

Quotes on Judgement and the Wrath of God

by

Jonathan Edwards

So one part of the punishment of the ungodly will be the open shame and disgrace which they shall suffer (*at the final judgment*). Although many of them have proudly lifted up their heads in this world, have had a very high thought of themselves, and have obtained outward honour among men; yet God will put them to open shame, by showing all their wickedness and moral filthiness before the whole assembly of angels and men; by manifesting his abhorrence of them, in placing them upon his left hand, among devils and foul spirits; and by turning them away into the most loathsome, as well as most dreadful pit of hell, to dwell there for ever.

Thou hast despised the mighty power of God; thou hast not been afraid of it. Now why is it not fit that God should show the greatness of his power in thy ruin? What king is there who will not show his authority in the punishment of those subjects that despise it!

If men bring not forth fruit to God, there is no other way in which they can be useful passively, but in being destroyed. They are fit for nothing else. They are not fit to be suffered to continue always in this world. God suffers them to live for the present, but it is only for a certain season. They are here in a transitory state. It is not fit that this world should be the constant abode of those who bring forth no fruit to God. It is not fit that the barren tree should be allowed always to stand in the vineyard. The husbandman lets it stand for a while, till he digs about it, dungs it, and proves it to be incurable, or till a convenient time to cut it down come; but it is not fit that such a tree should stand here always. It is not fit that they who bring forth no fruit to God, should be suffered to live always in a world which is so full of the goodness of God, or that his goodness should be spent upon them forever.

God will appear to be your mere enemy; and will be so for ever, without being reconciled. But if it be so, he will doubtless act as such. If he eternally hates you, he will act in his

dealings with you, as one that hates you without any love or pity. The proper tendency and aim of hatred is the misery of the object hated; so that you may expect God will make you miserable, and that you will not be spared.—Now, God does not act as your mere enemy: if he corrects you, it is in measure. He now exercises abundance of mercy to you. He threatens you now; but it is in a way of warning, and so in a merciful way. He now calls, invites, and strives with you, and waits to be gracious to you. But hereafter there will be an end to all these things: in another world God will cease to show you mercy.

God hath also a right to the character of supreme ruler, by reason of the absolute dependence of every creature on him. All creatures and rational creatures no less than others are wholly derived from him, and every moment are wholly dependent upon him for being, and for all good: so that they are properly his possession. And as, by virtue of this, he hath a right to give his creatures whatever rules of conduct he pleases, or whatever rules are agreeable to his own wisdom; so the mind and will of the creature ought to be entirely conformed to the nature and will of the Creator, and to the rules he gives, that are expressive of it. For the same reason, he hath a right to *judge* their actions and conduct, and to fulfil the sanction of his law. He who hath an absolute and independent right to give laws, hath evermore the same right to judge those to whom the laws are given.

It is not inconsistent with the mercy of God, to inflict an eternal punishment on wicked men. It is an unreasonable and unscriptural notion of the mercy of God, that he is merciful in such a sense that he cannot bear that penal justice should be executed. This is to conceive of the mercy of God as a passion to which his nature is so subject that God is liable to be moved, and affected, and overcome by seeing a creature in misery, so that he cannot bear to see justice executed: which is a most unworthy and absurd notion of the mercy of God, and would, if true, argue great weakness.—It would be a great defect, and not a perfection, in the sovereign and supreme Judge of the world, to be merciful in such a sense that he could not bear to have penal justice executed. It is a very unscriptural notion of the mercy of God. Faithful ministers will then give an account with joy, concerning those who have received them well, and made a good improvement of their ministry; and these will be given them, at that day, as their crown of rejoicing. And, at the same time, they will give an account of the ill treatment of such as have not well received them and their messages from Christ. They

will meet these, not as they used to do in this world, to counsel and warn them, but to bear witness against them, as their judges and assessors with Christ, to condemn them. And, on the other hand, the people will at that day rise up in judgment against wicked and unfaithful ministers, who have sought their own temporal interest more than the good of the souls of their flock.

Doth it seem to thee incredible, that God should be so utterly regardless of the sinner's welfare, as so to sink him into an infinite abyss of misery? Is this shocking to thee? And is it not at all shocking to thee, that thou shouldst be so utterly regardless as thou hast been of the honour and glory of the infinite God?

If you (an unrepentant sinner on the Day of Judgment) cry to God to pity you, he will be so far from pitying you in your doleful case, or showing you the least regard or favour, that instead of that, he will only tread you under foot. And though he will know that you cannot bear the weight of omnipotence treading upon you, yet he will not regard that, but he will crush you under his feet without mercy; he will crush out your blood, and make it fly, and it shall be sprinkled on his garments, so as to stain all his raiment. He will not only hate you, but he will have you in the utmost contempt: no place shall be thought fit for you, but under his feet to be trodden down as the mire of the streets.

There are the black clouds of God's wrath now hanging directly over your heads, full of the dreadful storm, and big with thunder; and were it not for the restraining hand of God, it would immediately burst forth upon you. The sovereign pleasure of God, for the present, stays his rough wind; otherwise it would come with fury, and your destruction would come like a whirlwind, and you would be like the chaff on the summer threshing floor.

The parting of soul and body was dreadful to them (unbelievers) when they died, but their meeting again at the resurrection will be more dreadful. They shall receive their bodies loathsome and hideous, agreeably to that shame and everlasting contempt to which they shall arise. As the bodies of the saints shall arise more glorious than when on earth, and shall be like unto Christ's glorious body, so we may well suppose that the bodies of the wicked will arise proportionably more deformed and hideous. Oftentimes in this world a

polluted soul is hid in a fine and comely body, but it will not be so then when things shall appear as they are; the form and aspect of the body shall be answerable to the hellish deformity of the soul. Thus shall they rise out of their graves, and shall lift up their eyes, and see the Son of God in the clouds of heaven, in the glory of his Father, with all his holy angels with him. Then shall they see their Judge in his awful majesty, which will be the most amazing sight to them that ever they saw, and will still add new horrors. That awful and terrible majesty in which he will appear, and the manifestation of his infinite holiness, will pierce their souls. They shall come forth out of their graves all trembling and astonished; fearfulness shall surprise them....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. And then shall all their sins be set forth in all their dreadful aggravations, all their filthiness will be brought to light to their everlasting shame and contempt.

Upon this (*the last trumpet*) all the dead shall rise from their graves; all both small and great, who shall have lived upon earth since the foundation of the world; those who died before the flood, and those who were drowned in the flood, all that have died since that time, and that shall die to the end of the world. There will be a great moving upon the face of the earth, and in the waters, in bringing bone to his bone, in opening graves, and bringing together all the scattered particles of dead bodies. The earth shall give up the dead that are in it, and the sea shall give up the dead that are in it. However the parts of the bodies of many are divided and scattered; however many have been burnt, and their bodies have been turned to ashes and smoke, and driven to the four winds.. yet the all-wise and all-powerful God can immediately bring every part to his part again. Of this vast multitude some shall rise to life, and others to condemnation. John v. 28, 29. "All that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good, unto the resurrection

of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." When the bodies are prepared, the departed souls shall again enter into their bodies, and be re-united to them, never more to be separated. The souls of the wicked shall be brought up out of hell, though not out of misery, and shall very unwillingly enter into their bodies, which will be but eternal prisons to them. Rev. xx. 13. "And death and hell delivered up the dead that were in them." They shall lift their eyes full of the utmost amazement and horror to see their awful Judge. And perhaps the bodies with which they shall be raised will be most filthy and loathsome, thus properly corresponding to the inward, moral turpitude of their souls.

The evil works of the wicked shall then be brought forth to light. They must then hear of all their profaneness, their impenitence, their obstinate unbelief, their abuse of ordinances, and various other sins. The various aggravations of their sins will also be brought to view, as how this man sinned after such and such warnings, that after the receipt of such and such mercies; one after being so and so favoured with outward light, another after having been the subject of inward conviction, excited by the immediate agency of God. Concerning these sins, they shall be called to account to see what answer they can make for themselves.

So the immutable truth of God, in the threatenings of his law against the sins of men, was never so manifested as it is in Jesus Christ, for there never was any other so great a trial of the unalterableness of the truth of God in those threatenings, as when sin came to be imputed to his own Son. And then in Christ has been seen already an actual complete accomplishment of those threatenings, which never has been nor will be seen in any other instance; because the eternity that will be taken up in fulfilling those threatenings on others, never will be finished.

God doth always lay, as it were, a restraint upon himself; he doth not stir up his wrath; he stays his rough wind in the day of his east wind; he lets not his arm light down on wicked men with its full weight. But when sinners shall have filled up the measure of their sins, there will be no caution, no restraint. His rough wind will not be staved nor moderated. The wrath of God will be poured out like fire. He will come forth, not only in anger, but in the fierceness of his anger; he will execute wrath with power, so as to show what his wrath is, and make his power known. There will be nothing to alleviate his wrath; his heavy wrath will

lie on them, without any thing to lighten the burden, or to keep off, in any measure, the full weight of it from pressing the soul.—His eye will not spare, neither will he regard the sinner's cries and lamentations, however loud and bitter. Then shall wicked men know that God is the Lord; they shall know how great that majesty is which they have despised, and how dreadful that threatened wrath is which they have so little regarded. Then shall come on wicked men that punishment which they deserve. God will exact of them the uttermost farthing. Their iniquities are marked before him; they are all written in his book; and in the future world he will reckon with them, and they must pay all the debt. Their sins are laid up in store with God; they are sealed up among his treasures; and them he will recompense, even recompense into their bosoms.

How *dreadful* the wrath of God is, when it is executed to the uttermost. To make you in some measure sensible of that, I desire you to consider whose wrath it is. The wrath of a king is the roaring of a lion; but this is the wrath of Jehovah, the Lord God Omnipotent. Let us consider, what can we rationally think of it? How dreadful must be the wrath of such a Being, when it comes upon a person to the uttermost, without any pity, or moderation, or merciful circumstances! What must be the uttermost of his wrath, who made heaven and earth by the word of his power; who spake, and it was done, who commanded, and it stood fast! What must his wrath be, who commandeth the sun, and it rises not, and sealeth up the stars! What must his wrath be, who shaketh the earth out of its place, and causeth the pillars of heaven to tremble! What must his wrath be, who rebuketh the sea, and maketh it dry, who removeth the mountains out of their places, and overturneth them in his anger! What must his wrath be, whose majesty is so awful, that no man could live in the sight of it! What must the wrath of such a Being be, when it comes to the uttermost, when he makes his majesty appear and shine bright in the misery of wicked men! And what is a worm of the dust before the fury and under the weight of this wrath, which the stoutest devils cannot bear, but utterly sink, and are crushed under it.

The wrath of God is like great waters that are dammed for the present; they increase more and more, and rise higher and higher, till an outlet is given; and the longer the stream is stopped, the more rapid and mighty is its course, when once it is let loose. It is true, that judgment against your evil works has not been executed hitherto; the floods of God's

vengeance have been withheld; but your guilt in the meantime is constantly increasing, and you are every day treasuring up more wrath; the waters are constantly rising, and waxing more and more mighty; and there is nothing but the mere pleasure of God, that holds the waters back, that are unwilling to be stopped, and press hard to go forward. If God should only withdraw his hand from the flood-gate, it would immediately fly open, and the fiery floods of the fierceness and wrath of God, would rush forth with inconceivable fury, and would come upon you with omnipotent power; and if your strength were ten thousand times greater than it is, yea, ten thousand times greater than the strength of the stoutest, sturdiest devil in hell, it would be nothing to withstand or endure it.

Seriously consider, if you live in the ways of sin, and appear at that day with the guilt of it upon you, how you will be able to endure the sight or the hearing of these things, and whether horror and amazement will not be likely to seize you, when you shall see the judge descending, and hear the trump of God. What account will you be able to give, when it shall be inquired of you, why you led such a sinful, wicked life? What will you be able to say for yourselves, when it shall be asked, why you neglected such and such particular duties, as the duty of secret prayer, for instance? or why you have habitually practised such and such particular sins or lusts? Although you be so careless of your conduct and manner of life, make so light of sin, and proceed in it so freely, with little or no dread or remorse; yet you must give an account of every sin that you commit, of every idle word that you speak, and of every sinful thought of your hearts. Every time you deviate from the rules of justice, of temperance, or of charity; every time you indulge any lust, whether secretly or openly, you must give an account of it: it will never be forgotten, it stands written in that book which will be opened on that day.

(The redeemed) When they shall see what manifestations of amazement there will be in you *(the damned at the judgment of God)*, at the heaving of this dreadful sentence, and that every syllable of it pierces you like a thunderbolt, and sinks you into the lowest depths of horror and despair; when they shall behold you with a frightened, amazed countenance, trembling and astonished, and shall hear you groan and gnash your teeth; these things will not move them at all to pity you, but you will see them with a holy joyfulness in their countenances, and with songs in their mouths. When they shall see you turned away and

beginning to enter into the great furnace, and shall see how you shrink at it, and hear how you shriek and cry out; yet they will not be at all grieved for you, but at the same time you will hear from them renewed praises and hallelujahs for the true and righteous judgments of God, in so dealing with you. Then you will doubtless remember how those your glorified parents seemed to be concerned for your salvation, while you were here in this world; you will remember how they were wont to counsel and warn you, and how little you regarded their counsels, and how they seemed to be concerned and grieved, that there appeared no more effect of their endeavours for the good of your souls. You will then see them praising God for executing just vengeance on you, for setting so light by their counsels and reproofs. However here they loved you, and were concerned for you, now they will rise up in judgment against you, and will declare how your sins are aggravated by the endeavours which they to no purpose used with you, to bring you to forsake sin and practise virtue, and to seek and serve God; but you were obstinate under all, and would not hearken to them. They will declare how inexcusable you are upon this account.

(At the Day of Judgment) The sentence will be pronounced. Christ will say to the wicked on the left hand, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." How dreadful will these words of the judge be to the poor, miserable, despairing wretches on the left hand! How amazing will every syllable of them be! How will they pierce them to the soul! These words show the greatest wrath and abhorrence. Christ will bid them depart; he will send them away from his presence, will remove them for ever far out of his sight, into an everlasting separation from God, as being most loathsome, and unfit to dwell in his presence, and enjoy communion with him. Christ will call them *cursed; Depart, ye cursed*, to whom everlasting wrath and ruin belong; who are by your own wickedness prepared for nothing else, but to be firebrands of hell; who are the fit objects and vessels of the vengeance and fury of the Almighty. *Into fire*: he will not send them away merely into a loathsome prison, the receptacle of the filth and rubbish of the universe; but into a furnace of fire; that must be their dwelling-place, there they must be tormented with the most racking pain and anguish. It is *everlasting* fire; there is eternity in the sentence, which infinitely aggravates the doom, and will make every word of it immensely more dreadful, sinking, and amazing to the souls that receive it. *Prepared for the devil and his angels*: this sets forth the greatness and intenseness of the torments, as the preceding part of the

sentence does the duration....What dolorous cries, shrieks, and groans! What trembling, and wringing of hands, and gnashing of teeth, will there then be! But with the most benign aspect, in the most endearing manner, and with the sweetest expressions of love, will Christ invite his saints on his right hand to glory; saying, “come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” He will not bid them to go from him, but *to come with him*; to go where he goes; to dwell where he dwells; to enjoy him, and to partake with him. He will call them blessed, blessed of *his Father*, blessed by him whose blessing is infinitely the most desirable, namely, God. *Inherit the kingdom*: they are not only invited to go with Christ, and to dwell with him, but to inherit a kingdom with him; to sit down with him on his throne, and to receive the honour and happiness of a heavenly kingdom.

(Unbelievers at the judgment of Christ) The stoutest heart of them all will then melt with fear. The hearts of those who are of a sturdy spirit, and perhaps scorn to own themselves afraid of any man, and are even ashamed to own themselves afraid of the wrath of God, will then become as weak as water, as weak as the heart of a little child. And the most reserved of them will not be able to hide his fears. Their faces will turn pale; they will appear with amazement in their countenances; every joint in them will tremble; all their bones will shake; and their knees will smite one against another: nor will they be able to refrain from crying out with fear, and from rending the air with the most dismal shrieks.

The rich captains, and valiant generals and princes, who now scorn to show any fear at the face of an enemy, who scorn to tremble at the roaring of cannon, will tremble and shriek when they shall hear the last trumpet, and see the majesty of their judge: it will make their teeth to chatter, and make them fly to hide themselves in the caves and rocks of mountains, crying to the rocks and mountains to fall on them, and cover them from the wrath of the judge. Fearfulness will surprise them when they shall be dragged before the judgment-seat...The majesty of the judge will be intolerable to them. His pure and holy eye, which will behold and search them, and pierce them through, will be more terrible to their souls a thousand times than flashes of lightning piercing their hearts. There will they stand in a trembling expectation, that by and by they shall hear the words of that dreadful sentence proceed out of the mouth of Christ.

God hath declared, Gal. vi. 7. "That he will not be mocked; "i.e. if any presume to mock him, they will find him, by experience, to be no contemptible being. God will vindicate his holy majesty from the contempt of those who dare to mock him, and he will do it effectually: they shall fully find how dreadful a being he is, whose name they have daringly profaned and polluted. Defilers and profaners of ordinances, by known and allowed wickedness, provoke God more than the heathen, who have no ordinances. Thus the wickedness of Judah and Jerusalem is said to be far worse than that of Sodom, though the inhabitants of Sodom were, as we have reason to think, some of the worst of the heathens.