

Jonathan Edwards [1723],
Sermons and Discourses: 1723-1729 (WJE Online Vol. 14 33-160)

Nothing Upon Earth Can Represent the Glories of Heaven

Dating from the beginning of 1724, this sermon is Edwards' earliest extant treatment of a text from Revelation.¹ As with the previous representative sermons from the Bolton period, this one has an intricate relationship with Edwards' notebooks. In addition to the "Miscellanies" and the seminal first entry on "Excellency" in "The Mind," Edwards here employs a further series, "Notes on the Apocalypse," which he had begun in September 1723.

In this sermon Edwards attempts to incorporate biblical prophecy into his evolving philosophical theology in order to demonstrate the glories of heaven and the purpose of God's goodness to humankind. Where *A Spiritual Knowledge, The Pleasantness of Religion*, and *Living Peaceably* expound Edwards' notion of excellency in relation to wisdom, holiness, and harmony among fellow creatures, *Nothing Upon Earth Can Represent the Glories of Heaven* describes the end for which God created the world.² That end is human happiness in the communication of God's glory, a happiness that will reach its epitome in heaven.

The very doctrine of the sermon admits that earthly language, objects, and experiences utterly fail to represent to our minds what heaven will be like. "Yet," Edwards states, "God condescends, when he speaks of these things, to our way of apprehension, and because we are most apt to be affected by those things which we have seen with our eyes, and heard with our ears, and had experience of." Edwards therefore resorts to a series of scriptural similitudes as the next best thing. Heaven is called a crown and kingdom, a treasure, a splendid city, a garden of pleasure, among other things. All of these metaphors and images give an "idea" of what the saints will enjoy in heaven.

Edwards then goes on to show what reason and Scripture say about the exalted state of the blessed. First, "natural reason tells us this, that

1. *Works*, 5, 15–16.

2. The cross-fertilization of notebook entries and sermons in this period is illustrated by the fact that a draft of "Miscellanies" no. 87, "Happiness," which relates to this sermon, is found at the end of the previous sermon, *Living Peaceably*. See *Works*, 10, 251, n. 7.

God created man for nothing else but happiness." The argument that God's motive in creating the world is his goodness is also found in the concurrently written "Miscellanies" no. 87, entitled "Happiness," which concludes that since rational creatures are the "consciousness of the universe," God made everything to conduce to their happiness; and in "Notes on the Apocalypse" no. 31, which states that "goodness is the only end why [God] created the world."³ But here Edwards extends the argument, drawing on other aspects of his thought. God made man to be happy "in the beholding of God's own excellency" and "in the enjoyment of God's love." The nature of humankind also argues its great ends, particularly that its nature is so far above the beasts and that God has created the world to serve its needs. Finally, it is unreasonable to suppose that God does anything in vain. Humankind's capacity for happiness and "felicity" are bound to be fulfilled.

Scripture makes it "abundantly clear... even quite above all that reason without the Scriptures could tell us," that the happiness of the saints is inconceivable. Numerous passages show that the saints shall enjoy God as their "portion," shall "see God's face," and shall "be like God." The extent of Christ's love to them—the sacrifices that Christ made on their behalf—argues the great degree of the happiness of heaven. Saints shall be so closely related to Christ as to be one body, of which Christ is the head. The union and happiness they shall enjoy will place them even above the angels.

If the state of the blessed in heaven is so happy as to be indescribable, Edwards affirms in the Application, "how much, then, is the world to be despised by Christians." The person who has a "firm belief and lively idea of these things" views the world "as a mere parcel of shadows, vanities, trifles." Those who leave the world behind for the things of heaven are truly wise. On the other hand, those who cannot wean themselves from the world, who cannot deny themselves a few days of toil for the sake of an eternal reward, are foolish and "unreasonable." "Rhetoric" is as insufficient to convey the glories of heaven as it is to "represent their folly."

* * *

The manuscript is in two octavo booklets, the first originally comprising seven leaves, and the second ten. Edwards later recrafted the sermon, shifting its text to 1 John 3:2 and adding two leaves to the first

3. See *Works*, 13, 251–52, and 5, 137.

-- 136 --

booklet and one leaf to the second. In the process, he also made minor revisions and renumbered some heads of the Doctrine and Application. The first booklet contains the Doctrine through the beginning of the first head of the second proposition, with no Application. The second booklet begins by concluding the first head, which has an

inference, and then continues to the second head and finishes with an application of the whole.

The sermon contains re preaching notations for at least seven different occasions, including Scantic (a section of his father's parish of East Windsor), New Haven, Fairfield, New York, Bolton, Glastonbury, and Northampton. As with *Living Peaceably*, it is difficult to determine whether the many re preachings mean that this was an early favorite of Edwards or of his audiences, but it may have been both.

Nothing Upon Earth Can Represent the Glories of Heaven

Revelation 21:18.4

And the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass.

4. Repreaching symbols indicate that the sermon was repreached a second time, and again at Bolton; and the shorthand symbol for Northampton appears at the bottom of MS p. 3.

Here we have a metaphorical description or visionary representation of the city of God, that Zion that stands on the Mount of God, so often spoken of in the holy Scriptures, in the Old Testament prophecies; that Jerusalem which is the mother of us all, that city spoken of, Hebrews 12:22–24; that Mount Zion, that city of the living God, that heavenly Jerusalem, where there are an innumerable company of angels, where there are the general assembly of the church, of the firstborn which are written in heaven; the same that is spoken of, Isaiah 65:17–18, "For behold, I create a new heavens and a new earth: and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be you glad and rejoice for ever in that which [I create]: for, behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing, and her people a joy," corresponding with the first and second verses of this chapter, "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." Here is the end of all the labors of the Christian; here is our Father's house, here is the end of the race. Here is that that Christianity aims at; here is the consummation of all God's wondrous dealings with men, of all those great things which Christ did and suffered. Here is the end of all.

It is called "new Jerusalem" in contradistinction to that which was so glorious in Solomon's time, which was a type, and is to be taken as including both the glorified church of God, the triumphing assembly

-- 138 --

of the saints, and their reward, or the glories of heaven, the place of their abode. It appears to be the former, that is, the congregation of the persons of the saints, by the latter end of the second verse, where this new Jerusalem is said to be "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband," and by the ninth verse, where it is called "the Lamb's wife": "And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife." It appears also to prelude the reward of the triumphant church, or the blessedness of their state, for so it is spoken of in the sixth, seventh and eighth verses: "And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." And several other passages do evidence the same.

We may observe how fitly this description is set at the end of this book of the visions of John, which is the most comprehensive and most particular prophecy of all the changes

that should happen to the Christian church that we have in the whole Bible. How fitly therefore is all closed with a description of that which is the ultimate end and drift of all these things.

We are not to imagine that this description is a literal description, as if the place of the abode of the blessed should be such a city so wide, having the walls just so high, having the gates made of such precious stones as are here upon earth, or that the streets of the city are made of literal gold; but we must consider that the thing was represented to John in a vision. And so other visions used to be by similitudes, by such similitudes as we are capable of receiving, taken from such things as are found upon earth.

And as the glories of heaven are the greatest glories, those things [that] are the most glorious of all, so the Holy Ghost chose out those things that are esteemed most precious and are most beautiful that we see with our bodily eyes. So we see the whole city is nothing but gold and precious stones, walls, streets, gates and foundations and all. The precious stones that are mentioned, are those that are the most precious that are found, and of the most beautiful appearance and delightful colors.

-- 139 --

And therefore we shall take notice of these things in the words:

1. What is here spoken of, that is, the city of God, the city where the glorified saints shall have their abode, the glorious state of the people of Jesus Christ.
2. What is the matter of the city, that is, pure gold. "And the city was pure gold"; that is, the ground of the city, upon which the city is built. For the wall was of jasper stone, as in the former part of the verse, and the foundations and gates were all precious stones, as you may see in the following verses; but that which all those was built upon was pure gold. 'Tis expressed in the twenty-first verse that "the street of the city was pure gold." Gold is what is esteemed the most excellent and precious of all metals, so that 'tis proverbial, "as precious as gold," gold being generally put for the most precious thing; and we are to take notice that 'tis pure gold, the best of gold, the most precious of that most precious metal.
3. We may observe a transcendent property of this gold, that is, transparency, that it is as clear as glass, such gold as there is none of in the world. There is pure gold, and bright gold, but no transparent or clear gold. Pure gold, although it is the most precious of all metals, was not sufficient to shadow forth the glory of that city. There was nothing upon earth that would do as a similitude here. Therefore the simile made use of, is such a thing as is not to be found upon earth—clear gold.

Doctrine.

There is nothing upon earth that will suffice to represent to us the glories of heaven.

In opening of this doctrine, we shall,

I. Take notice of some of those things that are upon the earth that are made use of by God to shadow forth [the] glories of heaven to us.

II. We shall show and prove that none of them, though the most glorious, can be found on earth [that] are sufficient to represent to us the glories of heaven.

I. As to those things that are made use of in Scripture to shadow forth to us the glories of heaven:

Although all things upon earth are insufficient to represent to us these glories, nor are we capable of conceiving of it, yet God condescends, when he speaks of these things, to our way of apprehension,

-- 140 --

and because we are most apt to [be] affected by those things which we have seen with our eyes, and heard with our ears, and had experience of. Therefore God has taken his similitudes, by which he would shadow forth heaven to us, from those things which, although they are but faint shadows, have yet an analogy and, in those things wherein they are compared, a likeness; and the thing resembled differs no otherwise from the similitudes, in no more degrees, than as they are more excellent and glorious.

Amongst the many men that are in the world, some are of one disposition and some of another. Some have an inclination to one thing as the chief of all their earthly goods, and some to another. Therefore eternal life is represented by various similitudes, so as to suit to the disposition of everyone. There is nothing that is esteemed highly by men that is not sinful but what the glories of heaven are likened to. We shall take notice of some of them only at this time:

First. The state of the blessed is called a crown and kingdom. A kingdom is looked upon as the highest condition that mortals can arrive at in the world. What will not men do, and what have not men done, and what will they not do, for a kingdom? Many nations have been overturned and ruined by means of men's ambition for a crown; and men commonly look upon princes as persons possessed not only of the highest honor, but also of the highest earthly felicity. How happy are men apt to think themselves when they get [to be] masters of a little spot of earth, and can bear rule over their fellow men.

But all that have any acquaintance with the Bible, know how oft the reward of the saints is called a kingdom. How many times did Christ promise his disciples a kingdom. How often do the apostles speak of a crown of glory and life in their epistles, to stir up those they writ to to diligence. And we know that the saints are called kings (Revelation 5:10 and elsewhere); and Christ also promises that they shall sit in his throne with him

(Revelation 3:21), yea, the same that is spoken of Christ in the Psalms. The kingdom he shall have is also spoken of the saints. Revelation 2:26–27, "And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father."

Thus the happiness of the saints is resembled to a kingdom, which is looked upon commonly by men as a complication of the height of all happiness.

Second. Another thing the Scripture makes use of as a similitude to

-- 141 --

shadow forth to us the glory of the blessed, is a treasure. Matthew 6:20, "Lay up treasure in heaven"; and Matthew 19:21, "Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven." How do men regard a great treasure; how will everyone look on it with an envious eye; and how do the possessors often delight to view and handle their treasure. How great are the riches of the saints said to be, in that they are joint heirs with Christ of the riches of God himself.

Third. Heaven is likened in Scripture to a splendid and glorious city. Many men are ever surprised and amazed by the sight of a splendid city. We need not to be told how often heaven is called the holy city of God. Other cities are built by men, but this city, we are told, was built immediately by God himself. His hands reared up the stately mansions of this city, and his wisdom contrived them. Hebrews 11:10, "For he looked for a city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Other cities that are royal cities, that is, the cities that are the seats of kings and where they keep their courts, are commonly, above all others, stately and beautiful; but heaven, we are told, is the royal city of God, where the King of heaven and earth dwells, and displays his glory. Hebrews 12:22, "The city of the living God."

It is compared to the city of Jerusalem, and is called by that name, "new Jerusalem." Jerusalem was a city upon many accounts the most glorious in the world, especially in Solomon's time, so glorious that even the Queen of Sheba, a great and powerful queen, a person not unacquainted with stately cities, her nature was quite overcome by so glorious a sight.⁵ If a person that had never seen any city before had fainted at the sight, it would not have been so much of a wonder; but we cannot think that so great a queen as the Queen of Sheba should be a stranger to stately buildings and cities, but yet she swooned at the sight.

The city of Jerusalem was glorious by reason of the temple and Solomon's palace. The highest heaven is represented as being the temple and the house of God. Revelation

3:12, "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God." John 14:2, "In my Father's house are many mansions."

And what manner of city have we the description of in these Revelation 21–22: the ground or bottom of the city was of pure gold, like unto clear glass;⁶ the great and high walls were

5. In revising for re preaching, JE deleted the remainder of the paragraph.

6. In revising for re preaching, JE interlineated "that is, transparent gold."

-- 142 --

all of jasper stone; the building of the [wall] was of jasper: the jasper stone is a stone remarked for its clearness, beauty and glorious appearance. The foundations of the city were all so many gems or great precious stones, the most bright and splendid of any in the world, as Revelation 21:19–20; the twelve gates were also so many precious stones, so that every several was one great pearl (Revelation 21:12); and this city was full of a glorious brightness, a transcendent splendor, flowing from God and the Lamb, as [in] the eleventh and twenty-third verses. And there was the throne of God and the Lamb in the city—as in the first verse of [the] twenty-second chapter—from whence there ran a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, through the midst of the city, having trees of life growing all along on the banks thereof on each side of the river monthly, yielding most delicious and health-giving fruit.

This is the city that the saints are to inherit. This is a shadow of the glories of heaven.

Fourth. Heaven is represented by a garden of pleasure. It is called "paradise." Luke 23:43, "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise." 2 Corinthians 12:3–4, "I knew such a man (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth); how that he was caught up into paradise." Paradise is a word of Greek derivation, that signifies a garden; and the Jews used the word *pardes* in the same sense. This is a paradise or garden, not of common trees, but having the tree of life growing in it. Revelation 2:7, "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God."

Fifth. The glory of the blessed is compared to light in our context, in Revelation 2:11, "And her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal"; and Revelation 2:24, "And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it"; and Revelation 2:5, "And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light." Now nothing is so pleasing naturally to the sight as light, and nothing that is the object of our senses that is so glorious. So they themselves shall shine like the sun. Matthew 13:43, "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun."

Sixth. The blessedness of the saints in glory is compared to a feast and banquet. Canticles 5:1, "Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved." Matthew 26:29, "Verily I say unto you, that I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until the day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." And many other places may be found parallel hereto.

Feasts are commonly made on joyful occasions. This feast is a marriage

-- 143 --

feast. Revelation 19:7, Revelation 19:9, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. [...] And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb."

Seventh. Their glory is compared unto glorious robes. Revelation 3:5, "He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment"; and Revelation 7:9, "After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude which no man z could

7. In revising for republishing, JE here inserted two leaves in which he revised the beginning of the sermon, with 1 John 3:2 as its new text. The insert reads:

"1 John 3:2, 'And it doth not yet appear what we shall be.'

"In the 1 John 2, the Apostle had been exhorting to beware of being seduced and drawn away by those who had forsaken Christ and the truth; and in the latter part of the chapter had urged their future and present state as argument to persuade them to this steadfastness and constancy, in 1 John 2:28: 'And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.'

"And the present state of the righteous, their state of regeneration, is urged in 1 John 2:29: 'If ye know that he is righteous, ye know every one that doth righteousness is born of him.'

"And having mentioned their being born of God, the Apostle cannot forbear to stop to take notice of the great and wonderful love of God, that such creatures as we are should be born of God, and so should be called his sons: 'Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be' [1 John 3:1].

"And yet this is not all. The Apostle takes notice in the next verse, the verse of our text, 'Now we are the sons of God, but it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is' [1 John 3:2]; as if he had said, 'The love of the Father is indeed astonishing, that ever such worms as we should be born of him and be called his sons; but yet that is not all: the love of God is yet more wonderful; we are the sons of God indeed now, but it don't appear what we shall be; the rest is unknown; we can't so much as conceive what we shall be hereafter: but this we know, that whereas now we are the sons of God, then we shall be like [him] and shall see him as he is.'

"The drift of the Apostle is to set forth the love of God to Christians. This he doth by their happiness in their twofold state:

"1. In their present state of grace. 'Beloved, now we are the sons of God.'

"2. In their future state of glory, or what they shall be when God shall appear. The greatness of the happiness of this state is set forth, first, by the inconceivableness of it, or it being hidden and unknown. 'And it doth not yet appear what we shall be.' Second, by that little which we do know of it, whereby we may guess at the greatness of this glory. 'But we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.' 'Tis the former of these we are to insist upon at this time, from this doctrine: DOCTRINE. *The godly are designed for unknown and inconceivable happiness.*

"In speaking to this, we shall do two things:

"I. We shall prove that the godly are designed for exceeding great happiness.

"II. Show in what respects this happiness is hidden and inconceivable.

"I. We shall prove that the godly are intended for exceeding happiness and most exalted glory.

"And upon this we shall chiefly insist, as being the main thing and what is most needful.

This is what men want to be really and thoroughly convinced [of], that such an happiness does await those that love and fear God.

"1 Corinthians 2:9, 2 Corinthians 12:14.

"*First.* 'Tis plainly evident by reason that God created man for this very end, that he might communicate happiness to him.

"This is evident, because 'tis certain that the motive of God's creating the world must be merely his goodness, which is nothing else but his inclination to communicate of his happiness. God created the world either from his goodness or his inclination to communicate happiness, or for his own happiness; there is not a third. But it could not be for his own happiness, it being impossible that an infinite and eternal Being should receive any addition of happiness. 'Tis evident therefore that what moved God to create the world was only his goodness, or his propensity to communicate of his own happiness to something else.

"But only the understanding part of the creation is capable of being a subject of this happiness. None will say that God created the world to give happiness to the sun, moon or stars, rocks, trees or beasts, but only to the spiritual part of the creation, for whom it is evident the rest was created. If it be objected against this, that God created the world ultimately for his own glory, this is so far from making against what we say, that it makes it more clear and evident. 'Tis undoubtedly true that God created all things for his own glory, but not for his essential glory but only his manifestative glory. But let us consider wherein this glory of God, that is the end of the creation, consists. God did not create the world to manifest his glory to himself or for a trial of his own power and wisdom, nor does it consist at all in any manifestation of his glory to any irrational beings who are not able to perceive it. We have brought it, therefore, to this: that the glory of God, which is the ultimate end of the creation of the universe, is the manifestation of God's perfections to the intelligent part of the universe.

"Nor yet doth this glory of God consist merely in the creature's perceiving his perfections: for the creature may perceive the power and wisdom of God, and yet take no delight in it, but abhor it. Those creatures that so do, don't glorify God. Nor doth the glory of God consist especially in speaking of his perfections: for words avail not any otherwise than as they express the sentiment of the mind. This glory of God, therefore, [consists] in the creature's admiring and rejoicing [and] exulting in the manifestation of his beauty and excellency. For God has no glory actively from those that behold his glory and take no pleasure in [it]; but the essence of glorifying of God consists, therefore, in the creature's rejoicing in God's manifestation of his beauty, which is the joy and happiness we speak of. So we see it comes to this at last: that the end of the creation is that God may communicate happiness to the creature; for if God created the world that he might be glorified in the creature, he created it that they might rejoice in his glory: for we have shown they are the same. But if God created us to rejoice in his perfections, he made us to be happy in the seeing God's perfections, and rejoicing in them consists [in] the creature's glorifying of God; and the seeing God's perfections and rejoicing in them is the creature's highest happiness, and is that very happiness spoken of in the scripture, called seeing God's face [Revelation 22:4].

"God indeed created the world to glorify his name, that is, to manifest his glory an excellency to the creature. But why is it that God wills that the creature should know his excellency? Not because that God is the better or happier for it, but because it is the happiness of the creature.

God created the world to manifest his power and his wisdom. But why would God have us know that he is powerful and wise? Because in the knowing of that is the happiness of the creature, not his own happiness."

number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands." They shall be clothed likewise upon the most joyful occasion, even as a bride adorns herself for her wedding. Rev.

-- 145 --

Revelation 19:8, "And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white."

Eighth. And lastly, their blessedness is compared to rivers of pleasure and life, as if they not only might drink as much pleasure as they would, but might even swim in it and be overwhelmed in delight and joy.⁸

Thus we have taken notice of some of those similitudes by which God has been pleased to shadow forth the glories of heaven, even all the most glorious [that] can be found in the aspectable world. We are come, therefore, to show,

II. That none are sufficient to represent to us, or to give us an idea of, the glories of the blessed. Although perhaps they give us as bright a picture and image of it—or would do, if fully understood—as we are capable of receiving in his life, yet 'tis but a very faint shadow. 'Tis but a glimpse, and a small glimpse too; they are things that are quite beyond our conception. Nothing that we see upon earth will serve to give us a notion; those things are so much more excellent, so much more pure, more refined, noble and exalted, we have never yet seen anything with our eyes, or heard anything with our ears, like it. 1 Corinthians 2:9, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love him."⁹

But here it may be said, that this is incredible, that man should be intended for so great glory as this comes to, to live in it forever. 'Tis joyful and glorious indeed, if we could but firmly believe it; but it seems to be really beyond belief. We hope therefore here to make it out satisfactorily to all reasonable persons who will shut their eyes against the truth. And here, we shall tell,

First. what natural reason evidences in this matter, because such sort of proofs as these will go much further with some kind of persons than Scripture proof.

1. Natural reason tells us this, that God created man for nothing else but happiness. He created him only that he might communicate happiness

8. In revising for re preaching, JE added: "Psalms 36:8, 'And thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures.' Revelation 22:1."

9. In revising for re preaching, JE added: "Indeed, the sun may be represented by the stars to them who never saw."

-- 146 --

to him. And therefore the happiness that God designed him [for] must be exceeding great.

Let it not be an objection to this, that God created man chiefly for his own glory. I answer, this is not different: for he created them that he might glorify himself this way, by making them blessed, and communicate his goodness to them.

'Tis evident that the end of man's creation must needs be, that he may be made happy, from the motive of God's creating the world; which could be nothing else but his goodness: for it was either because of his goodness, or inclination to make others happy, or for his own happiness. But it can't be for his own happiness; for it is impossible that an eternal, an infinite Being, should be capable of receiving more happiness than he has already.

Therefore the motive of God's creating the world must be his inclination to communicate his own happiness to something else. This reason tells us. If it be said that the end of man was that God might manifest his power and wisdom, holiness or justice, so I say too; but the question, "Why did God will to make known his power and wisdom, etc.? What could move [God] to will that his power and wisdom should be known? It would add nothing to God's happiness that those were known"—no, but the knowing of them makes us happy, and not God: and this is the end why God has showed his power and wisdom.

But the communicating of God's goodness must be the ultimate end; for this end God exalted his power and wisdom, and it could be for no other. God shows his power by powerfully bringing about some end, and so his wisdom. That is the meaning of the word, "wisdom": skillfully bringing about an end. Therefore the manifestation of this skill must be for some other end, which could be nothing but God's goodness. But God's goodness is the same with his inclination to give happiness.

Therefore 'tis proved that God made the whole creation, that he might give happiness. But only man, or the rational part of the creation, is capable of being a subject of this happiness. Sun and moon, and trees and rocks and beasts, are not capable of receiving true happiness. Therefore 'tis evident that God created the whole universe for this very end, that he might give happiness to the rational part of the universe.

Again, that happiness is the end of the creation appears by this: 'tis evident that God has created man to see his works and his power; for God's power, wisdom and the like would not be shown if there was no rational beings to see it: for certainly God did not create the world to satisfy himself what he could do, for he knew his own power. Therefore

-- 147 --

man must be created to see God's works, and to glorify him for them. Now glorifying God is nothing else but rejoicing in that glory he has displayed. So that God doubtless made man to rejoice in him and his works. But if God made man for this very end, to rejoice, he made him for this very end, to be happy.

Wherefore seeing it is so, we may justly conclude that man was designed by God for exceeding, inexpressibly great happiness. Seeing this was the end of the creation, we cannot reasonably think that God created all these things—heaven and earth, this vast universe—for a small degree of happiness to the creature.

No doubt but God will obtain his end in a glorious perfection. When God creates a world for a thing,¹ God will accomplish that thing in a high degree of perfection. We argue justly that, seeing God has created the world for his own glory, he will glorify with an inconceivable glory. So we argue as justly that, seeing God has created the world to glorify himself this way, in the happiness of the rational part of the world, he will therefore make them exceeding happy.

2. Reason tells us that man was created to be happy in the beholding of God's own excellency, and therefore that the happiness of the saints will be exceeding great. The creation of the world is nothing but God's manifestation of his own perfection and excellency. 'Tis certain that God did not thus exert his excellencies for nothing, nor did he give man a capacity of perceiving these manifestations—and the glories and excellencies of God in them—for nothing; but it would be utterly in vain if there were none to behold and admire them. Wherefore it follows that man, or rational beings in general, was created to behold the manifestations of God's excellency, and to view them, and to be delighted with the sight of them.

So that 'tis evident that God made man to be happy in the beholding of God's own excellency.² And seeing this is the end of man, doubtless this end shall be obtained to the full; that is, there will be a time wherein man will, with open face and with as full a view as his nature is capable of, behold the excellency and beauty of God. And seeing God's excellency is so great, even infinite, there is no doubt but the happiness in beholding it will be inconceivably great, even worthy of the gloriousness of the object. This reason tells us.

3. Reason tells us that man was created to be happy in the enjoyment of God's love, and therefore that those that enjoy this happiness must be inconceivably happy. We have showed already that it must needs be

1. MS: "thing we."

2. JE later deleted this sentence.

that God created the world only from goodness, and that the rational part of the world are the ultimate objects of all this goodness. Wherefore it follows that God created the whole world for the manifestation of his love and goodness to the rational part of the world. Therefore there will doubtless be a time wherein God will fully manifest his love to good men, to those that answer the end of their creation.

But reason tells us that they that fully enjoy the love of God must be exceeding happy beyond compare: for how happy are men sometimes in the love one of another. How much more happy, then, must they necessarily be in the enjoyment of the love of him who is infinitely greater, better and more excellent than any creature.³

4.4 'Tis very reasonable to conclude that man's highest happiness is vastly higher and more excellent than the highest pleasure of the beasts, and therefore that 'twill be inconceivably beyond all earthly pleasures.

'Tis very reasonable that, seeing God has created men for this end—to be happy—and seeing he has made [men] of a nature so much more excellent than the beasts, that therefore he designed them for a pleasure as much higher as his nature is: for God creates all things in harmony and proportion, orders all things beautifully. And therefore we may certainly conclude that God intended men for something immensely better than ever he intended the beasts.

God created man in his own image, inspired him with a heavenly ray, gave him noble and excellent powers. This is evident to reason. And the beasts are left without those faculties that man has, whereby he is able to meditate on God, or the first cause of all things, to see him who is invisible, and see future and eternal things.

But the beasts God has left groveling on the earth and has put them in subjection unto man, has given them all into his hands for him to destroy and kill or save them alive⁵ according as shall be most for his own benefit. 'Tis evident that God has made man both the ruler and the end of beasts, that they are created for his use and to make him

3. The first preaching unit ends here. In revising for re preaching, JE added in a blank space on the last page of the first booklet: "1 John 3:2, 'And it doth not yet appear what we shall be.' Preached at Scantic, at N[ew] H[aven], at Fairfield." Shorthand indicates that the sermon was also delivered at New York, Bolton, and Glastonbury. The next preaching unit begins with a recapitulation of the text, doctrine, and main heads already covered, which is omitted here.

4. JE later renumbered this point 2.

5. In revising for re preaching, JE replaced "destroy and kill or save them alive" with "dispose."

comfortable. They are all suited to this by their natures; one beast God has made for one use, and another for another. 'Tis evident to anyone that is not blind, that the inferior

creatures are created for man, and that God has given them powers and excellencies so far only as to make them subservient to this end.

But man in many respects is like the angels, is made but a little lower than they in nature, has understanding and reason as well as they, and was created for as high an end as they. The soul of man, were it not depraved, would be as an angel incarnate; but how great a difference is there between an angel and a beast. And the difference between the human and bestial nature is of the same kind, abating the fallen and sinful state of man.

Wherefore, seeing God has made man of so much more excellent nature than the beasts, and has made him ruler over them, and has made the beasts for him, 'tis certainly reasonable to think that God designed man for something exceedingly better than ever he designed them.

But earthly pleasures, and good things, those that are merely earthly, are the same kind of things that the beasts do enjoy. They enjoy sensual pleasure as well as man, and in all probability more than man, for the senses of beasts are commonly quicker and more lively than men's. In many respects they have more earthly pleasure than man has, and not half so keen and bitter afflictions as men are liable unto.

Wherefore we may safely and certainly conclude that man was intended for something vastly higher than is on the earth, of quite another nature than ever the beasts enjoy:⁶ for if this lower world is all made for man, doubtless man was made for something more than all the lower world.

5.7 'Tis reasonable to conclude that God intended man for something exceeding great and excellent, because he has taken so much care of him in the creation of the world. It is reasonable to think that when God doth very great things for man, that he intends to bring him, if he right improves, to very great things by them. When he lays out his power in a wonderful and astonishing manner for his sake, 'tis reasonable to conclude that some great thing will come of it at last that shall be inexpressibly for his advantage.

6. In revising for re preaching, JE deleted the remainder of the sentence.

7. JE later renumbered this point 3.

Thus, if God has made the world for man, and the various parts of it for his use; if [God] created this vast universe and fitted them on purpose to promote his good, 'tis evident that God sets very much by this creature, man, and that he intends him for excellent things if he will love and fear him.

But 'tis evident to any considerate person, that God has made the world, and suited it [8](#) for man's use and to his advantage, because everything is so contrived by God as to be beneficial to mankind: the sun, moon and stars to give him light and heat, and to be signs and seasons, days and years. How evident is it that the sun was contrived by infinite wisdom to give light to man, light, to cause the fruits of the earth to grow and yield their increase; and the moon to enlighten him by night; and in the absence of that, the stars, without which our nights would be without the least glimmering of light at all, but would be perfect darkness. How evident is it to reason that God has created the earth for man to dwell upon and to yield him her increase; and the air, for him to breath in; and the wilderness, for fuel and timber, etc.; and the corn and vine and oil, to sustain and nourish him; and the beasts and birds, to be his meat and so serve him; the sea, for transportation and to supply water to the clouds and rivers, whereby the earth is watered.

These things, 'tis evident, God has done for man, and they are very great things. Certainly 'tis no small thing to create a world. 'Tis no small matter to keep the heavenly bodies in their appointed courses. 'Tis no small thing for God to hang the earth upon nothing and continually to uphold it by his power, and to create so many living creatures and sustain them. But these are the things that God has done for man, as is evident from the make of the things and their adaptedness to those ends.

Wherefore it is not very unjust to conclude that, seeing God hath done such exceedingly wonderful things for man, that he intends those of men that love and serve him for something inconceivably blessed and glorious. God has given us a witness of what he intends for us, if we will love him, in his ordering of things without us; so that 'tis truly as the Apostle says, Acts 14:16–17, that God has not left those nations without witness, which do not enjoy the light of Scripture: "Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good,

8. MS: "them."

-- 151 --

and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."

6.9 God has made man capable of exceeding great happiness, which doubtless did not in vain. God never made man capable of so pure, so high and excellent a happiness for nothing, for de doth nothing in vain. To create man with a capacity that he never intended to fill, when he created, would have been to have created a large capacity when there was need but of a smaller; yea, it makes man less happy, to be capable of more happiness than he shall ever obtain.

Now 'tis evident, then, man is made with a nature capable of great happiness; for he has created him with a mind that is capable of very great knowledge, and of high and excellent affections, even of loving of God; but he that has a nature capable of knowing and loving God, has a nature capable of enjoying of [God]: for beholding and loving and possessing is enjoying.

Now God is the best good, and fountain of all felicity, and they that are capable of knowing much of him, and loving him much, must be capable of that which is a vast and unspeakable delight.

And doubtless when God gave man such a nature, so capacitated, he did it knowingly and with design, and gave him such a soul and nature that he might be capable of such blessedness, and that all of men that should truly love him might actually enjoy so great pleasure.

It is unreasonable to think that God made man's highest happiness and his capacity disproportionate, who doth all things in the exactest proportion. Man would never be perfect if he was never to be according to the full of his capacity, and as happy as his nature will allow; but none can reasonably think that God created man so much more excellent than other creatures, and never intended he should be perfect. Other creatures are perfect in their kind; the beasts enjoy as great delight as their nature will allow of: and can any think that man, who is the end of those creatures and their ruler, was intended in his creation to be left in this respect imperfect, and as a vessel partly empty and never to be filled?

7.1 It appears that man was intended for very great blessedness, inasmuch as God has created man with an earnest desire of very great felicity. 'Tis evident that every man in the world that the use of his faculties, has a very desire to enjoy very blessedness sometime or

9. JE later renumbered this point 4.

1. JE later renumbered this point 5.

-- 152 --

other,² that makes every man so unsatiable, that nothing that can be found in the world will satisfy him. They who have nothing but this world that they set their hearts upon, they can never be satisfied with anything they can enjoy, yea, though they enjoy all that the earth can afford, as many kings and princes of the earth, and as Solomon in particular, did. 'Tis evident by experience that nothing upon [earth], yea, all the world, will not satisfy man; yea, the more he has, the more he craves. We see that man's desires will enlarge themselves without any bounds, and that no finite object can satisfy them at all.

Neither is it only wicked men that desire very great happiness, but the holiest men upon the earth as well as others. This is not the effect of sin or fruit of the fall of man; and this appears, because the more holy men are, the more earnestly do they desire very great felicity. For the more any man loves God, the more earnestly will he long to enjoy him. Yea, 'tis a virtue to long for this happiness of enjoying God intimately and forever.

Wherefore, seeing God created man with so earnest a desire of very great happiness, and the better men are, the more earnestly do they desire, we may certainly conclude that good men enjoy as much as they desire: for God did not create in man so earnest a desire, when at the same time he did not create for so much as he should desire. This is a desire [that] is not an effect of the fall, [as] we have showed; but God created man with nothing that should torment him, as a desire that could never be satisfied would be an eternal torment. Therefore God has made it evident that good men shall obtain exceeding great happiness.

Thus you see how reasonable what the Scripture has brought to light concerning the happiness of the saints is in itself, that mere reason evidences so much about; so that there is no reason that it should seem incredible to us, that ever man should be the subject of so great, so exceeding great happiness, as the Scripture represents.

Inference.

I shall make application of this in inference before I proceed any further.

Inf. [I.] Seeing that reason does so undeniably evidence that saints

2. In revising for re preaching, JE amended the preceding part of the paragraph to read: "It appears that man was intended for very great blessedness, inasmuch as God has created man with a craving and desire that can be filled with nothing but a very great happiness. 'Tis evident that every man in the world that has the use of his faculties, has a thirst after very great blessedness sometime or other."

-- 153 --

shall, some time or other, enjoy so great glory, hence we learn that there is undoubtedly a future state after death, because we see they do not enjoy so great glory in this world. We have a natural [reason], whereby 'tis evident there will be another state hereby besides the revelation of Scripture, which puts the case beyond all question forever.

In this world, the godly meet with abundance of tribulation, oftentimes are persecuted to death, and are very much like sheep that are tore to pieces amongst wolves. They meet with abundance of crosses and tribulations, very often in the most peaceable and quiet seasons; and oftentimes, besides this, they are under desertions of the Spirit of God, and all the spiritual pleasure they enjoy in this life does but enflame their desire and thirst for more enjoyment of God; and if they knew that there was no future life, [it]

would but increase their misery, to consider that after this life was ended they were never to enjoy God anymore at all.

Inf. II. How good is God, that he has created man for this very end, to make him happy in the enjoyment of himself, the Almighty, who was happy from the days of eternity in himself, in the beholding of his own infinite beauty: the Father in the beholding and love of his Son, his perfect and most excellent image, the brightness of his own glory; and the Son in the love and enjoyment of the Father. And God needed no more, could accede no more. But yet God, who was thus happy in himself, has a natural propensity and inclination to communicate happiness to some other beings. This inclination in the nature of God is what we call goodness. And 'twas because of this inclination that he created the world, and especially that he created men and angels in it. 'Twas not that he might be made more happy himself, but that [he] might make something else happy; that³ he might make them blessed in the beholding of his excellency, and might this way glorify himself. And even the damnation of the wicked is for the manifestation of God's justice, that he might show more of his excellency to the blessed, to their greater delight in their Godhead. Good, therefore, is God, who does such wondrous things merely from an inclination to goodness.

[Doctrine Concluded.]

We now come, in the

Second place, to give those reasons and arguments drawn from the holy Scriptures which make it abundantly clear beyond manner of doubt that the happiness and glory of saints will be thus exceedingly

3. MS: "in the."

-- 154 --

great, even quite above all that reason without the Scriptures could tell us, quite above all that we can speak or think, or anything upon earth can represent.

God has given us that light in the Scripture that does set the matter forth in an exceeding clear and bright light. But to take notice of all in the Scriptures that doth fully reveal this to us would require many hours. But we shall only take notice of some of the chief. And,

1.4 This very thing is plainly asserted in the Word of God, in that forementioned place, 1 Corinthians 2:9; and the apostle Paul, who had only a vision of them, declares that they are so great that he could not utter it (2 Corinthians 12:4). 1 John 3:2, "Now we are the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be."

2. It appears that they shall be thus exceeding blessed and glorious, because they shall enjoy God as their own portion, and shall fully enjoy the possession of all things. The infinite God gives himself to them to be enjoyed as much as to the full of their capacity. Certainly, therefore, the doctrine must be true, that nothing earthly can⁵ give us a representation of their glory; so certainly silver, nor gold, nor precious stones, nor crowns, nor kingdoms can be in any measure compared to the infinite God. Besides, they shall also with him possess all things fully.

3.⁶ Because they shall see God's face, and enjoy God as his own dear children. There is no need to multiply texts of Scripture to prove this; we know how often this is there declared. What relation can there be nearer? Men's children are the very fruit of themselves, are the communication of their own beings. How exceeding happy, therefore, must the blessed be, whose blessedness is represented by this very thing!

4.⁷ They shall be like God. 1 John 3:2, "Beloved, now we are the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." God is the first excellency and happiness: and what greater happiness can there be for a creature, than to be like to this Being? It is impossible to go higher.

5.⁸ This appears exceeding abundantly by the greatness of Christ's love to them; which appears not only by his declarations thereof, but

4. In revising for re preaching, JE deleted the first point.

5. MS: "will Gi Can."

6. JE later renumbered this point 1.

7. JE later renumbered this point 3.

8. JE later renumbered this point 4.

-- 155 --

especially by his actions.⁹ Seeing that they are so exceeding dear to Christ, we must certainly conclude that when they come to enjoy Christ, they will be made proportionably happy and blessed. Christ never would do such kind of things for a small degree of happiness to his creatures, for any degree of happiness that was not quite beyond all representation.

6.¹ Because they shall be so nearly related, so closely united to Christ. We know how this union is represented that is between Christ [and saints]: they are as near as our hands and feet are to our head; the church of saints is Christ's spouse, the bride, the Lamb's wife, his flesh and his bone, one spirit, as near as the body is the soul; the saints are called the body of Christ, yea, they are the fullness or completeness of Christ. Ephesians 1:22-23, "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all." Christ don't look upon himself full or complete without believers, even as the spirit is not a complete

man without the body, or as the bridegroom is not complete without the bride. How great, then, will the glory and blessedness of believers [be], when they shall fully enjoy this their head and husband, when they shall partake of his own glory, as the spouse partakes of the happiness of him to whom she² is espoused.

7.3 The saints shall in many respects be more highly privileged in glory than the angels. The angels are as the nobles and barons in the court of heaven, but the saints are as the kings' children. The angels are indeed the children of God by creation, and because they are of his image; but the saints are God's children, inasmuch as they are the members of his own eternal Son.

God never did such wondrous things for any of the angels as he has done for man in the work of redemption. Christ Jesus never did any such things for them, for he took not on him the nature of angels. The angels are not so nearly related to Christ as believers are. The angels are as his ministers and servants, but believers his bride (Revelation 19:7). Read the Book of Solomon's Song if you would know the intimate union there is between Christ and saints.

Therefore 'tis the office of angels to minister unto the saints in glory,

9. Here JE drew a dash, possibly indicating his intention to give illustrations of Christ's declarations and acts of love to saints.

1. JE later renumbered this point 5.
2. MS: "ye."
3. JE later renumbered this point 6.

-- 156 --

as the nobles of the court do minister to the king's children, or his queen, as the church of saints is called, Psalms 45:9, "Upon thy right hand did stand the queen in gold of Ophir." Hebrews 1:14, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" Therefore they are called "their angels," Matthew 18:10, "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven."⁴

Application.

We now shall apply the whole that we have said to the hearts of all that have heard these things. They are the same that we read of in the Word of God, and such as no Christians should be unacquainted with. And O! that all that go under the name of Christians were more acquainted with them and more fully understood them, and turned the eye of their minds oftener towards them, and would cause that these highest glories that can be thought [of], might be more the objects of their meditation!

Indeed, if there be such a reward as this is—and which we have proved, I suppose, by unexceptionable arguments that there really is, both by the light of reason and brighter gospel's light and positive Word of God—it is enough to make a man stand astonished, and all his lifetime to live in astonishment, that the world, who have had it revealed to them, are not in general so earnestly engaged about it, so taken up with the thoughts of it and in contriving and striving to obtain it, as in comparison of it quite to neglect every⁵ other concern; but

4. In revising for republishing, JE added: "*Exh.* 1. Pressing all to take these things into their serious consideration. If they are so great, they are worthy to be considered."

5. The eighth leaf of the second booklet (MS pp. 15–16), which begins at this point, is a later insert that revises Pt. II of the Doctrine for the sermon on 1 John 3:2. The insert reads:

"II. We are come, briefly to show in what respects the future felicity of the saints is unknown and inconceivable, in these four [things]:

First. With respect to the objects of their enjoyment. 'Tis so more especially with respect to God, who is above all the object of the glorified saints' enjoyment. 'Tis but very little that we see, hear or understand of the beauty of God; all that we can extend our thoughts to is but a glimmering or twilight, and give us no conception of what the meridian brightness of God's glory is. Though God is gloriously manifesting himself many ways, by his creation, by his Word, by his Son, by his Spirit; yet after all, 'tis so little a portion that is heard of God. Job 26:14, 'Lo, these are parts of his ways: but how little a portion is heard of him?' And if our understandings could contain it, our frame would not bear it. Exodus 33:20, 'And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live.'

"And as to those other objects of enjoyment, we have no adequate conception of the glory and beauty of the man Christ Jesus, no, nor of the saints and companions in glory.

Second. The excellency and spiritual beauty of the enjoyers. The saints in this world cannot conceive how excellent and glorious they themselves shall be hereafter. This may be what is more especially intended by the expression, 'it doth not yet appear what we shall be.'

"Happiness does not only consist in enjoying of others' excellency, but in being excellent ourselves. As the saints don't know how excellent the persons are which they will enjoy, neither can they conceive how glorious and beautiful they themselves shall be who shall enjoy them.

Third. The manner and circumstances of enjoyment are hidden and inconceivable. We know not after what manner the saints shall be united to God and Christ, nor after what ineffable manner Christ will manifest his love to them, nor [after] what manner the saints shall express their love to God and Christ and one another. Their words, the Apostle tells us, they are unutterable by us (2 Corinthians 12:4). Nor do we know in what circumstances this will be in. We know not what manner of place the highest heavens are, nor with what manner of glories it shines, what shall be the place and circumstances of their bodies after the resurrection, and what glories shall then be presented to their external senses. These things eye hath not as yet seen nor ear heard.

Fourth. Their happiness is inconceivable with respect to the degree of it, and not only with respect to its nature and manner. Our minds, though they can stretch and extend themselves very far, and we can frame an idea of greater [happiness] than ever was enjoyed by fallen mortals—yea, this is usual—yet with our imagination we can't reach this happiness; it will be found to be quite beyond whatever entered into the heart of man."

-- 157 --

especially when we see the world, the miserable blind world, so stupid, so dull, so regardless about those things, as if they either were not true, or did not concern them, or were no great matters.

And here,

I. We will address ourselves to those who do not live and act under the influence of a belief of such manner of things as these. Indeed, if there were not a powerful God that can do what he pleases, man might forever despair of saying anything that shall affect the hearts of those who are so senseless, that live their lives' time under the hearing of such things, and their minds nor their actions are never the otherwise for them.

Will not your own hearts accuse you of folly and sottishness if you neglect these things? What reasonable [persons] cannot see the folly of groveling on the ground for a little dirt and dung, and all the while disregarding such manner of things as we have heard of, which are eternal and are offered even unto them, and they are urged to accept of? How dreadfully will such persons in torment cry out of this folly, how will they accuse and curse themselves forever for such neglects!

II. To those that bear the name and profession of Christians, first, to blush and be ashamed, and hold down their heads with confusion, that

-- 158 --

they who hope they are the very persons to whom all these things do belong, set so little by their own inheritance and what they hope to be their own portion, that ever their hearts should be so much upon the world; [that] they should vex themselves about the things of the earth and this life, who hope for such glory; and that they purify themselves no more, that they do no more good, live so little to Jesus Christ, think no oftener of heaven itself, and the new Jerusalem; and that they walk so little worthy of this their vocation, and are yet as babes in Christ Jesus, and are so easily overcome by a temptation to disobey and dishonor this their glorious Lord and Captain; that they live so little in love one with another, and do [no] more for God, whom they hope will do such things as these for them.

And O! that Christians would more thoroughly consider their inheritances than ever yet they have done, and awake out of sleep and arise from the dead, that Christ may give them light, that they would distinguish themselves from the rest of the world a little more by their holy lives and by bringing forth fruits meet for him by whom they are dressed!

Inf. I is the blessedness of those who are in heaven: so great, that nothing in the world will suffice so much as to give a representation of it. How much, then, is the world to be despised by Christians. If we search all the face of the earth, and not only so, but tear out its bowels and ransack its inwards, or dive to the bottom of the sea, go and look into the palaces and stately rooms of princes, and search their coffers, yea, if we take in the visible heavens, everything that we can discover there, and put all these things together, and imagine much better and more beautiful than they are, we can get nothing that will

serve to give us a picture of heavenly glory. Not only are [these] insufficient to come near the substance, but will not so much as give an image. And Christians are those that do expect this same glory, and that within seventy years, and to enjoy it forever. Verily, how little is the world to be esteemed by such, and how inconsistently will such as say they expect this act if they much regard it, yea, if they were sure they could obtain the whole world, with all its wealth, as glorious as the representation was that the devil made to our Savior from the high mountain.

How much less, when all they expect is only a little inconsiderable part of this, and that with abundance of affliction and uncertainty, accompanied with many disappointments. What shall a Christian say to this? Is it possible for one really to believe the futurity of these things, and that they are indeed such as we are told, and yet have his heart upon the earth?

-- 159 --

May we not rather certainly conclude, that if a man had a firm belief and lively idea of those things, he would look down on the world as a mere parcel of shadows, vanities, trifles, and disregard [them] as he does the motes that fly about in the air, any other ways than just as he makes use of them to the purposes of this future life?

Now surely we need not wonder that we are commanded to look upon those things as loss and dung, and it need not be a paradox that the Apostle exhorts Christians to "rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; to weep, as [though] they wept not; and to buy, as though we possessed not" (1 Corinthians 7:30).

[*Inf.*] II. Hence we learn who are wise men. Truly 'tis impossible to believe these things of which we have heard at this time, and not be fully convinced that seeking these things—yea, laying out ourselves to the utmost for them—is the greatest point of wisdom and prudence, and the contrary the highest degree of folly; and that those that do leave the world in their hearts to follow after this, are the most wise, and the only wise men, and all others very worthy of the denomination of fools.

[*Inf.*] III. How much greater is the Christian's reward than the Christian's troubles. All the troubles of this [world] are truly worthy to be despised in comparison of the glories of the future as well as worldly prosperity. There are many that are looked upon as miserable by the world, that are the most blessed of the earth. Doctrines strange to the world are contained in the beginning of the fifth chapter of Matthew, but if we believe what we have heard, they will no longer be strange to us. Those, that he that mourns, and he that is persecuted and reviled, is blessed, and commanded to rejoice and be exceeding glad, need not to seem strange to us.

What if the Christian dwells in a hut, or is clothed with rags, or is full of sores, as Lazarus was? What if he be thought worthy to be [a] companion of dogs by this world?

What if everyone hisses at him and reproaches or tramples upon him? Or what if we see him buffeted and spit on, as their Master was? What if there have been many thousands that have been burnt at the stake, for the sake of a good conscience? Shall we pronounce these miserable, notwithstanding this blessedness we have heard of is their portion, notwithstanding these things do but add to the weight of their crown of glory? If we have understood what we have heard, we shall not be prone to give sentence thus, but rather admiring their felicity, shall pronounce them happiest of all men.

[*Inf.*] IV. How unreasonable are they who grudge to deny themselves

-- 160 --

for the sake of heaven. Truly no rhetoric can represent their folly. How great folly must it [be] for men to shrink at mortification and self-denial for a few days for such a degree of happiness as this who can't care to deny the cravings of an appetite or their slothfulness for such manner of glory.

-- 161 --

Finis

By accessing this content (registered and unregistered), you agree as follows:

The *Works of Jonathan Edwards Online* is a digital learning environment that provides free access to Jonathan Edward's writings, as well as other content relevant to the writings. These materials are made available solely for educational or scholarly purposes. Users must keep intact, and not modify or remove, any copyright or other proprietary notices contained on the original screens on any copy you make. You are not permitted to sell, lease, license, rent, transfer, disassemble, modify, post, or publish any aspect of the materials, or authorize others to use these materials for commercial purposes. Any is prohibited. In the event you wish to use these materials other than as provided above, including quoting from or publishing texts in whole or in part, you must obtain explicit written permission from the Jonathan Edwards Center at Yale University, edwards@yale.edu

Transcripts are the result of countless hours of labor and are not in the public domain. Any unauthorized reproduction will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. If you have inquiries about this, please email edwards@yale.edu.

All documents are © 2008-2011 Jonathan Edwards Center, Yale University.