

## The Religion of the Wicked

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The religion of the wicked is a lie: “There is no peace,” says the prophet, “to the wicked.”<sup>i</sup> Indeed there can be none, for they are reprov'd in their own consciences and condemn'd in their own hearts for all their disobedience. Go where they will, rebukes go with them, and oftentimes terrors too. It is an offended God who pricks them, and by His light “sets their sins in order before them.”<sup>ii</sup>

Sometimes they strive to appease Him by their outward devotion and worship, but in vain; for the true worship of God is the doing of His will, which will they transgress. Sometimes they fly to sports and company to drown the Reprover's voice and blunt His arrows, to chase away troubled thoughts and secure themselves out of the reach of the Disquieter of their pleasures. But the Almighty, sooner or later, is sure to overtake them.

There is no flying from His justice for those who reject the terms of His mercy. Indeed their Accuser is always with them, they can no more be rid of Him than of themselves. He is in the midst of them, and will stick close to them. That Spirit which bears witness with the spirits of the just will bear witness against theirs.

Yes, their own hearts will abundantly condemn them; and “if our heart condemns us,” says the apostle John, “God is greater, and knows all things;”<sup>iii</sup> that is, there is no escaping the judgments of God if a man is not able to escape the condemnation of himself.

(No Cross, No Crown: A Discourse Showing the Nature and Discipline of the Holy Cross of Christ: And that the Denial of Self, and Daily Bearing of Christ's Cross, is the only way to the Rest and Kingdom of God by William Penn, e-book, Edited by Jason R. Henderson, Akron, Ohio: Market Street Fellowship, 2017, 19, Text and Paragraph Structure Modified)

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<sup>i</sup> Isaiah 48:22; Isaiah 57:21

<sup>ii</sup> Psalm 50:21

<sup>iii</sup> 1 John 3:20