

Quotes on Saints

by

Jonathan Edwards

Indeed the saints have no Excellency, as they are in and of themselves. In them, that is, in their flesh, dwells no good thing. They are in themselves poor, guilty, vile creatures, and see themselves to be so; but they have an Excellency and glory in them, because they have Christ dwelling in them. The Excellency that is in them, though it be but as a spark, yet it is something ten thousand times more excellent than any ruby, or the most precious pearl that ever was found on the earth; and that because it is something divine, something of God.

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 everything 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 a true light; and however they were reproached and slandered by men, they shall receive praise of God in the sight of angels and men.

Consider how much above the world that blessedness is which God has given; how therefore ought you to live above the world. God has redeemed you out of the world, and therefore do not live as though you had your portion in this life. Live as pilgrims and strangers; as those that are not at home; as fellow-citizens with the saints and of the household of God. Be ye not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the

renewing of your mind. How dishonourable will it be to you that God had so advanced and entitled you to such glory, to set your heart upon the dust of the earth; how you dishonour the grace of God in giving you such blessedness; and how will you dishonour the blessedness that God has given, no more to set your heart on it, and to set it so much on the world! In heaven they are not idle, but they are continually employed, and their employments are holy employments; they spend their time wholly in holy exercises; in contemplating on God, in praising and serving him... If ever you go to heaven, your heart must be brought beforehand to such a temper as freely to choose such employments, you must have a relish of them, and must account them excellent and delightful employments...You must be pure in heart, and clean in hands. The pure in heart alone shall see God...You must hate and abhor all sin, and allow none in your life. Sin must become to you a great burden. You must loathe yourself for it, and fight and strive against it, to purge yourself more and more from it; striving more and more to mortify sin, earnestly desiring and seeking; to be more holy, more conformed to the will of God, and to walk more becoming a Christian....You must be brought to sell all for heaven...

The glorious Son of God is theirs; that lovely one, who was from all eternity God's delight, rejoicing always before him. All his beauty is their portion, and his dying love is theirs, his very heart is theirs, and his glory and happiness in heaven are theirs, so far as their capacity will allow them to partake of it...This is that good which God reserves for his friends. God distributes silver and gold and such like things among his enemies, because he slights them and regards them not. They are contemptible things in his eyes, as we throw husks to swine. But he has reserved better things for his children, of which no ungodly man, though a prince or monarch shall partake. This is the ground which Christians have of peace and pleasure in this world. However, the saints cannot always take comfort, and do not always taste the sweetness that there is in store for them, by reason of the darkness and clouds that sometimes interpose. But though they may walk in great darkness for a long time, yet they are happy notwithstanding.

Christians, being the children of God, are honoured of God as such...They are treated as such in the great value God puts upon them, for they are his jewels, those which he has set apart for himself; and he is tender of them as of the apple of his eye. He disregards wicked

men in comparison of them. He will give kings for them and princes for their life. He is jealous for them. He is very angry with those that hurt them. If any offend them, it were better for them that a mill-stone were cast about their neck, and they were drowned in the depths of the sea. He loves them with a very great and wonderful love. He pities them as a father pities his children. He will protect them, and defend them, and provide for them, as a father provides for his children. This honour have all they that fear and love God, and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

One part of the reward which God intends for his saints is the honour which he intends to bestow upon them (*at the final judgment*). He will honour them in the most public and open manner, before the angels, before all mankind, and before them that hated them. And it is most suitable that it should be so: it is suitable that those holy, humble souls, that have been hated by wicked men, have been cruelly treated and put to shame by them, and who have been haughtily domineered over, should be openly acquitted, commended, and crowned, before all the world.

The souls of the righteous shall descend from heaven together with Christ and his angels: 1 Thess. iv. 14. "Them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." They also shall be re-united to their bodies, that they may be glorified with them. They shall receive their bodies prepared by God to be mansions of pleasure to all eternity. They shall be every way fitted for the uses, the exercises, and delights of perfectly holy and glorified souls. They shall be clothed with a superlative beauty, similar to that of Christ's glorious body: Phil. iii. 21. "Who shall change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." Their bodies shall rise incorruptible, no more liable to pain or disease, and with an extraordinary vigour and vivacity, like that of those spirits that are as a flame of fire.... With what joy will the souls and bodies of the saints meet, and with what joy will they lift up their heads out of their graves to behold the glorious sight of the appearing of Christ! And it will be a glorious sight to see those saints arising out of their graves, putting off their corruption, and putting on incorruption and glory.

The saints in glory are so much employed in praise, because they are perfect in *humility*, and have so great a sense of the infinite distance between God and them. They have a great

sense of their own unworthiness that they are by nature unworthy of any of the mercy of God. Labour therefore that you may obtain more of a sense of your own littleness, and vileness; that you may see more what you are, how ill you have deserved at the hands of God, and how you are less than the least of all his mercies.

False professors are very commonly widely different in this respect from those who are sincere and upright. Sincere Christians are universally holy; they have regard to all God's commands; it is their sincere desire, aim, and endeavours to do their duty in every respect. But it is generally far otherwise with hypocrites; in some things they are like Christians, in others like heathens.

To those animals which are of a filthy and impure nature, as swine and dogs, ravens and vermin, those things that are filthy and nauseous to mankind, do not seem at all disgusting; but on the contrary they love them, it is food that suits their appetites. It is because they are of an impure and filthy nature; the nature of the animal is agreeable to such things. So it is with men of impure hearts. They see no filthiness in sin, they do not nauseate it, it is in no way uncomfortable to them to have it hanging about them, they can wallow in it without any reluctance; yea, they take pleasure in it, it is their meat and their drink, because they are of an impure nature. But he who has become pure in heart hates sin; he has antipathy to it; he does not love to be near it; if he sees any of it hanging about him, he abhors himself for it; he seems filthy to himself, he is a burden to himself, he abhors the very sight of it, and shuns the appearance of it. If he sees sin in others, it is a very unpleasant sight to him; as sin, and as committed against God, it is grievous and uncomfortable to him wherever he discovers it. It is because his heart is changed, and God has given him a pure nature.

The miseries of the damned in hell will be inconceivably great. When they shall come to bear the wrath of the Almighty poured out upon them without mixture, and executed upon them without pity or restraint, or any mitigation; it will doubtless cause anguish, and horror, and amazement vastly beyond all the sufferings and torments that ever any man endured in this world; yea, beyond all extent of our words or thoughts. For God in executing wrath upon ungodly men will act like an Almighty God.....The saints in glory will see this, and be far more sensible of it than now we can possibly be. They will be far more sensible how

dreadful the wrath of God is, and will better understand how terrible the sufferings of the damned are; yet this will be no occasion of grief to them. They will not be sorry for the damned; it will cause no uneasiness or dissatisfaction to them; but on the contrary, when they have this sight, it will excite them to joyful praises.

The apostle (Paul) was greatly derided and despised for preaching a crucified Jesus...Here is an example for us to follow, if at any time we fall in among those who hold religion in contempt, and will despise us for our pretensions to religion, and will be ready to deride us for being so precise, and look upon us as fools; that we may not be ashamed of religion, and yield to sinful compliances with vain and loose persons, lest we should appear singular, and be looked upon as ridiculous. Such a meanness of spirit possesses many persons, who are not worthy to be called Christians; and are such as Christ will be ashamed of when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.