

The End of the Wicked Contemplated by the Righteous

or

The Torments of the Wicked in Hell, No Occasion of Grief to the Saints in Heaven

A Sermon by Jonathan Edwards

Rev. xviii. 20. Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her.

In this chapter we have a very particular account of the fall of Babylon, or the antichristian church, and of the vengeance of God executed upon her. Here it is proclaimed that Babylon the great is fallen, and become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird; that her sins had reached unto heaven, and that God had remembered her iniquity; that God gave commandment to reward her, as she had rewarded others, to double unto her double according to her works; in the cup she had filled, to fill to her double, and how much she had glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow to give her.

And it is declared, that these plagues are come upon her in one day, death, mourning, and famine; and that she should be utterly burnt with fire; *because strong is the Lord who judgeth her.*

These things have respect partly to the overthrow of the antichristian church in this world, and partly to the vengeance of God upon her in the world to come. There is no necessity to suppose, that such extreme torments as are here mentioned will ever be executed upon papists, or upon the antichristian church, in this world. There will indeed be a dreadful and visible overthrow of that idolatrous church in this world. But we are not to understand the plagues here mentioned as exclusive of the vengeance which God will execute on the wicked upholders and promoters of antichristianism, and on the cruel antichristian persecutors, in another world.

This is evident by ver. 3. of the next chapter, where, with reference to the same destruction of antichrist which is spoken of in this chapter, it is said, "Her smoke rose up for ever and

ever;" in which words the eternal punishment of antichrist is evidently spoken of. Antichrist is here represented as being cast into hell, and there remaining for ever after; he hath no place anywhere else but in hell. This is evident by ver. 20. of the next chapter, where, concerning the destruction of antichrist, it is said, "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone."

Not but that the wicked antichristian have in all ages gone to hell as they died, and not merely at the fall of antichrist; but then the wrath of God against antichrist, of which damnation is the fruit, will be made eminently visible here on earth, by many remarkable tokens. Then antichrist will be confined to hell, and will have no more place here on earth; much after the same manner as the devil is said at the beginning of Christ's thousand years' reign on earth, to be cast into the bottomless pit, as you may see in the beginning of the twentieth chapter. Not but that he had his place in the bottomless pit before; he was cast down to hell when he fell at first: 2 Pet. ii. 4. "Cast them down to hell, and deliver them into chains of darkness." But now, when he shall be suffered to deceive the nations no more, his kingdom will be confined to hell. In this text is contained part of what John heard uttered upon this occasion; and in these words we may observe,

1. To whom this voice is directed, *viz. to the holy prophets and apostles*, and the rest of the inhabitants of the heavenly world. When God shall pour out his wrath upon the antichristian church, it will be seen, and taken notice of, by all the inhabitants of heaven, even by holy prophets and apostles. Neither will they see as unconcerned spectators.

2. What they are called upon by the voice to do, *viz. to rejoice over Babylon* now destroyed, and lying under the wrath of God. They are not directed to rejoice over her in prosperity, but in flames, and beholding the smoke of her burning ascending up for ever and ever.

3. A reason given: for *God hath avenged* you on her; *i. e.* God hath executed just vengeance upon her, for shedding your blood, and cruelly persecuting you. For thus the matter is represented, that antichrist had been guilty of shedding the blood of the holy prophets and apostles, as in chap. xvi. 6. "For they have shed the blood of saints and of prophets," and in chap. xviii. 24. of this context, "In her was found the blood of prophets and of saints, and of all them that were slain on the earth." Not that antichrist had literally shed the blood of the

prophets and apostles; but he had shed the blood of those who were their followers, who were of the same spirit, and of the same church, and same mystical body. The prophets and apostles in heaven are nearly related and united to the saints on earth; they live, as it were, in true Christians in all ages. So that by slaying these, persecutors show that they would slay the prophets and apostles, if they could; and they indeed do it as much as in them lies.

On the same account, Christ says of the Jews in his time, Luke xi. 50. "That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; from the blood of Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, it shall be required of this generation." So Christ himself is said to have been crucified in the antichristian church, chap. xi. 8. "And their dead bodies shall lie in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified." So all the inhabitants of heaven, all the saints from the beginning of the world, and the angels also, are called upon to rejoice over Babylon, because of God's vengeance upon her, wherein he avenges them: they all of them had in effect been injured and persecuted by antichrist. Indeed they are not called upon to rejoice in having their revenge glutted, but in seeing justice executed, and in seeing the love and tenderness of God towards them, manifested in his severity towards their enemies.

Sect. I

When the saints in glory shall see the wrath of God executed on ungodly men, it will be no occasion of grief to them, but of rejoicing.

It is not only the sight of God's wrath executed on those wicked men who are of the antichristian church, which will be occasion of rejoicing to the saints in glory; but also the sight of the destruction of all God's enemies: whether they have been the followers of antichrist or not, that alters not the case, if they have been the enemies of God, and of Jesus Christ. All wicked men will at last be destroyed together, as being united in the same cause and interest, as being all of Satan's army.

They will all stand together at the Day of Judgment, as being all of the same company. And if we understand the text to have respect only to a temporal execution of God's wrath on his enemies, that will not alter the case. The thing they are called upon to rejoice at, is the

execution of God's wrath upon his and their enemies. And if it be matter of rejoicing to them to see justice executed in part upon them, or to see the beginning of the execution of it in this world; for the same reason will they rejoice with greater joy, in beholding it fully executed. For the thing here mentioned as the foundation of their joy, is the execution of just vengeance: *Rejoice, for God hath avenged you on her.*

Prop. I. The glorified saints will see the wrath of God executed upon ungodly men. This the Scriptures plainly teach us, that the righteous and the wicked in the other world see each other's state. Thus the rich man in hell, and Lazarus and Abraham in heaven, are represented as seeing each other's opposite states, in the 16th chap, of Luke The wicked in their misery will see the saints in the kingdom of heaven; Luke xiii. 28, 29. "There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out."

So the saints in glory will see the misery of the wicked under the wrath of God. Isa. lxvi. 24. "And they shall go forth and look on the carcases of the men that have transgressed against me: for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched." And Rev. xiv. 9, 10. "If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, 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." The saints are not here mentioned, being included in Christ, as his members. The church is the fullness of Christ, and is called Christ, 1 Cor. xii. 12. So in the 19th chapter, ver. 2, 3. the smoke of Babylon's torment is represented as rising up for ever and ever, in the sight of the heavenly inhabitants.

At the Day of Judgment, the saints in glory at Christ's right hand, will see the wicked at the left hand in their amazement and horror, will hear the judge pronounce sentence upon them, saying, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels;" and will see them go away into everlasting punishment. But the Scripture seems to hold forth to us, that the saints will not only see the misery of the wicked at the day of judgment, but the fore-mentioned texts imply, that "the state of the damned in hell will be in the view of the heavenly inhabitants; that the two worlds of happiness and misery will be in view of each other. Though we know not by what means, nor after what manner, it will

be; yet the Scriptures certainly lead us to think, that they will some way or other have a direct and immediate apprehension of each other's state. The saints in glory will see how the damned are tormented; they will see God's threatenings fulfilled, and his wrath executed upon them.

Prop. II. When they shall see it, it will be no occasion of *grief* to them. 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 Scripture calls this wrath, God's fury, and the fierceness of his wrath; and we are told that this is to show God's wrath, and to make his power known; or to make known how dreadful his wrath is, and how great his power.

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? These two things are evidences of it:

1. That the seeing of the wrath of God executed upon the damned, should cause grief in the saints in glory, is inconsistent with that state of perfect happiness in which they are. There can no such thing as grief enter, to be an allay to the happiness and joy of that world of blessedness. Grief is an utter stranger in that world. God hath promised that he will wipe away all tears from their eyes and there shall be no more sorrow. Rev. xxi. 4. and chap. vii. 17.

2. The saints in heaven possess all things as their own, and therefore all things contribute to their joy and happiness. The Scriptures teach that the saints in glory inherit all things. This God said in John's hearing, when he had the vision of the New Jerusalem; Rev. xxi. 7. And the Scriptures teach us to understand this absolutely of all the works of creation and

providence. 1 Cor. iii. 21, 22. "All things are yours, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours." Here the apostle teaches, that all things in the world to come, or in the future and eternal world, are the saints'; not only life but death; men, and angels, and devils, heaven and hell, are theirs, to contribute to their joy and happiness. Therefore the damned and their misery, their sufferings and the wrath of God poured out upon them, will be an occasion of joy to them. If there were any thing whatsoever that did not contribute to their joy, but caused grief, then there would be something which would not be theirs.

That the torments of the damned are no matter of grief, but of joy, to the inhabitants of heaven, is very clearly expressed in several passages of this book of Revelation; particularly by chap. xvi. 5-7. and chap. xix. at the beginning.

Sect. II

Why the sufferings of the wicked will not be cause of grief to the righteous, but the contrary.

1. Negatively; it will not be because the saints in heaven are the subjects of any ill disposition; but on the contrary, this rejoicing of theirs will be the fruit of an amiable and excellent disposition: it will be the fruit of a perfect holiness and conformity to Christ, the holy Lamb of God. The devil delights in the misery of men from cruelty, and from envy and revenge, and because he delights in misery, for its own sake, from a malicious disposition.

But it will be from exceedingly different principles, and for quite other reasons, that the just damnation of the wicked will be an occasion of rejoicing to the saints in glory. It will not be because they delight in seeing the misery of others absolutely considered. The damned suffering divine vengeance will be no occasion of joy to the saints merely as it is the misery of others, or because it is pleasant to them to behold the misery of others merely for its own sake. The rejoicing of the saints on this occasion is no argument, that they are not of a most amiable and excellent spirit, or that there is any defect on that account, that there is anything wanting, which would render them of a more amiable disposition. It is no argument that they have not a spirit of goodness and love reigning in them in absolute

perfection, or that herein they do not excel the greatest instances of it on earth, as much as the stars are higher than the earth, or the sun brighter than a glow-worm.

And whereas the heavenly inhabitants are in the text called upon to rejoice over Babylon, because God had avenged them on her; it is not to be understood, that they are to rejoice in having their revenge glutted, but to rejoice in seeing the justice of God executed, and in seeing his love to them in executing it on his enemies.

2. Positively; the sufferings of the damned will be no occasion of grief to the heavenly inhabitant, as they will have *no love nor pity* to the damned as such. It will be no argument of want of a spirit of love in them, that they do not love the damned; for the heavenly inhabitants will know that it is not fit that they should love them, because they will know then, that God has no love to them, nor pity for them; but that they are the objects of God's eternal hatred. And they will then be perfectly conformed to God in their wills and affections. They will love what God loves, and that only.

However the saints in heaven may have loved the damned while here, especially those of them who were near and dear to them in this world, they will have no love to them hereafter.

It will be an occasion of their rejoicing, as *the glory of God* will appear in it. The glory of God appears in all his works: and therefore there is no work of God which the saints in glory shall behold and contemplate, but what will be an occasion of rejoicing to them. God glorifies himself in the eternal damnation of the ungodly men. God glorifies himself in all that he doth; but he glorifies himself principally in his eternal disposal of his intelligent creatures, some are appointed to everlasting life, and others left to everlasting death.

The saints in heaven will be perfect in their love to God: their hearts will be all a flame of love to God, and therefore they will greatly value the glory of God, and will exceedingly delight in seeing him glorified. The saints highly value the glory of God here in this, but how much more will they so do in the world to come. They will therefore greatly rejoice in all that contributes to that glory. The glory of God will in their esteem be of greater consequence, than the welfare of thousands and millions of souls.—particularly, (1.) They will rejoice in seeing the *justice* of God glorified in the sufferings of the damned. The misery of the damned, dreadful as it is, is but what justice *requires*. They in heaven will see and

know it much more clearly, than any of us do here. They will see how perfectly just and righteous their punishment is, and therefore how properly inflicted by the supreme Governor of the world.

They will greatly rejoice to see justice take place, to see that all the sin and wickedness that have been committed in the world, is remembered of God, and has its due punishment. The sight of this strict and immutable justice of God will render him amiable and adorable in their eyes. They will rejoice when they see him who is their Father and eternal portion so glorious in his justice.

Then there will be no remaining difficulties about the justice of God, about the absolute decrees of God, or anything pertaining to the dispensations of God towards men. But divine justice in the destruction of the wicked will then appear as light without darkness, and will shine as the sun without clouds, and on this account will they sing joyful songs of praise to God, as we see the saints and angels do, when God pours the vials of his wrath upon antichrist; Rev. xvi. 5-7. They sing joyfully to God on this account, that true and righteous are his judgments; Rev. xix. 1-6. They seeing God so strictly just will make them value his love the more. Mercy and grace are more valuable on this account. The more they shall see of the justice of God, the more will they prize and rejoice in his love.

(2.) They will rejoice in it, as it will be a glorious manifestation of the *power* and *majesty* of God. God will show his own greatness in executing vengeance on ungodly men. This is mentioned as one end of the destruction of the ungodly; "What if God, willing to show his wrath, and make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction?"

God will hereby show how much he is above his enemies. There are many now in the world who proudly lift up themselves against God. There are many open opposers of the cause and interest of Christ. "They set their mouth against the heavens, and their tongue walketh through the earth." Then God will show his glorious power in destroying these enemies.

The power of God is sometimes spoken of as very glorious, as appearing in the temporal destruction of his enemies; Exod. xv. 6. "Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power; thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy." But how much more glorious will it appear in his triumphing over, and dashing in pieces at once, all his enemies,

wicked men and devils together, all his haughty foes! The power of God will gloriously appear in dashing to pieces his enemies as a potter's vessel. Moses rejoiced and sang when he saw God glorify his power in the destruction of Pharaoh and his host at the Red sea. But how much more will the saints in glory rejoice, when they shall see God gloriously triumphing over all his enemies in their eternal ruin!

Then it will appear how dreadful God is, and how dreadful a thing it is to disobey and condemn him. It is often mentioned as a part of the glory of God, that he is a terrible God. To see the majesty, and greatness, and terribleness of God, appearing in the destruction of his enemies, will cause the saints to rejoice; and when they shall see how great and terrible a being God is, how will they prize his favour! how will they rejoice that they are the objects of his love! how will they praise him the more joyfully, that, he should choose them to be his children, and to live in the enjoyment of him!

It will occasion rejoicing in them, as they will have the greater sense of *their own happiness*, by seeing the contrary misery. It is the nature of pleasure and pain, of happiness and misery, greatly to heighten the sense of each other. Thus the seeing of the happiness of others tends to make men more sensible of their own calamities; and the seeing of the calamities of others tends to heighten the sense of our own enjoyments.

When the saints in glory, therefore, shall see the doleful state of the damned, how will this heighten their sense of the blessedness of their own state, so exceedingly different from it! When they shall see how miserable others of their fellow-creatures are, who were naturally in the same circumstances with themselves; when they shall see the smoke of their torment, and the raging of the flames of their burning, and hear their dolorous shrieks and cries, and consider that they in the meantime are in the most blissful state, and shall surely be in it to all eternity; how will they rejoice!

This will give them a joyful sense of the *grace and love of God to them*, because hereby they will see how great a benefit they have by it. When they shall see the dreadful miseries of the damned, and consider that they deserved the same misery, and that it was *sovereign grace*, and nothing else, which made them so much to differ from the damned, that, if it had not been for that, they would have been in the same condition: but that God from all eternity was pleased to set his love upon them, that Christ hath laid down his life for them, and hath made them thus gloriously happy for ever, O how will they admire that dying love of Christ,

which has redeemed them from so great a misery, and purchased for them so great happiness, and has so distinguished them from others of their fellow-creatures! How joyfully will they sing to God and the Lamb, when they behold this!

Sect. III

An objection answered.

The objection is, "If we are apprehensive of the damnation of others now, it in no wise becomes us to rejoice at it, but to lament it. If we see others in imminent danger of going to hell, it is accounted a very sorrowful thing, and it is looked upon as an argument of a senseless and wicked spirit, to look upon it otherwise. When it is a very dead time with respect to religion, and a very degenerate and corrupt time among a people, it is accounted a thing greatly to be lamented; and on this account, that at such times there are but few converted and saved, and many perish. Paul tells us, that he had great heaviness and continual sorrow in his heart, because so many of the Jews were in a perishing state: Rom. ix. 1, 2, 3. "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh."

And if a neighbour die, and his death be attended with circumstances which look darkly as to the state of his soul, we account it a sorrowful thing, because he hath left us no more comfortable grounds to hope for his salvation. Why, is it not then an unbecoming thing in the saints in glory to rejoice when they see the damnation of the ungodly?

Ans. 1. It is now our duty to love all men, though they are wicked; but it will not be a duty to love wicked men hereafter. Christ, by many precepts in his word, hath made it our duty to love all men. We are commanded to love wicked men, and our enemies and persecutors. But this command doth not extend to the saints in glory, with respect to the damned in hell. Nor is there the same reason that it should. We ought now to love all, and even wicked men; we know not but that God loves them. However wicked any man is, yet we know not but that he is one whom God loved from eternity; we know not but that Christ loved him with a dying love, Had his name upon his heart before the world was, and had respect to him when he endured those bitter agonies on the cross.

We know not but that he is to be our companion in glory to all eternity.

But this is not the case in another world. The saints in glory will know concerning the damned in hell, that God never loved them, but that he hates them, and will be for ever hated of God. This hatred of God will be fully declared to them; they will see it, and will see the fruits of it in their misery. Therefore, when God has thus declared his hatred of the damned, and the saints see it, it will be no way becoming in the saints to love them, not to mourn over them. It becomes the saints fully and perfectly to consent to what God doth, without any reluctance or opposition of spirit; yea, it becomes them to rejoice in everything that God sees meet to be done.

Ans. 2. We ought now to seek and be concerned for the salvation of wicked men, because now they are capable subjects of it. Wicked men, though they may be very wicked, yet are capable subjects of mercy. It is yet a day of grace with them, and they have the offers of salvation. Christ is as yet seeking their salvation; he is calling upon them, inviting and wooing them; he stands at the door and knocks. He is using many means with them, is calling them, saying, *Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die?* The day of his patience is yet continued to them; and if Christ is seeking their salvation, surely we ought to seek it.

God is wont now to make men the means of one another's salvation; yea, it is his ordinary way so to do. He makes the concern and endeavours of his people the means of bringing home many to Christ. Therefore they ought to be concerned for and endeavour it. But it will not be so in another world: there wicked men will be no longer capable subjects of mercy. The saints will know that it is the will of God the wicked should be miserable to all eternity. It will therefore cease to be their duty any more to seek their salvation, or to be concerned about their misery. On the other hand, it will be their duty to rejoice in the will and glory of God. It is not our duty to be sorry that God hath executed just vengeance on the devils, concerning whom the will of God in their eternal state is already known to us.

Ans. 3. Rejoicing at the calamities of others now, rests not on the same grounds as that of the saints in glory. The evil of rejoicing at other's calamities now, consists in our envy, or revenge, or some such disposition is gratified therein; and not that God is glorified, that the majesty and justice of God gloriously shine forth.

Ans. 4. The different circumstances of our nature now, from what will he hereafter make that a virtue now which will be no virtue then. For instance, if a man be of a virtuous disposition, the circumstances of our nature now are such, that it will necessarily show itself by natural affection, and to be without natural affection is a very vicious disposition; and is so mentioned in Rom. i. 31.

But natural affection is no virtue in the saints in glory. Their virtue will exercise itself in a higher manner.

Ans. 5. The vengeance inflicted on many of the wicked will be a manifestation of God's love to the saints. One way whereby God shows his love to the saints, is by destroying their enemies.

God hath said, "He that toucheth you, toucheth the apple of mine eye." And it is often mentioned in Scripture, as an instance of the great love of God to his people, that his wrath is so awakened, when they are wronged and injured. Thus Christ hath promised that God will avenge his own elect, Luke xviii. 7. and hath said, that "if any man offend one of his little ones, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea."

Matt. xviii. 6.

So the saints in glory will see the great love of God to them, in the dreadful vengeance which he shall inflict on those who have injured and persecuted them; and the view of this love of God to them will be just cause of their rejoicing. Thus, in the text, heaven and the holy apostles and prophets are called to rejoice over their enemies, because God hath avenged them of them.

Sect. IV

The ungodly warned.

I shall apply this subject only in one use, *viz.* of *warning* to ungodly men. And in order to this, I desire such to consider,

1. How destitute of any comforting consideration your condition will be, if you perish at last. You will have none to pity you. Look which way you will, before or behind, on the right hand

or left, look up to heaven, or look about you in hell, and you will see none to condole your case, or to exercise any pity towards you, in your dreadful condition. You must bear these flames, you must bear that torment and amazement, day and night, for ever, and never have the comfort of considering, that there is so much as one that pities your case; there never will one tear be dropped for you.

(1.) You have now been taught that you will have no pity from the *created inhabitants* of heaven. If you shall look to them, you will see them all rejoicing at the sight of the glory of God's justice, power, and terrible majesty, manifested in your torment. You will see them in a blissful and glorious state; you will see Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God; you will see many come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and sit down in that glorious kingdom; and will see them all with one voice, and with united joy, praising God for glorifying himself in your destruction. You will wail and gnash your teeth under your own torments, and with envy of their happiness; but they will rejoice and sing: Isa. lxx. 13, 14. "Therefore thus saith the Lord, Behold, my servants shall eat. but ye shall be hungry: behold, my servants shall drink, but ye shall be thirsty: behold, my servants shall rejoice, but ye shall be ashamed: behold, my servants shall sing for joy of heart, but ye shall cry for sorrow of heart, and shall howl for vexation of spirit."

(2.) God will exercise no pity towards you. If you might have his pity in any degree, that would be of more worth to you than thousands of worlds. That would make your case to be not without comfort and hope. But God will exercise no pity towards you. He hath often said concerning wicked men that his eye shall not spare, neither will he have pity, (Ezek. v. 11. and vii. 4, 9. and viii. 18.)

He will cast upon you, and not spare; you will see nothing in God, and receive nothing from him, but perfect hatred, and the fierceness of his wrath; nothing but the mighty falls or outpourings of wrath upon you every moment; and no cries will avail to move God to any pity, or in the least to move him to lighten his hand, or assuage the fierceness and abate the power of your torments.

Jesus Christ, the Redeemer, will have no pity on you. Though he had so much love to sinners, as to be willing to lay down his life for them, and offers you the benefits of his

blood, while you are in this world, and often calls upon you to accept them; yet then he will have no pity upon you.

You never will hear any more instructions from him; he will utterly refuse to be your instructor: on the contrary, he will be your judge, to pronounce sentence against you.

(3.) You will find none that will pity you in hell. The devils will not pity you, but will be your tormentors, as roaring lions or hell-hounds to tear you in pieces continually. And other wicked men who shall be there will be like devils; they will have no pity on you, but will hate, and curse, and torment you. And you yourselves will be like devils; you will be like devils to yourselves, and will be your own tormentors.

2. Consider what an aggravation what you have heard under this doctrine will be to your misery. Consider how it will be at the day of judgment, when you shall see Christ coming in the clouds of heaven, when you shall begin to wail and cry, as knowing that you are those who are to be condemned; and perhaps you will be ready to fly to some of your godly friends; but you will obtain no help from them: you will see them unconcerned for you, with joyful countenances ascending to meet the Lord, and not the less joyful for the horror in which they see you. And when you shall stand before the tribunal at the left hand, among devils, trembling and astonished, and shall have the dreadful sentence passed upon you, you will at the same time see the blessed company of saints and angels at the right hand rejoicing, and shall hear them shout forth the praises of God, while they hear your sentence pronounced. You will then see those godly people, with whom you shall have been acquainted, and who shall have been your neighbours, and with whom you now often converse, rejoicing at the pronounciation and execution of your sentence.

Perhaps there are now some godly people, to whom you are near and dear, who are tenderly concerned for you, are ready to pity you under all calamities, and willing to help you; and particularly are tenderly concerned for your poor soul, and have put up many fervent prayers for you. How will you bear to hear these singing for joy of heart, while you are crying for sorrow of heart, and howling for vexation of spirit, and even singing the more joyful for the glorious justice of God which they behold in your eternal condemnation?

You that have godly parents, who in this world have tenderly loved you, who were won't to look upon your welfare as their own, and were wont to be grieved for you when any thing

calamitous befell you in this world, and especially were greatly concerned for the good of your souls, industriously sought, and earnestly prayed for their salvation; how will you bear to see them in the kingdom of God, crowned with glory? Or how will you bear to see them receiving the blessed sentence, and going up with shouts and songs, to enter with Christ into the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world, while you are amongst a company of devils, and are turned away with the most bitter cries, to enter into everlasting burnings, prepared for the devil and his angels? How will you bear to see your parents, who in this life had so dear an affection for you, now without any love to you, approving the sentence of condemnation, when Christ shall with indignation bid you depart, wretched, cursed creatures, into eternal burnings? How will you bear to see and hear them praising the Judge, for his justice exercised in pronouncing this sentence, and hearing it with holy joy in their countenances, and shouting forth the praises and hallelujahs of God and Christ on that account?

When they shall see what manifestations of amazement there will be in you, 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. And when the Judge shall execute the more terrible wrath upon you on this account, that you have made no better improvement of your parents' instructions, they will joyfully praise God for it. After they shall have seen you lie in hell thousands of years, and your torment shall yet continue without any rest, day or night; they will not begin to pity you then; they will praise God, that his justice appears in the eternity of your misery.

You that have godly husbands, or wives, or brethren, or sisters, with whom you have been wont to dwell under the same roof, and to eat at the same table, consider how it will be with you, when you shall come to part with them; when they shall be taken and you left; Luke xvii. 34, 35, 36. "I tell you, in that night, there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken and the other left.

Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken and the other left." However you may wail and lament, when you see them parted from you, they being taken and you left, you will see in them no signs of sorrow, that you are not taken with them; that you ascend not with them to meet the Lord in the air, but are left below to be consumed with the world, which is reserved unto fire, against the day of the perdition of ungodly men.

Those wicked men, who shall go to hell from under the labours of pious and faithful ministers, will see those ministers rejoicing and praising God upon the occasion of their destruction. Consider, ye that have long lived under Mr. Stoddard's ministry, and are yet in a natural condition, how dreadful it will be to you, to see him who was so tenderly concerned for the good of your souls while he was here, and so earnestly sought your salvation, to see him rising up in judgment against you, declaring your in-excusableness, declaring how often he warned you; how plainly he set your danger before you, and told you of the opportunity that you had; how fully he set forth the miserable condition in which you were, and the necessity there was that you should obtain an interest in Christ; how movingly and earnestly he exhorted you to get into a better state, and how regardless you were; how little you minded all that he said to you; how you went on still in your trespasses, hardened your necks, and made your hearts as an adamant, and refused to return! How dreadful will it be

to you to hear him declaring how inexcusable you are upon these accounts! How will you be cut to the heart, when you shall see him approving the sentence of condemnation, which the Judge shall pronounce against you, and judging and sentencing you with Christ, as an assessor in judgment; for the saints shall judge the world, (1 Cor. vi. 2.) and when you shall see him rejoicing in the execution of justice upon you for all your unprofitableness under his ministry!

3. Consider what a happy opportunity you have in your hands now. Now your case is very different from the case of wicked men in another world, of which you have now heard; and particularly in the following respects.

(1.) God makes it the duty of all the godly now to be concerned for your salvation. As to those who are damned in hell, the saints in glory are not concerned for their welfare, and have no love nor pity towards them; and if you perish hereafter, it will be an occasion of joy to all the godly. But now God makes it the duty of all the godly, to love you with a sincere good-will and earnest affection. God doth not excuse men from loving you, for your ill qualities: though you are wicked and undeserving, yet God makes it the duty of all sincerely to wish well to you; and it is a heinous sin in the sight of God, for any to hate you. He requires all to be concerned for your salvation, and by all means to seek it. It is their duty now to lament your danger, and to pray for mercy to you, that you may be converted and brought home to Christ.

Now the godly who know you, desire your salvation, and are ready to seek, and pray for it. If you be now in distress about the condition of your souls, you are not in such a forsaken, helpless condition, as those that are damned; but you may find many to pray for you, many who are willing to assist you by their advice and counsels, and all with a tender concern, and with hearty wishes that your souls may prosper. Now some of you have godly friends who are near and dear to you; you are beloved of those who have a great interest in heaven, and who have power with God by their prayers: you have the blessing of living under the same roof with them. Some of you have godly parents to pray for you, and to counsel and instruct you, who you may be sure will do it with sincere love and concern for you. And there is not only the command of God, God hath not only made it the duty of others to seek your salvation, but hath given encouragement to others to seek it. He gives encouragement that they may obtain help for you by their prayers, and that they may be instrumental of your

spiritual good. God reveals it to be his manner, to make our sincere endeavours a mean of each other's good. How different is the case with you from what it is with those that are already damned! And how happy an opportunity have you in your hands, if you would but improve it!

(2.) Now you live where there is *a certain order of men* appointed to make it the business of their lives to seek your salvation. Now you have ministers, not to rise up in judgment against you; but in Christ's stead, to beseech you to be reconciled to God; 2 Cor. v. 20. God hath not only made it the duty of all to wish well to your souls, and occasionally to endeavour to promote your spiritual interests, but he hath set apart certain persons, to make it their whole work, in which they should spend their days and their strength.

(3.) *Christ himself* is now seeking your salvation. He seeks it by the fore-mentioned means, by appointing men to make it their business to seek it; he seeks it by them; they are his instruments, and they beseech you in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to God. He seeks it, in commanding your neighbours to seek it. Christ is represented in Scripture, as wooing the souls of sinners. He uses means to persuade them to choose and accept of their own salvation. He often invites them to come to him that they may have life, that they may find rest to their souls; to come and take of the water of life freely. He stands at the door and knocks; and ceases not, though sinners for a long time refuse him. He bears repeated repulses from them, and yet mercifully continues knocking, saying.

"Open to me that I may come in and sup with you, and you with me." At the doors of many sinners he stands thus knocking for many years together. Christ is become a most importunate suitor to sinners, that he may become their sovereign. He is often setting before them the need they have of him, the miserable condition in which they are, and the great provision that is made for the good of their souls; and he invites them to accept of this provision, and promises it shall be theirs upon their mere acceptance.

Thus how earnestly did Christ seek the salvation of Jerusalem, and he wept over it when they refused; Luke xix. 41, 42. "And when he was come near, he beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes." And Matt. xxiii. 37. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto

thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!”

Thus Christ is now seeking your salvation; such an opportunity have you now in your hands. Consider therefore how many means Christ is using with you, to bring you to salvation. Besides those things which have been now mentioned, some of you have a degree of the inward strivings and influences of the Spirit, which makes your opportunity much greater. You have Christ’s internal calls and knockings. All the persons of the Trinity are now seeking your salvation. God the Father hath sent his Son, who hath made way for your salvation, and removed all difficulties, except those which are with your own heart. And he is waiting to be gracious to you; the door of his mercy stands open to you; he hath set a fountain open for you to wash in from sin and uncleanness. Christ is calling, inviting, and wooing you; and the Holy Ghost is striving with you by his internal motions and influences.

4. If you now repent, before it be too late, *the saints and angels* in glory will rejoice at your repentance. If you repent not till it is too late, they will, as you have heard, rejoice in seeing justice executed upon you. But if you now repent, they will rejoice at your welfare, that you who were lost, are found; that you who were dead, are alive again. They will rejoice that you are come to so happy a state already, and that you are in due time to inherit eternal happiness. Luke xv. 3-10. So that if now you will improve your opportunity, there will be a very different occasion of joy in heaven concerning you, than that of which the doctrine speaks; not a rejoicing on occasion of your misery, but on occasion of your unspeakable blessedness.

5. If you repent before it is too late, *you yourselves* shall be of that joyful company. They will be so far from rejoicing on occasion of your ruin, that you yourselves will be of that glorious company, who will rejoice in all the works of God, who will have all tears wiped away from their eyes, to whom there will be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, and from whom sorrow and sighing shall flee away. You yourselves will be of those who will rejoice at the glorious display of God’s majesty and justice, in his wrath on his enemies. You will be of those that shall sing for joy of heart at the day of judgment, while others mourn for sorrow of heart, and howl for vexation of spirit; and you will enter into the joy of your Lord, and there shall *never be any end or abatement of your joy.*’