

Final Judgment

Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758)

Jonathan Edwards, the great American Puritan theologian, was born at Windsor Farms, Connecticut, where his father was a Congregational minister for over sixty years. His mother's father was Solomon Stoddard, who pastored the church at Northfield, Massachusetts, for fifty-seven years. With this heritage, Edwards began studying Latin at age six, tutored by his father and four older sisters. When he entered Yale College just before turning thirteen, he already knew Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. He graduated with highest honors just before his seventeenth birthday. He was converted while seventeen and two years later became a preacher in a small Presbyterian church in New York.

In the fall of 1723, Edwards became a tutor at Yale, but four years later he was ordained at the Northampton church and became his celebrated grandfather's assistant. Edwards's preaching was rhetorically neither powerful nor dynamic, but it did exhibit deep thought and strong feeling. After Stoddard's death, Edwards succeeded him as pastor of the church, and it was during his tenure there that the Great Awakening began in 1734. Edwards's strong Calvinistic sermons led to many conversions, overwhelming his listeners with their spiritual power. During this awakening Edwards became a close friend of George Whitefield, a Calvinistic evangelist. During the Northampton years his writings included *God Glorified in Man's Dependence* (1731), *A Divine and Supernatural Light Imparted to the Soul by the Spirit of God* (1734), *A Narrative of Surprising Conversions* (1736), *Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God* (1741), *Thoughts on the Revival in New England* (1742), *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections* (1745), and the *Life and Diary of the Rev. David Brainerd* (1749).

An old controversy arose in the church over the requirements for admission to membership and to the Lord's Supper. Edwards opposed what had been Stoddard's practice, that of giving communion to people who were moral but unconverted. As a result of his faithfulness to the Scriptures, Edwards was dismissed in June 1750 after twenty-three years of service. His principles eventually prevailed among American evangelical churches, however.

Left with no congregation and no income to provide for his large family, Edwards lived on gifts from friends until he was called to pastor the small Congregational church at Stockbridge, Massachusetts, in 1751. Here he also preached, through an interpreter, to the Housatonic Indians. During these years he became ill with fever from the uncivilized conditions of the wilderness. In 1754 he published his most controversial work, *Essay on the Freedom of the Will*. It was a defense of the doctrines, of divine foreordination, original sin, and eternal punishment.

In 1757 Edwards was elected president of Princeton College in New Jersey, beginning to exercise his office in January and being inaugurated on 16 February 1758. On 23 February he was inoculated for small pox, and on 22 March he died

from a resulting fever. His father and son-in-law had died only months before, and his wife died just six months later. Thus, the sharpest philosophical and theological mind in colonial America was silenced—except for his written legacy.

Samuel Hopkins, Edwards's former student, edited and published eighteen of his sermons in 1764. In 1777 his valuable work *History of Redemption* was published. Samuel Austin published an eight-volume collection of his published works in 1809. Finally, in 1829 a ten-volume edition was published, edited by S. E. Dwight.

Some of Edwards's greatest sermons were on the theme of final judgment, and the present selection deals with the final state of the righteous and the wicked. Interestingly, most of the discourse deals with the portion of the righteous and their eternal glories in Christ. The value of this treatise is that it illustrates the Puritan eschatological emphasis on judgment and the eternal states of the blessed and the damned. One finds very little speculation concerning the exact fulfillment of events prophesied of the "last days." Though teaching about the events related to the return of Christ is certainly valid and important, speculation as to how soon Christ will return engenders far less spiritual revival than does the Puritan emphasis upon final judgment and blessing.

The Portion of the Wicked

Romans 2:8, 9—*But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile.*

It is the drift of the apostle in the three first chapters of this epistle to show, that both Jews and Gentiles are under sin, and therefore cannot be justified by works of law, but only by faith in Christ. In the first chapter he had shown that the Gentiles were under sin: in this he shows that the Jews also are under sin, and that however severe they were in their censures upon the Gentiles, yet they themselves did the same things; for which the apostle very much blames them: "Therefore, thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest, for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest, doest the same things." And he warns them not to go on in such a way, by forewarning them of the misery to which they will expose themselves by it, and by giving them to understand that instead of their misery being less than that of the Gentiles, it would be the greater, for God's distinguishing goodness to them above the Gentiles. The Jews thought that they should be exempted from future wrath, because God had chosen them to be his peculiar people. But the apostle informs them that there should be indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, to every soul of man; not only to the Gentiles, but to every soul; and to the Jews first and chiefly, when they did evil, because their sins were more aggravated.

In the text we find,

1. A description of wicked men.

Those qualifications of wicked men here mentioned that have the nature of a cause, are their being *contentious*, and *not obeying the truth*, but *obeying unrighteousness*. By their being contentious, is meant their being contentious against the truth, their quarrelling with the gospel, their finding fault with its declarations and offers. Unbelievers find many things in the ways of God at which they stumble, and by which they are offended. They are always quarrelling and finding fault with one thing or another, whereby they are kept from believing the truth and yielding to it. Christ is to them a stone of stumbling, and rock of offence. They do not obey the truth, that is, they do not yield to it, they do not receive it with faith. That yielding to the truth and embracing it, which there is in saving faith, is called *obeying*, in scripture. Rom. 6:17. "But God be thanked that ye were the servants of sin; but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you." Heb. 5:9. "And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." Rom. 1:5. "By whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations for his name": But they obey unrighteousness instead of yielding to the gospel, they are under the power and dominion of sin, and are slaves to their lusts and corruptions.

It is in those qualifications of wicked men that their wickedness radically consists; their unbelief and opposition to the truth, and their slavish subjection to lust, are the foundation of all wickedness.

Those qualifications of wicked men, which have the nature of an effect, are their doing evil. This is the least of their opposition against the gospel, and of their slavish subjection to their lusts; that they do evil. Those wicked principles are the foundation, and their wicked practice is the superstructure; those were the root, and this is the fruit.

2. The punishment of wicked men. . . .

Those things mentioned in their punishment that have the nature of a cause are *indignation* and *wrath*; i.e. the indignation and wrath of God. It is the anger of God that will render wicked men miserable; they will be the subjects of divine wrath, and hence will arise their whole punishment.

Those things in their punishment that have the nature of an effect, are *tribulation* and *anguish*. Indignation and wrath in God, will work extreme sorrow, trouble, and anguish of heart, in them.

***Doctrine.* Indignation, wrath, misery, and anguish of soul, are the portion that God has allotted to wicked men.**

Every one of mankind must have the portion that belongs to him. God allots to each one his portion; and the portion of the wicked is nothing but wrath, and distress, and anguish of soul. Though they may enjoy a few empty and vain pleasures and delights, for a few days while they stay in this world, yet that which is allotted to them by the Possessor and Governor of all things to be their portion, is only indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish. This is not the portion that wicked men choose; the portion that they choose is worldly happiness, yet it is the portion that God carves out for them; it is the portion that they in effect choose for themselves. For they choose those things that naturally and necessarily lead to it, and those that they are plainly told, times without number, will issue in it. Prov. 8:36. "But he that sinneth against me, wrongeth his own soul; all they that hate me love death." But whether they choose it or not, this will and must be the portion to all eternity of all who live and die wicked men. Indignation and wrath shall pursue them as long as they live in this world, shall drive them out of the world, and shall follow them into another world; and there wrath and misery shall abide upon them throughout eternity.

The method that I shall take in treating this subject, is to describe the wrath and misery of which wicked men shall be the subjects, both here and hereafter, in the successive parts and periods of it, according to the order of time.

I. I shall describe the wrath that often pursues wicked men in this life. Indignation and wrath often begin with them here.

1. God oftentimes in wrath leaves them to themselves. They are left in their sins, and left to undo themselves, and work out their own ruin; he lets them alone in sin. Hos. 4:17. "Ephraim is joined to his idols; let him alone." He often leaves them to go great lengths in sin, and does not afford them that restraining grace that he does to others. He leaves them to their own blindness, so that they always remain ignorant of God and Christ, and of the things that belong to their peace. They are sometimes left to hardness of heart, to be stupid and senseless, so that nothing will ever thoroughly awaken them. They are left to their own hearts lusts, to continue in some wicked practices all their days. Some are left to their covetousness, some to drunkenness, some to uncleanness, some to a proud, contentious, and envious spirit, and some to a spirit of finding fault and quarrelling with God. God leaves them to their folly, to act exceedingly foolishly, to delay and put off the concerns of their souls from time to time, never to think the present time the best, but always to keep it at a distance, and foolishly to continue flattering themselves with hopes of long life, and to put far away the evil day, and to bless themselves in their hearts, and say, "I shall have peace, though I add drunkenness to thirst." Some are so left that they are miserably hardened and senseless, when others all around them are awakened, and greatly concerned, and inquire what they shall do to be saved. Sometimes God leaves men to a fatal backsliding for a misimprovement of the strivings of his spirit. They are let alone, to backslide perpetually. Dreadful is the life and condition of those

who are thus left of God. We have instances of the misery of such in God's holy word, particularly of Saul and Judas. Such are, sometimes, very much left to the power of Satan to tempt them, to hurry them on in wicked courses, and exceedingly to aggravate their own guilt and misery.

2. Indignation and wrath are sometimes exercised towards them in this world, by their being cursed in all that concerns them. They have this curse of God following them in every thing. They are cursed in all their enjoyments. If they are in prosperity, it is cursed to them; if they possess riches, if they have honour, if they enjoy pleasure, there is the curse of God that attends it. Psalm 92:7. "When the wicked spring as the grass, and when all the workers of iniquity do flourish; it is that they may be destroyed for ever."

There is a curse of God that attends their ordinary food: every morsel of bread which they eat, and every drop of water which they drink. Psalm 69:22. "Let their table become a snare before them; and that which should have been for their welfare let it become a trap." They are cursed in all their employments, in whatsoever they put their hands to; when they go into the field to labour, or are at work at their respective trades. Deut. 28:16. "Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field." The curse of God remains in the houses where they dwell, and brimstone is scattered in their habitations. Job 18:15. The curse of God attends them in the afflictions which they meet with, whereas the afflictions that good men meet with, are fatherly corrections, and are sent in mercy. The afflictions which wicked men meet with are in wrath, and come from God as an enemy, and are the foretaste of their everlasting punishment. The curse of God attends them also in their spiritual enjoyments and opportunities, and it would have been better for them not to have been born in a land of light. Their having the Bible and the sabbath, is only to aggravate their guilt and misery. The word of God when preached to them is a savour of death unto death. Better would it be for them, if Christ had never come into the world, if there had never been any offer of a Saviour. Life itself is a curse to them; they live only to fill up the measure of their sins. What they seek in all the enjoyments, and employments, and concerns of life, is their own happiness; but they never obtain it; they never obtain any true comfort, all the comforts which they have are worthless and unsatisfying. If they lived a hundred years with never so much of the world in their possession, their life is all filled up with vanity. All that they have is vanity of vanities, they find no true rest for their souls, they do but feed on the east wind, they have no real contentment. Whatever outward pleasures they may have, their souls are starving. They have no true peace of conscience, they have nothing of the favour of God. Whatever they do, they live in vain, and to no purpose; they are useless in the creation of God, they do not answer the end of their being. They live without God, and have not the presence of God, nor any communion with him. But on the contrary, all that they have and all that they do, does but contribute to their own misery, and render their future and everlasting state the more dreadful. The best of wicked men live but miserable and wretched

lives, with all their prosperity; their lives are most undesirable, and whatever they have, the wrath of God abides upon them.

3. After a time they must die. Eccles. 9:3. "This is an evil among all things that are done under the sun, that there is one event unto all: yea, also the heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead."

Death is a far different thing when it befalls wicked men, from what it is when it befalls good men; to the wicked it is in execution of the curse of the law, and of the wrath of God. When a wicked man dies, God cuts him off in wrath, he is taken away as by a tempest of wrath, he is driven away in his wickedness. Prov. 14:32. "The wicked is driven away in his wickedness: but the righteous hath hope in his death." Job 18:18. "He shall be driven from light into darkness, and chased out of the world." Job 27:21. "The east wind carrieth him away, and he departeth, and as a storm, hurleth him out of his place." Though wicked men while they live, may live in worldly prosperity, yet they cannot live here always, but they must die. The place that knoweth him, shall know him no more; and the eye that hath seen him shall see him no more in the land of the living. . . .

4. Wicked men are oftentimes the subjects of much tribulation and anguish of heart on their death beds. Sometimes the pains of body are very extreme and dreadful; and what they endure in those agonies and struggles for life, after they are past speaking, and when body and soul are rending asunder, none can know. Hezekiah had an awful sense of it; he compares it to a lion's breaking all his bones. Isaiah 38:12, 13. "Mine age is departed, and is removed from me as a shepherd's tent: I have cut off as a weaver my life; he will cut me off with pining sickness; from day even to night, wilt thou make an end of me. I reckoned till morning, that, as a lion, so will he break all my bones: from day even to night, wilt thou make an end of me." But this is but little to what is sometimes undergone by wicked men in their souls when they are on their death beds. Death appears sometimes with an exceedingly terrible aspect to them; when it comes and stares them in the face, they cannot bear to behold it. It is always so, if wicked men have notice of the approach of death, and have reason and conscience in exercise, and are not either stupid or distracted. When this king of terrors comes to show himself to them, and they are called forth to meet him, O how do they dread the conflict! But meet him they must: "There is no man that hath power over the spirit to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death: and there is no discharge in that war; neither shall wickedness deliver those that are given to it." Death comes to them with all his dreadful armour, and his sting not taken away; and it is enough to fill their souls with torment that cannot be expressed. It is an awful thing for a person to be lying on a sick bed, to be given over by physicians, to have friends stand weeping round the bed as expecting to part with him; and in such circumstances as those, to have no hope, to be without an interest in Christ, and to have the guilt of his sins lying on his soul, to be going out of the world without his peace being made with God, to stand before

his holy judgment-seat in all his sins, without any thing to plead, or answer.

II. I shall describe the wrath that attends wicked men hereafter.

1. The soul, when it is separated from the body, shall be cast down into hell. There is without doubt a particular judgment by which every man is to be tried at death, beside the general judgment: for the soul, as soon as it departs from the body, appears before God to be judged. Eccles. 12. "Then shall the dust return to the earth, as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God, who gave it": that is, to be judged and disposed of by him. Heb. 9:27. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." But this particular judgment is probably no such solemn transaction, as that which will be at the day of judgment; the soul must appear before God, but not in the manner that men shall appear at the end of the world. The souls of wicked men shall not go to heaven to appear before God, neither shall Christ descend from heaven for the soul to appear before him; neither is it to be supposed, that the soul shall be carried to any place where there is some special symbol of the divine presence, in order to be judged. But as God is every where present, so the soul shall be made immediately sensible of his presence. Souls in a separate state shall be sensible of the presence of God and of his operations in another manner than we now are. All separate spirits may be said to be before God: the saints are in his glorious presence, and the wicked in hell are in his dreadful presence; they are said to be tormented in the presence of the Lamb. Rev. 14: 10. "The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb." So the soul of a wicked man, at its departure from the body, will be made immediately sensible that it is before an infinitely holy and dreadful God and his own final Judge; and will then see how terrible a God he is, he will see how holy a God he is, how infinitely he hates sin; he will be sensible of the greatness of God's anger against sin, and how dreadful is his displeasure. Then will he be sensible of the dreadful majesty and power of God, and how fearful a thing it is to fall into his hands. Then the soul shall come naked with all its guilt, and in all its filthiness, a vile, loathsome, abominable creature, an enemy to God, a rebel against him, with the guilt of all its rebellion and disregard of God's commands, and contempt of his authority, and slight of the glorious gospel, before God as its Judge. . . .

2. Here the souls of wicked men shall suffer extreme and amazing misery in a separate state, until the resurrection. This misery is not indeed their full punishment; nor is the happiness of the saints before the day of judgment their full happiness. It is with the souls of wicked men, as it is with devils. Though the devils suffer extreme torment now, yet they do not suffer their complete punishment; and therefore it is said, that they are cast down to hell, and bound in chains. II Peter 2:4. "God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down

to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.” . . .

But yet they are there in extreme and inconceivable misery; they are there deprived of all good, they have no rest nor comfort, and they are subject to the wrath of God; God there executes wrath on them without mercy, and they are swallowed up in wrath. Luke 16:24. “And he cried, and said, father Abraham, have mercy on me; and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.” Here we are told that, when the rich man died, he lifts up his eyes being in torment, and he tells Abraham that he is tormented in a flame; and it seems that the flame was not only about him, but in him; he therefore asks for a drop of water to cool his tongue. This doubtless is to represent to us that they are full of the wrath of God as it were with fire, and they shall there be tormented in the midst of devils and damned spirits; and they shall have inexpressible torment from their own consciences. God’s wrath is the fire that never shall be quenched, and conscience is the worm that never dies. How much do men suffer from horror of conscience sometimes in this world, but how much more in hell!

3. The separate souls of the wicked, besides the present misery that they suffer, shall be in amazing fear of their more full punishment at the day of judgment. Though their punishment in their separate state be exceedingly dreadful, and far more than they can bear, though it be so great as to sink and crush them, yet this is not all; they are reserved for a much greater and more dreadful punishment at the day of judgment; their torment will then be vastly augmented, and continue in that augmentation to all eternity. Their punishment will be so much greater then, that their misery in this separate state is but as an imprisonment before an execution; they, as well as the devils, are bound in chains of darkness to the judgment of the great day.

4. When the day of judgment comes they shall rise to the resurrection of damnation. When that day comes, all mankind, that have died from off the face of the earth shall arise; not only the righteous, but also the wicked. Dan. 12:2. “And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth, shall awake; some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.” Rev. 20:13. “And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged, every man according to his works.” The damned in hell know not the time when the day of judgment will be, but when the time comes it will be made known, and it will be the most dreadful news that ever was told in that world of misery. It is always a doleful time in hell; the world of darkness is always full of shrieks and doleful cries; but when the news is heard, that the day appointed for judgment is come, hell will be filled with louder shrieks and more dreadful cries than ever before. When Christ comes in the clouds of heaven to judgment, the news of it will fill both earth and hell with mourning and bitter crying. We read that all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him, and so shall all the inhabitants of hell, and then must the souls of

the wicked come up to be united to their bodies, and stand before the Judge. They shall not come willingly, but shall be dragged forth as a malefactor is dragged out of his dungeon to execution. They were unwilling when they died to leave the earth to go to hell; but now they will be much more unwilling to come out of hell to go to the last judgment. . . .

5. Then must they appear before their judge to give up their account. They will find no mountains or rocks to fall upon them, that can cover them, and hide them from the wrath of the Lamb. Many of them will see others at that time, who were formerly their acquaintance, who shall appear with glorious bodies, and with joyful countenances and songs of praise, and mounting up as with wings to meet the Lord in the air, while they are left behind. Many shall see their former neighbours and acquaintance, their companions, their brothers, and their wives taken and they left. They shall be summoned to go and appear before the judgment seat; and go they must, however unwilling; they must stand at Christ's left hand, in the midst of devils, and wicked men. This shall again add still further amazement, and will cause their horror still to be in a further degree than ever. With what horror will that company come together! and then shall they be called to their account; then shall be brought to light the hidden things of darkness; then shall all the wickedness of their hearts be made known; then shall be declared the actual wickedness they have been guilty of; then shall appear their secret sins that they have kept hid from the eye of the world; then shall be manifested in their true light those sins that they used to plead for, and to excuse and justify. . . .

6. Then the sentence of condemnation shall be pronounced by the Judge upon them. Matt. 25:41. "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." This sentence will be pronounced with awful majesty; and there shall be great indignation, and dreadful wrath shall then appear in the Judge, and in his voice, with which he shall pronounce the sentence; and what a horror and amazement will these words strike into the hearts of the wicked, on whom they shall be pronounced! Every word and syllable shall be like the most amazing thunder to them, and shall pierce their souls like the fiercest lightning. The Judge will bid them depart from him; he will drive them from his presence, as exceedingly abominable to him, and he shall give them the epithet *accursed*; they shall be an accursed company, and he will not only bid them depart from his presence, but into everlasting fire, to dwell there as their only fit habitation. And what shows the dreadfulness of the fire, is, that it is prepared for the devil and his angels: they shall lie for ever in the same fire in which the devils, those grand enemies of God, shall be tormented. When this sentence shall be pronounced, there shall be in the vast company at the left hand tremblings, and mourning, and crying, and gnashing of teeth, in a new manner, beyond all that ever was before. If the devils, those proud and lofty spirits, tremble many ages beforehand at the bare thoughts of this sentence, how will they tremble when it comes to be pronounced! And how, alas! will wicked men tremble! Their anguish will be aggravated by hearing that blessed sentence pronounced on those who shall be

at the right hand: "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." . . .

7. In this condition [i.e., in those everlasting burnings to which they are sentenced] they shall remain throughout the never-ending ages of eternity. Their punishment shall be then complete, and it shall remain in this completion for ever. Now shall all that come upon them which they so long trembled for fear of, while their souls were in a separate state. They will dwell in a fire that never shall be quenched, and here they must wear out eternity. Here they must wear out one thousand years after another, and that without end. There is no reckoning up the millions of years or millions of ages; all arithmetic here fails, no rules of multiplication can reach the amount, for there is no end. They shall have nothing to do to pass away their eternity, but to conflict with those torments; this will be their work for ever and ever; God shall have no other use or employment for them; this is the way that they must answer the end of their being. And they never shall have any rest, nor any atonement, but their torments will hold up to their height, and shall never grow any easier by their being accustomed to them. Time will seem long to them, every moment shall seem long to them, but they shall never have done with the ages of their torment. . . .

The Portion of the Righteous

Romans 2:10—*But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good.*

The Apostle, having in the preceding verses declared what is the portion of wicked men; viz, indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish; in this verse declares what is the portion assigned to good men. in the words of the text we should observe,

1. The description of a good man; viz, *the man that worketh good*. Such men are here described by the fruit which they bring forth. Christ has taught us that the tree is known by its fruit. Paul here describes them by that which most distinguishes them; not by the external privileges which they enjoy, or the light under which they live; but by the fruits which they bring forth. For as the Apostle says, in verse 13, "Not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of it shall be justified." That which distinguishes good men from bad, is not that they *hear* good, or that they *profess* good, or that they *intend* good; but that they *do* good. They are *workers* of good.

2. The reward of such a man; viz. "*glory, honour, and peace*"; in which are mentioned three sorts of good that are assigned to them as their portion. 1. Their moral good, expressed by the word *glory*. Glory shall be given them; i.e. they shall be made excellent and glorious. They shall be endued with those excellent and glorious qualifications, which will render them beautiful and lovely. They shall have the image of God, and be partakers of his holiness. Thus the word glory is

used by St. Paul, II Cor. 3:18, We are changed into the same image from glory to glory. 2. Their relative good; *Honour*. They shall be in most honourable circumstances. They shall be advanced to great dignity, receive a relation to God, and Christ, and the heavenly inhabitants, and God shall put honour upon them. 3. Their natural good; *Peace*: which, as it is used in the scriptures, signifies happiness; and includes all comfort, joy and pleasure.

I shall endeavour to show from the text, that glory, honour, and peace are the portion which God has given to all good men. In describing their happiness, I shall consider the successive parts of it; both here and hereafter.

First. I propose to treat of their happiness in this world. Those who are truly good men have been the subjects of a real, thorough work of conversion, and have had their hearts turned from sin to God. Of such persons it may be said, that they are truly blessed. They are often pronounced blessed by God. He is infinitely wise, and sees and knows all things. He perfectly knows who are blessed, and who are miserable. He hath said, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly."—"Blessed is he whose sins are forgiven."—"Blessed is the man that maketh the Lord his trust."—"Blessed are the poor in spirit"—"the meek"—"the merciful"— "the pure in heart." . . .

Secondly. I proceed to consider the happiness of the saints in Death. It may seem a mystery to the world that men should be happy in death, which the world looks upon as the most terrible of all things; but thus it is to the saints. Their happiness is built upon a rock, and it will stand the shock of death: when the storm and floods of death come with their greatest violence, it stands firm, and neither death nor hell can overthrow it. . . .

Thirdly. Let us next consider the happiness of the saints, in their state of Separation from the Body.

1. When the soul departs from the body, it is received by the blessed angels and conducted by them to the third heavens. On the eve of its departure there is a guard of angels standing round the dying bed; and the devils, though eager to seize upon it as their prey, shall by no means be suffered to come nigh. The holy angels shall be a guard to the soul, to keep off all its enemies. We are taught that this is part of the office in which God employs them. Psalm 34:7. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them." Psalm 91:11. "For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways."... There are some who say that there is no such place as heaven; but this is evidently a mistake, for the heaven, into which the man Christ Jesus entered with his glorified body, is certainly some place. It is absurd to suppose that the heaven where the body of Christ is, is not a place. To say that the body of Christ is in no place, is the same thing as to say he has no body. The heaven where Christ is, is a place; for he was seen ascending, and will be seen descending again; and the heaven where the departed souls of the saints are, is the same

heaven where Christ has ascended. And therefore Stephen, when he was departing this life, saw heaven opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. And he prayed to that same Jesus whom he saw, that he would receive his spirit; i.e. that he would receive it to him, where he saw him, at the right hand of God. And the apostle Paul signifies, that if he should depart, he should be with Christ. Phil. 1:23. "For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better": II Cor. 5:8. "We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." Besides there are some of the saints there already with their bodies, as Enoch and Elijah. . . .

2. They shall remain there in a state of exceeding glory and blessedness, till the resurrection. They shall remain there in the enjoyment of God, dwelling with Jesus Christ in a state of perfect rest, without the least disturbance or molestation. Rev. 4:13. "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: Yea, saith the spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." There they shall dwell in habitations of sweet delight and pleasure in Paradise; there they shall drink of those rivers of pleasures for evermore; there they shall dwell in perfect light and perfect love; there they shall see and converse with God and Christ, and with angels and glorious spirits, and shall contemplate the wonderful love of God to men in sending his only Son; there shall they contemplate the glorious love of God to them, the love he had to them before the foundation of the world. There shall they see and know what love Christ had to them, that influenced him to lay down his life for them: and shall behold the beauty and excellency of Christ, and see face to face, and know even as they are known. . . .

3. They remain in a joyful expectation of their more full and complete blessedness at the resurrection. As the wicked have not their full punishment until after the resurrection, so neither have the saints their complete happiness. Though they have attained to such exceeding glory, yet they are not yet arrived at its highest degrees, for that is reserved for their final state. The reward which the saints receive after the resurrection, is often spoken of as their chief reward. This is the reward that Christ has promised. John 6:40. "And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on him, may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day." This is the chief reward that the saints seek and wait for. Rom. 8:23. "And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the spirit, even we ourselves groan earnestly within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." Phil. 3:11. "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." "Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection." So the happiness, that shall be given at Christ's second coming, is spoken of as the principal happiness. Titus 2:13. "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."

This the saints will be in joyful expectation of in heaven; they shall rest in sweet repose on God's promise that it shall be so, their desires of it bringing no uneasiness; they rejoicing in it most in the consideration that it will be in God's time, in the fittest and best time.

Fourthly. I shall consider the glory, honour, and peace, which the godly shall receive at the Resurrection and the Day of Judgment.

1. When the time appointed comes, notice shall be given of it in heaven, which will be to their exceeding joy. God has in his own eternal counsels fixed the time, but now it is kept secret; it is not only not known by any on the earth, but neither is it known in heaven by either saints or angels there, and the man Christ Jesus himself, in his state of humiliation, did not himself know it: Matt. 24:36. "But of that day and hour knoweth no man; no not the angels of heaven, but my Father only." The saints and angels in heaven have a joyful expectation of it, but they know not when it is; but when the time comes, God's eternal counsels concerning it shall be made known; the joyful tidings shall be proclaimed through all heaven, that all may prepare to attend the Lord Jesus Christ in his descent to the earth.

2. They shall descend with Christ from the highest heaven towards the earth. When notice is given to the heavenly host, they shall all gather themselves together to attend on this most joyful and glorious occasion; and then the glorious Son of God shall descend, and the holy angels with him, and not only the angels, but the souls of the saints shall come with Christ. I Thess. 4:14. "For if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." Christ shall descend with the glory of his Father; he shall appear in a glory becoming the Supreme Lord and Judge of heaven and earth. Now heaven will for a time be left empty of its inhabitants; those glorious and blessed abodes will be deserted by those that dwelt there, to attend the Judge of the world. . . .

3. The dead in Christ shall arise at the sound of the last trumpet with glorified bodies, and the living saints shall see them. The holy and blessed souls of saints that descended from heaven with Christ, shall then be reunited to those bodies that shall be prepared by infinite wisdom and skill to be fit organs for a holy and happy soul. The body shall not rise as it was before; there shall be a vast difference in it. I Cor. 15:42, 43, 44. "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body." The glory of that body that the saints shall rise with is what we now cannot conceive of. It shall not be such a dull and heavy moulded thing as it is now: it shall be active and vigorous. as a flame of fire fit for the use of a glorified soul. . . .

4. Then shall the good works, which the saints have done, be declared to their peace and glory. We are often told that every man shall be judged according to his works, and Christ keeps a book of remembrance of the good works of the saints as well as of the sins of the ungodly. And however mean and polluted that which the saints do, is in itself, yet all the pollution that attends it is hid, and every thing they do for God that has the least sincerity in it is precious in God's eyes. Through his infinite grace it shall in no case lose its reward, neither shall it in any wise lose its honour. At the day of judgment they shall receive praise and glory in reward for it. Christ will declare all the good they have done to their honour; what they did secretly and the world knew it not, and when they did not let their left hand know what their right hand did. Then shall they receive praise and honour for all their labour, for all their self-denial, and all their suffering in the cause of Christ; and those good works of theirs that were despised, and for which they were condemned, and suffered reproach, shall now be set in true light; and however they were reproached and slandered by men, they shall receive praise of God in the sight of angels and men. I Cor. 4:5. . . .

5. The saints shall sit on thrones with Christ, to judge wicked men and devils. Christ will put that honour upon them on that day, he will cause them to sit on his right hand as judges with him, and so the saints shall judge the world. Matt. 19:28. "And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel." I Cor. 6:2, 3. "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?" They shall judge kings and princes who were their persecutors, and the devils, who were their tempters.

6. At the finishing of the judgment Christ shall pronounce the blessed sentence upon them, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

This blessed sentence Christ shall pronounce on them with inexpressible manifestations of grace and love. Every word of it will be ravishing to them, and will cause raptures of joy in their hearts; that this glorious person, though he orders with such indignation the wicked to depart from him, yet will so sweetly invite them to come with him, and that he should accost them after such a manner, saying, "ye blessed of my Father." Christ will pronounce them blessed in the sight of men and angels; and blessed indeed, because blessed by his Father. There will not only be a manifestation of Christ's love to them in this sentence, but a declaration of the Father's love, for they are declared to be blessed of him. Christ shall invite them to come with him, and for no less a purpose then to inherit a kingdom. Christ gives them a glorious kingdom; the wealth to which he invites them is the wealth of a kingdom; and the honour he gives them is the honour of kings; and what yet adds to the blessedness is this, that it is a kingdom

prepared for them from the foundation of the world. God loved them from all eternity, and therefore he has prepared a kingdom for them. God had respect to them in the creation of the world, and then prepared this glorious kingdom for them, and out of love to them. They have therefore a right to it, and now therefore they are invited to come to possess it; and not only to possess it, but to *inherit* it, that is, to possess it as *heirs*, as those that have a right to the kingdom by virtue of their being his children. . . .

. . . to sum up this whole description, there shall never be any end to their glory and blessedness. Therefore is it so often called eternal life, and everlasting life. We are told that at the day of judgment, when the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment, the righteous shall enter into life eternal. Matt. 25:46. The pleasures which there are at God's right hand, are said to be for evermore; Psalm 16:11: And that this is not merely a long duration, but an absolute eternity, is evident from that which Christ has said, that those who believe on him shall not die. John 6:50; Rev. 22:5. In the description of the New Jerusalem it is said, "And they shall reign for ever and ever." The eternity of this blessedness shall crown all. If the saints knew that there would be an end to their happiness, though at never so great a distance, yet it would be a great damp to their joy. The greater the happiness is, so much the more uncomfortable would the thoughts of an end be, and so much the more joyful will it be to think that there will be no end. The saints will surely know that there will be no more danger of their happiness coming to an end, than there will be that the being of God will come to an end. As God is eternal, so their happiness is eternal; as long as the fountain lasts, they need not fear but they shall be supplied. . . .

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