you believe any Thing less than a Life of strict Piety, Self-Denial, and Mortification, can keep you from those Torments, the Eternity of which I have been endeavouring to prove.

BUT I can no more — These Thoughts are too melancholy for me to dwell on, as well as for you to hear — and God knows as Punishing is his strange Work, so denouncing his Threatnings is mine. — But if the bare mentioning the Torments of the Damned is so shocking, Good God! terrible must the enduring of them be!

AND now are not some of you ready to cry out, “ These are hard Sayings, who can bear them ? ”

BUT let no sincere *Christians* be in the least terrified at what has been delivered. No, for you is reserved, a Crown, a Kingdom, an Eternal and exceeding Weight of Glory. CHRIST never said the Righteous, the Upright, the sincere, but these Wicked, Merciless, negatively good Professors before described shall go into Everlasting Punishment. For you, who love him in Sincerity, a new and living Way is laid open into the Holy of Holies by the Blood of
 JESUS

JESUS CHRIST. And an abundant Entrance will be administered unto you, at the Great Day of Account, into Eternal Life.— Take heed therefore and beware that there be not in any of you a Root of Bitterness springing up of Unbelief. But on the contrary stedfastly and heartily rely on the many precious Promises reached out to you in the Gospel, knowing that He who hath promised is faithful, and therefore will perform.

BUT let no obstinately wicked Professors, dare to apply any of the Divine Promises to themselves. For *it is not meet to take the Childrens Bread and give it unto Dogs.* No, to such the Terrors of the Lord only belong. And as certainly as **CHRIST** will say to his true Followers, *Come, ye blessed Children of my Father, receive the Kingdom prepared for you from the Beginning of the World,* so he will unalterably pronounce this dreadful Sentence against all that die in their Sins, *Depart from me, ye Cursed, into everlasting Fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels.*

FROM which unhappy State, *may GOD of his infinite Mercy deliver us all thro'*
JESUS

*JESUS CHRIST, to whom with Thee,
O Father, and Thee, O Holy Ghost, three
Persons and one Eternal GOD, be ascribed,
as is most due, all Honour, Power, Might,
Majesty and Dominion, now, and for ever-
more,*

F I N I S.





In a few Days will be published, in one
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