

The Portion of the Righteous

by Jonathan Edwards

The portion of the righteous is glory, honor, and peace, which they experience in this world through their relationship with God and their union with Christ.

Scripture: Matthew 11:28, Romans 2:10, 1 Corinthians 15:42, 1 Thessalonians 4:16, Revelation 22:12

Topics: "Righteous Living", "Eternal Rewards"

Description

Jonathan Edwards preaches about the portion of the righteous, emphasizing that glory, honor, and peace are the rewards assigned to those who work good. He describes the characteristics of a good man as one who does good deeds, and the rewards of glory, honor, and peace that await them. Edwards delves into the happiness of the righteous in this world, highlighting their conversion, blessedness, and the excellency, honor, and peace bestowed upon them. He also explores the happiness of the saints in death, the state of separation from the body, the joy of the saints at the resurrection and day of judgment, and the glory, honor, and peace they will receive at the resurrection and the day of judgment.

Transcript

The Portion Of The Righteous

Dated December, 1740.

Romans 2:10

But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good.

Subject: Glory, honor, and peace is the portion that God has given to all the godly.

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

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

men from bad, is not that they hear good, or that they profess good, or that they intend good; but that they do good. They are workers of good.

II. The reward of such a man; viz. "glory, honor, and peace;" in which are mentioned three sorts of good that are assigned to them as their portion. 1. Their moral good, expressed by the word glory. Glory shall be given them; i.e. they shall be made excellent and glorious. They shall be endued with those excellent and glorious qualifications, which will render them beautiful and lovely. They shall have the image of God, and be partakers of his holiness. Thus the word glory is used by St. Paul, 2 Cor. 3:18. We are changed into the same image from glory to glory. 2. Their relative good; Honor. They shall be in most honorable circumstances. They shall be advanced to great dignity, receive a relation to God, and Christ, and the heavenly inhabitants, and God shall put honor upon them. 3. Their natural good; Peace: which, as it is used in the Scriptures, signifies happiness; and includes all comfort, joy, and pleasure.

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

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

In considering the happiness of the righteous in this world, I shall pursue the method which the text obviously points out, and shall consider, I. The excellency; II. The honor; and , III. The peace and pleasure, which God bestows upon them in the present life.

I. The excellency or glory. The sum of this consists in their having the image of God upon them. When a person is converted, he has the image of God enstamped on him. Col. 3:10, "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him who created him." and Eph. 4:23, 24, "And be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness." They have their eyes opened, and are led into such a sight of God and thorough acquaintance with him, as changes the soul into the image of God's glory.

What can render a creature more excellent than to have the very image of the Creator? and how blessed a change is that which is wrought in conversion, which brings a man thus to be in the image of God! For though the image of God in Christians in this world is very imperfect, yet it is real. The real image of God is most excellent, though it be imperfect.

Hence, "the righteous is more excellent than his neighbour," and "the saints are the excellent of the earth." The image of God is their glory, and it may well be called glory, for imperfect as it is, it renders them glorious in the eyes of the angels of heaven. The image of God is a greater beauty in their eyes, than the brightness and glory of the sun in the firmament.

Indeed the saints have no excellency, as they are in and of themselves. In them, that is, in their flesh, dwells no good thing. They are in themselves poor, guilty, vile creatures, and see themselves to be so. But

they have an excellency and glory in them, because they have Christ dwelling in them. The excellency that is in them, though it be but as a spark, yet it is something ten thousand times more excellent than any ruby, or the most precious pearl that ever was found on the earth; and that because it is something divine, something of God.

This holy heavenly spark is put into the soul in conversion, and God maintains it there. All the powers of hell cannot put it out, for God will keep it alive, and it shall prevail more and more. Though it be but small, yet it is powerful; it has influence over the heart to govern it, and brings forth holy fruits in the life, and will not cease to prevail till it has consumed all the corruption that is left in the heart, and till it has turned the whole soul into a pure, holy, and heavenly flame, till the soul of man becomes like the angels, a flame of fire, and shines as the brightness of the firmament.

II. I would consider the honor to which Christians are advanced in this world; and the sum of this is, that they are the children of God. This is an excellent and glorious degree of honor and dignity to which they are admitted; and that because the Being to whom they are related is an infinitely glorious being, a being of incomprehensible majesty and excellency; and also because the relation is so near and honorable a relation. It is a great honor to be the servant of God. John the Baptist said of Christ, that he was not worthy to stoop down to loose the latchet of Christ's shoes. But Christians are not only admitted to be the servants of God, but his children; and how much more honorable in a family is the relation of children than that of servants! Gal. 4:7, "Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." Rom. 8:16, 17, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." 1 John 3:1, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God!" The honor appears the greater if it be considered how Christians are brought into their relation to God; and that is by Christ. They become the children of God by virtue of their union with the only begotten and eternal Son of God. They are united to him as his spouse, and members of his body, as his flesh and his bones, and as one spirit; and, therefore, as Christ is the Son of God, so they are sons. Therefore are they joint heirs with Christ, because they are joint sons with him. To this end God sent forth his Son, that so they might through him also be sons. Gal. 4:4, 5, "But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." And therefore they partaking of the relation of the Son, so are they also of the spirit of the Son; as it follows in the next verse, "and because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father."

Herein Christians are the children of God in a more honorable way than the angels themselves; for the angels are the sons of God by virtue of that relation which they have to God, as they are in themselves singly and separately. But Christians are the children of God, as partaking with Christ, the only begotten Son, in his sonship, whose sonship is immensely more honorable than that of the angels. And Christians, being the children of God, are honored of God as such. They are sometimes owned as such by the inward testimony of the Spirit of God. For, as it is found in the verse already cited from Romans, "the Spirit beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God." They are treated as such in the great value God puts upon them, for they are his jewels, those which he has set apart for himself; and he is tender of them as of the apple of his eye. He disregards wicked men in comparison of them. He will give kings for them and princes for their life. He is jealous for them. He is very angry with those that hurt them. If any offend them, it were better for them that a millstone were cast about their neck, and they were

drowned in the depths of the sea. He loves them with a very great and wonderful love. He pities them as a father pities his children. He will protect them, and defend them and provide for them, as a father provides for his children. This honor have all they that fear and love God, and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ.

III. Peace and pleasure are also the portion of Christians in this world. Their peace and joy in God begin in the present life, and are no less excellent than the glory with which he invests them and the honor to which he advances them. We ought here to consider, 1st, what foundation they have for peace and joy. 2nd, what peace and joy they actually have.

1st. Their foundation for peace and joy is in their safety and their riches.

1. They have ground for peace because of their safety. They are safe in Jesus Christ from the wrath of God and from the power of Satan. They that are in Christ shall never perish, for none shall pluck them out of his hand. They are delivered from all their dreadful misery, that indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, which shall come on ungodly men. They were naturally exposed to it, but they are delivered from it; their sins are all forgiven them. The handwriting is eternally blotted out. Their sins are all done away; God has cast them behind his back, and buried their sorrows in the depths of the sea, and they shall no more come into remembrance. They are most safe from misery, for they are built on Christ their everlasting rock. Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God. They have the faithful promise of God for their security, that is established as a sure witness in heaven. They have an interest in that covenant, that is well ordered in all things and sure. "Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate them from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus.

2. They have a foundation of unspeakable comfort and joy, because of their riches. They have true and infinite riches. They are the possessors and heirs of something real and substantial, and that is worthy to be called by the name of riches. The things they possess are excellent, more precious than gold and than rubies; all the desirable things of this world cannot equal them, and they have enough of it. The riches that they have given them of God are inexhaustible. It is sufficient for them; there is no end of it. They have a fountain of infinite good for their comfort, and contentment, and joy; for God has given himself to them to be their portion, and he is a God of infinite glory. There is glory in him to engage their contemplation forever and ever, without ever being satiated. And he is also an infinite fountain of love; for God is love, yea, an ocean of love without shore or bottom! The glorious Son of God is theirs; that lovely one, who was from all eternity God's delight, rejoicing always before him. All his beauty is their portion, and his dying love is theirs, his very heart is theirs, and his glory and happiness in heaven are theirs, so far as their capacity will allow them to partake of it; for he has promised it to them, and has taken possession of it in their name. And the saints are also rich in the principle that is in them. They have inward riches which they carry about with them in their own hearts. They are rich in faith. Jam. 2:5, "Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?" They have the grace of God in their hearts, which is a most excellent treasure, and a good foundation of joy; for it is the seed of joy. Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart. And the seed that is sown in their hearts, is the grace of God there. That is a seed that, however it lies hid, will certainly in due time spring up, and put forth itself, and will bud, and blossom, and will bring forth rich fruit. These riches are the true riches. This is the good which God reserves for his friends. God distributes silver and gold and such like things among his enemies, because he slights them and regards them not. They are contemptible things in his eyes, as we throw husks to swine. But he has

reserved better things for his children, of which no ungodly man, though a prince or monarch, shall partake. This is the ground which Christians have of peace and pleasure in this world. However, the saints cannot always take comfort, and do not always taste the sweetness that there is in store for them, by reason of the darkness and clouds that sometimes interpose. But though they may walk in great darkness for a long time, yet they are happy notwithstanding.

2nd. They sometimes in this world have the actual enjoyment of peace and pleasure that are most excellent. Sometimes the clouds that are in the way are removed, and Christians are enabled to behold the ground they have for rejoicing. Though God's glory and love be often hid from them, as it were with a veil, or at least, so as to hinder a clear view of it, yet God sometimes is pleased to remove the veil, to draw the curtain, and to give the saints sweet visions. Sometimes there is, as it were, a window opened in heaven, and Christ shows himself through the lattice. They have sometimes a beam of sweet light breaking forth from above into the soul. And God and the Redeemer sometimes come to them, and make friendly visits to them, and manifest themselves to them. Sometimes Christians have seasons of light and gladness for some considerable period, and at other times their views are more transient. Sometimes their light and joy arise in reading of the Holy Scriptures, sometimes in hearing the word preached, sometimes at the Lord's table, sometimes in the duty of prayer, sometimes in Christian conference, sometimes in meditation when they are about their occupations, as in the time of more set and solemn meditations; and sometimes in the watches of the night.

Those spiritual joys and pleasures which believers possess in this world, are chiefly of three sorts.

1. The joy which they have in a sense of their own good estate; in the sense they have of the pardon of their sins, and their safety from hell; and a sense of the favor of God, and in the hope they have of eternal life.

2. The joy and delight, which they have in the apprehension and view of God's excellency and love. The joy of a Christian does not consist merely in the sense of his own good estate, as natural men often are ready to imagine; but there is an excellent, transcendent, soul-satisfying sweetness that sometimes fills the soul in the apprehension of the excellency of God. The soul dwells upon the thought, fixes on it, and takes complacency in God as the greatest good, the most delightful object of its contemplation. This pleasure is the sweetest pleasure that a Christian ever feels, and is the foretaste of the pleasures of heaven itself. Herein sometimes the saints do boast of the cluster of Canaan. This sort of joy is evidence of sincerity above any other joy, a more sure evidence than a rejoicing in our own good estate. From the joy which the Christian has in the view of the glory and excellency of God; the consideration of the love of God to him cannot be excluded. When he rejoices in God as a glorious God, he rejoices in him the more because he is his God, and in consideration of there being a union between him and this God. Otherwise, if there were a separation, the view of God's excellency, though it would raise joy one way, would proportionally excite grief another. God is sometimes pleased to manifest his love to the saints, and commonly at those times, when a Christian has the greatest views of God's excellency, he has also of his love. The soul is spiritually sensible of God as being present with it, and as manifesting and communicating himself; and it has sweet communion with God, and tastes the sweetness of his love, and knows a little what is the length, and breadth, and depth, and height of that love which passeth knowledge.

3. The third kind of joy is found in doing that which is to the glory of God. The true love of God makes this sweet and delightful to the soul. The joy of a Christian not only arises in knowing and viewing but also in doing; not only in apprehending God, but also in doing for God. For he loves God not only with a love of

complacency, but a love of benevolence also. And as a love of complacency delights in beholding, so does a love of benevolence delight in doing for the object beloved. The peace and pleasure which the Christian has in these things, is far better more desirable than pleasures that this world can afford, and especially than the pleasures of wicked men; and that on the following accounts.

(1). There is light in this pleasure. The peace and pleasures of wicked men have their foundation in darkness. When wicked men have any quietness or joy, it is because they are blind, and do not see what is their real condition. If it were not for blindness and delusion, they could have no peace nor comfort in anything. There needs nothing but to open a wicked man's eyes, and let him look about him and see where he is, and it would be enough to destroy all the quietness and comfort of the most prosperous wicked man in the world. But on the contrary, the peace of a godly man, is a peace that arises from light. When he sees things most as they are, then he has most peace; and the distress and trouble which he sometimes feels, arise from clouds and darkness. When a godly man is in the greatest fear and distress, if he did not know what a happy state he were in, he would at the same time rejoice with unspeakable joy; so that his pleasure is not founded, like that of wicked men, in stupidity, but in sensibleness; not in blindness, but in light, and sight, and knowledge.

(2). There is rest in this pleasure. He that has found this joy, finds a sweet repose and acquiescence of the soul in it. It sweetly calms the soul and allays its disappointments. Christ says, Mat. 11:28, "Come unto me, all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." There is a sweet contentment in it; the soul that tastes it, desires no better pleasure. There is a satisfaction in it. The soul that has been wandering before, when it comes to taste of this fountain, finds in it that which satisfies its desires and cravings, and discovers that in it which it needs in order to its happiness. John 4:14, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." It is quite otherwise with the pleasures of ungodly men. There is no true rest in them, they are not enjoyed with inward quietness, there is no true peace enjoyed within, neither do they afford contentment. But those wicked men that have the most worldly pleasures, are yet restlessly inquiring, "who will show us any good?" "The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt." Wicked men in the midst of their enjoyment of pleasure have no true rest, neither do their reflections on it afford rest; but only remorse of conscience, and disquietude of soul, under the guilt that is contracted. But the pleasures of the godly afford rest in the enjoyment, and rest and sweetness in the reflection. It oftentimes calms and refreshes the soul to look on past comforts.

(3). There is life in it. It is a pleasure that strengthens and nourishes and preserves the soul, and gives it life, and does not corrupt and destroy and bring it to death, as do sinful pleasures. The pleasures of the wicked are poison to the soul, they tend to enfeeble it, to consume it, and kill it. But the pleasures of the godly feed the soul, and do not consume it; they strengthen, and do not weaken it; they exalt, and do not debase it; they enrich, and do not impoverish it. Death and corruption are the natural fruit of the pleasures of sin, but life is the fruit of spiritual pleasures. Gal. 6:8, "For he that soweth to his flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption: but he that soweth to the Spirit, shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." The life in which this joy consists, and to which it tends, is the most excellent life, and the only life worthy of the name; it is spiritual, and the beginning of eternal life. This pleasure is a fountain springing up to everlasting life. John 4:14.

(4). There is substance in it. This pleasure is not a mere shadow, an empty delight, as earthly pleasures are, but it is substantial joy. The pleasures of sin last but a little season, they are the crackling of thorns under a pot, or as the blazing meteors of the night, that appear for a moment, and then vanish. But this

pleasure is like the durable light of the stars or the sun. Worldly pleasures are easily overthrown. A little thing will spoil all the pleasures of a king's court. Haman, in the midst of all his prosperity and greatness, could say, "Yet all this availeth me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the king's gate." But the joys of the saints are such as the changes of time cannot overthrow. If God lifts up the light of his countenance, this will compose and rejoice the heart under the saddest tidings. They joy in affliction. Their enemies cannot overthrow this joy. The devil and even death itself cannot overthrow it; but oftentimes it lives, and is in its greatest height, in the midst of the valley of the shadow of death. When in the most tormenting death, how often have the martyrs sung in the midst of the flames, and under the hands of their cruel tormentors! Job 35:10, "But none saith, Where is God my Maker, who giveth songs in the night."

(5). There is holiness in it. It is the excellency of these joys that they are holy joys. They are not like the polluted stream of sinful pleasures, but they are pure and holy. Rev. 22:1, "And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." These pleasures do not defile the soul, but purify it; they do not deform, but beautify it; they not only greatly delight the soul, but render it more excellent. They impart something more of God, more of a divine disposition and temper, dispose to holy actions, and cause the soul to shine as Moses's face did when he had been conversing with God in the mount, and as Stephen's face, which was as the face of an angel, when he was heaven opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. Thus these pleasures make the soul more excellent, and more divine, as well as more happy.

(6). There is sometimes glory in it. God sometimes unveils his face, and lest in light more plentifully. This is a delight and joy, the excellency, and sweetness, and admirableness of which cannot be expressed. It is a kind of glory that fills the soul. So excellent is its nature, that the sweetness earthly delight vanishes into nothing, and appears as base and vile as dross and dirt, or as the mere mire of the street. It is bright above all that is earthly, as the sun is brighter than the glow-worm. Of this, the apostle takes notice. 1 Pet. 1:8, "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

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

I. Death is rendered no death to them. It is not worthy of the name of death. As the life of a wicked man is not worthy of the name of life, so the death of a godly man is not worthy of the name of death. It is not looked upon as any death at all in the eyes of God, who sees all things as they are, nor is it called death by him. Hence Christ promises, that those who believe in him shall not die. John 6:50, 51, "this is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof and not die."

I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." It is no death to the saints, because it is no destruction to them. The notion of death implies destruction, or perishing, in it; but the godly are not destroyed by death, death cannot destroy them; for as Christ says, they shall never perish. John 3:15, "That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life."

A godly man, when he dies, in no wise perishes. There is no end put to his life as a Christian, for that is a spiritual life that remains unquenched by death. A wicked man, when he dies, dies indeed, because then an end is put to all the life which he has; for he has no other life but temporal life. But the life of a Christian is hid with Christ, and safely laid up with him in heaven; and therefore death cannot reach his life, because it cannot reach heaven. Death can no more reach the believer's life than Christ's life.

No death can reach Christ our life now though he died once. But now he has forever sat down at the right hand of God. He says, for the comfort of his saints, Rev. 1:18, "I am he that liveth and was dead: and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and death." Death not only cannot destroy a Christian, but it cannot hurt him. Christ carries him on eagle wings aloft on high, out of the reach of death. Death, with respect to him, is disarmed of his power.

And every Christian may say, "O death, where is thy sting?" Death was once indeed a terrible enemy, but now he has become weak. He spent all his strength on Christ; in killing him, he killed himself; he was conquered then, and has now no power to hurt his followers. Death is now but the shadow of what he would have been if Christ had not conquered him. He was once a lion, but now he is but a lamb. A good man may indeed be harassed with fears of death, and may be much terrified when going through the valley of the shadow of death, but that is no just ground of any terror, and if the saints are terrified, it is only through their infirmity and darkness.

As a child is frightened in the dark where there is no danger, because he is a child, so a good man may be affrighted at the terrible looks of death. But he will find this awful appearance to be only a shadow, that can look terribly, but can do nothing terrible. Death may, through the weakness of the saints, trouble them, and exercise them, but he cannot destroy the ground they have for comfort and support. When death comes to a wicked man, all those things on which he built his comfort fail, their foundation is overflown with a flood.

Job 22:16. But the foundation of the peace and comfort of the godly man is not shaken at such a time. Oftentimes the saints are actually carried above all the fears and terrors of death; they see that it is but a shadow, and are not afraid. Not only their foundation of comfort remains, but that peace and comfort itself is undisturbed, the light shines through the darkness, and the lamb-like nature of death appears through the shadow of the lion. The godly have a God to stand by them when they come to die, in whose love and favor they may shelter themselves, in whose favor is life, yea, life in death; and they have a blessed Savior to be with them, to uphold them with the right hand of his righteousness.

These are the friends they have with them, when they are going to take their leave of all earthly friends. God will be with them when their flesh and heart fails. God will be the strength of their heart, when they are weak and faint, and nature fails. God will put underneath his everlasting arms to support them, and will make all their bed for them in their sickness. Psalms 37:37, "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace."

II. Death is not only no death to them, but it is a translation to a more glorious life, and is turned into a kind of resurrection from the dead. Death is a happy change to them, and a change that is by far more like a resurrection than a death. It is a change from a state of perfect light, and holiness, and joy. When a saint dies, he awakes, as it were, out of sleep. This life is a dull, lifeless state. There is but a little spiritual life, and a great deal of deadness. There is but a little light, and a great deal of darkness.

There is but a little sense, and a great deal of stupidity and senselessness. But when a godly man dies, all this deadness, and darkness, and stupidity, and senselessness are gone forever, and he enters

immediately into a state of perfect life, and perfect light, and activity, and joyfulness. A man's conversion is compared to a resurrection, because then a man rises from spiritual death. Eph. 2:1, "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins." But through spiritual life is then begun, yet there are great remains of spiritual death after this, and but little life.

But when a godly man dies, he rises from all remains of spiritual death, and comes into a state of perfect life. This body is like a prison to the holy soul, it exceedingly clogs, and hinders, and cramps it in its spiritual exercises and comforts. But when a saint dies, the soul is released from this prison, this grave, and comes into a state of glorious freedom and happiness. So that death is not only deprived of his sting, but is made a servant to the saints, to bring them to Christ in heaven, who is their life.

And their ground of comfort does not only last when they are going out of the world, but it is in some respects increased, for then their perfect happiness draws nigh. It is "far better" to depart and be with Christ, than to continue here. And when the saints are enabled to see their own happiness in death, they are enabled exceedingly to rejoice in the midst of the valley of the shadow of death, and to triumph joyfully over the king of terrors. Death to the saints is always a passage or avenue, leading out of a world of vanity, and sin, and misery, into a world of life, light, and glory.

But though often a dark avenue, it is at times full of light, the darkness all vanishes away, and the light shines out of that glorious city into which they are entering. It shines through the darkness and fills the soul, and the clouds of death vanish before it. The awful appearance of death is but a mask or disguise that death wears. It is not terrible but joyful in reality, and this light of the new Jerusalem sometimes so clearly shines, that it shines through the frightful disguise, and shows the saints that death is but a servant.

Yea, sometimes it is so when death has on its most terrible disguise that ever it wears, and comes in its most dreadful forms, as when the saints are burnt at the stake, and put to all cruel and tormenting deaths. It is often times joyful to the saints when dying, to think that they are now going into the glorious presence of God, to enjoy God and Christ to the full. The joyful expectation sometimes makes them ready to cry out, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!" and "Why is his chariot so long in coming?"

Thirdly, let us next consider the happiness of the saints, in their state of separation from the body.

I. When the soul departs from the body, it is received by the blessed angels and conducted by them to the third heavens. On the eve of its departure there is a guard of angels standing round the dying bed; and the devils, though eager to seize upon it as their prey, shall by no means be suffered to come nigh. The holy angels shall be a guard to the soul, to keep off all its enemies. We are taught that this is part of the office in which God employs them. Psal. 34:7, "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them."

Psal. 91:11, "For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways;" as it was with Daniel in the lion's den. Dan. 6:22, "My God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before him innocency was found in me; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt." And as soon as the soul is loose from the body, it shall be kindly and courteously received by those bright and blessed ones, to be conducted by them in to Christ's glorious presence.

For the angels are all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them that shall be the heir of salvation. This is one way in which they shall minister; viz. to guard and conduct the departed spirits of the saints; which we are plainly taught in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus. Luke 16:22, "And it came to pass,

that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried." These spirits of holiness and love, when they have received the soul, shall conduct it along through the aerial and starry heavens to the most glorious part of the universe; the highest part of the creation, the place of God's most holy residence, the city and palace of the most high God, where Christ is.

There are some who say that there is no such place as heaven; but this is evidently a mistake, for the heaven into which the man Christ Jesus entered with his glorified body, is certainly some place. It is absurd to suppose that the heaven where the body of Christ is, is not a place. To say that the body of Christ is in no place, is the same thing as to say he has no body. The heaven where Christ is, is a place; for he was seen ascending, and will be seen descending again; and the heaven where the departed souls of the saints are, is the same heaven where Christ has ascended.

And therefore Stephen, when he was departing this life, saw heaven opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God. And he prayed to that same Jesus who he saw, that he would receive his spirit; i.e. that he would receive it to him, where he was him, at the right hand of God. And the apostle Paul signifies, that if he should depart, he should be with Christ. Phil. 1:23, "For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better:" 2 Cor. 5:8, "We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord."

Besides, there are some of the saints there already with their bodies, as Enoch and Elijah. Therefore there is some place, where God gloriously manifests himself, and where Christ is, and where saints and angels dwell, and whither the angels carry the souls of the saints when they depart from their bodies; and this place is called Paradise, and the third heaven. 2 Cor. 12:2, 4. The aerial heaven is the first heaven; the starry heaven is the second; and the blessed abode of Christ and saints and angels the third, because it is above the other two; and so Christ is said to be made higher than the heavens.

Heb. 7:26, "For such a high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens," i.e. higher than the visible heaven. This heaven is far above the stars. So it is said that Christ ascended far above all heavens. Eph. 4:10, "He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things," i.e. far above all the heaven that we see. This is the mount Zion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and hither the angels conduct the souls of the saints when they leave their earthly tabernacles.

When they come there, they shall be received with a joyful welcome, the doors of this glorious city are opened to them, and they shall have entrance given to them into heaven, as an inheritance to which they have a right. Rev. 22:14, "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." And then shall open to view that glorious world, that beautiful city, and delightful paradise, which they had often before heard of, and thought of, and desired.

Then they shall see it, and possess it as their own. There they shall be welcomed and joyfully received by that glorious company that dwell there, by the angels, and by the saints that went to heaven before them. There was joy among them at their conversion, and now also will there be joy among them when they are brought home to glory. To have one that was dear to them before, because a child of the same family and a disciple of the same Lord, brought home from a strange country to come and dwell with them forever; how will their fellow citizens and brethren in heaven be glad for them, and rejoice with them, and embrace

them, when they come there to join them in their praises of God and the Lamb!

And then they shall be conducted unto the Lord Jesus Christ in his glory, and shall be presented to him perfectly free from sin, and without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; who will also abundantly welcome them to his glory, and to the blessed enjoying of his love. And then shall their good Shepherd rejoice, when he shall not only have brought home the soul that was lost to a saving close with him, but home to him in his heavenly Father's house. The Savior shall then rejoice when he shall receive a soul that he loved before the foundation of the world; and for which he laid down his life, and endured such dreadful sufferings.

This was the joy that was set before him, to redeem and make happy the souls of his elect; and he will rejoice, therefore, when he sees this accomplished. He will bid them welcome, and make them welcome, and they shall be received into the full enjoyment of his love. The Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and he shall present them also to God his Father, having redeemed them to him by his blood, who shall also abundantly welcome them there. Then the soul shall behold that glory and taste that pleasure which it long hoped for, and thought of with delight, and the thoughts of which were wont to be such a support to it when on earth.

Then shall it know by experience what the joys of heaven are; then shall the great and precious promises of the gospel be fulfilled; then shall faith be turned into vision, and hope into fruition; then shall all sin be eternally left behind. There shall be no more indwelling corruption, wicked thoughts, or sinful dispositions, to torment them. And whatever sorrow and affliction they underwent on earth, God shall now wipe away all tears from their eyes; and though they have lately passed through death, yet there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying; neither shall there be any more pain, because the former things shall be passed away.

Rev. 21:4. If they have lived hardly in this world, and suffered hunger and thirst, there shall be an end of it all; and they that have suffered persecution, and have had their raiment stained with their own blood, shall now suffer no more. "And he said unto me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat: for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of water; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Rev. 7:14, 15, 16, 17. Though they had many enemies to conflict with while on earth, yet now shall they obtain the victory over them; now shall they triumph and sing, being forever out of the reach of all Satan's temptations, and of all his power to afflict or molest them. Now shall they appear in mount Zion with the Lamb, clothed in white robes, and palms in their hands. Rev. 7:9.

II. They shall remain there in a state of exceeding glory and blessedness, till the resurrection. They shall remain there in the enjoyment of God, dwelling with Jesus Christ in a state of perfect rest, without the least disturbance or molestation. Rev. 14:13, "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." There they shall dwell in habitations of sweet delight and pleasure in paradise; there they shall drink of those rivers of pleasures for evermore.

There they shall dwell in perfect light and perfect love. There they shall see and converse with God and Christ, and with angels and glorious spirits, and shall contemplate the wonderful love of God to men in sending his only Son. There shall they contemplate the glorious love of God to them, the love he had to them before the foundation of the world. There shall they see and know what love Christ had to them, that influenced him to lay down his life for them; and shall behold the beauty and excellency of Christ, and see face to face, and know even as they are known. 1 Cor. 13:12.

There they shall sweetly meditate on the wonderful dealings of God to them while in this lower world, in preserving of them, in granting to them to live under means of grace, when many thousands and millions of others never had these privileges. They shall contemplate the wonderful mercy of God to them in striving with them by his Spirit, in convincing them of sin, in stirring them up to seek salvation, in converting them, and in bringing them out of darkness into marvelous light.

The mercy and grace of God in converting them will then appear otherwise to them than it does now. They shall then contemplate the manifold mercies of God to them through the whole course of their lives. They shall see how God has protected them, and guided them by his counsel, and led them all along. They shall see the wonderful wisdom and mercy of God towards them in these and those dispensations, that now appear most dark to them, shall see the meaning of those that were matter of difficulty to them, and shall see how all things wrought together for their good.

These will be sweet meditations to them, and doubtless will be subjects of the saints' conversation with each other. How sweet will it be for the saints to look back and see how God carried them along through the wilderness, through all the storms of this world, and all its dangers, and temptations, and enemies, after they have come to their resting-place; and how sweet will it be for them to converse together of these things, and what ardent praises will it occasion! And then also shall they see the wisdom of God in the government and ordering of the affairs of his church all along, the scheme of divine providence shall be opened to them, and the admirable wisdom of it shall be unfolded; and they shall also see how God brings his purposes and promises to pass in his providence towards his church here on earth.

They shall see and rejoice at it when the kingdom of God flourishes in the world. We are told, there is joy in heaven if but one sinner repenteth. Then doubtless the saints of the Old Testament after their entrance into heaven, saw and rejoiced when Christ came into the world. And therefore two of them, Moses and Elijah, came down to converse with Christ, at his transfiguration. Abraham, Moses, and David, and the prophets Isaiah and Daniel, and all the prophets, doubtless saw the fulfillment of the glorious things foretold in their prophecies with exceeding rejoicing.

They saw that glorious enlargement of the church that was produced by the preaching of the prophets. And thus also the apostles and evangelists in heaven, and other primitive Christians and martyrs, saw the glorious flourishing and prevailing of the kingdom of Christ after their death, till the utter downfall of heathenism, and the establishment of Christianity throughout the Roman empire.

The holy martyrs with joy beheld the destruction of those pagan powers that persecuted the church of God. Rev. 6:9, 10, 11, "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the testimony which they held: and they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth? And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also and their brethren, that should be killed as they

were, should be fulfilled."

Therefore they rejoiced when they saw it accomplished. And so the saints that died in former ages, they without doubt beheld and rejoiced greatly at the time of the resurrection from popery in the days of Luther and Calvin, and other reformers. And so doubtless the saints that went to heaven, before this remarkable outpouring of the Spirit on this town and other neighboring towns, especially those that went to heaven from hence, have seen this work and greatly rejoiced at it.

And so the saints, that die before the glorious days that are coming at the downfall of antichrist and the calling of the Jews, will rejoice at the conversion of the world to Christianity. We are ready to lament that we shall not probably live to see those times. But if we die and go to heaven, we shall see them nevertheless, and rejoice in them not the less for not being in this world. But we shall rejoice more, for we shall see and understand more of the glory of God in such a work, and have more love to God, and therefore shall rejoice more at the advancement of his kingdom.

Thus when the apostle John had visions of the glorious things that should be brought to pass for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ, he from time to time mentions the visions he also had of the hosts of heaven rejoicing at it. Rev. 11:15, 16, 17, "And the seventh angel sounded, and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign forever and ever. And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces and worshipped God, saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned."

So when the spiritual Babylon, the church of Rome, falls, the holy apostles and prophets, though dead many ages before, are called upon to rejoice. Rev. 18:20, "Rejoice over her, thou heavens, and ye holy apostles and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her." So the multitude of the heavenly hosts are described as rejoicing, and as singing hallelujahs on that occasions; and all heaven is full of praise. Rev. 19:1 "And after these things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God: for true and righteous are his judgments; for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hast avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke went up forever and ever." These things may give us some notion how the spirits of just men made perfect do employ themselves.

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

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

Fourthly, I shall consider the glory, honor, and peace, which the godly shall receive at the resurrection and the day of judgment.

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

II. They shall descend with Christ from the highest heaven towards the earth. When notice is given to the heavenly host, they shall all gather themselves together to attend on this most joyful and glorious occasion; and then the glorious Son of God shall descend, and the holy angels with him, and not only the angels, but the souls of the saints, shall come with Christ. 1 Thes. 4:14, "For if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." Christ shall descend with the glory of his Father; he shall appear in a glory becoming the Supreme Lord and Judge of heaven and earth. Now heaven will for a time be left empty of its inhabitants; those glorious and blessed abodes will be deserted by those that dwelt there, to attend the judge of the world.

III. The saints on earth shall behold this glorious sight of their Savior coming in the clouds of heaven, with all his holy angels with him. The first notice that shall be given of this descent shall be in heaven, but soon after there shall be notice of it on earth. Christ shall be seen coming while he is yet at a great distance; every eye shall see him of both good and bad. And it will be the most joyful sight to the saints that ever they saw. The first notice of it will cause their hearts to overflow with joy and gladness, it will fill the hearts of the godly as full of joy as it will the wicked with terror and amazement. If the saints are then waked out of their sleep at midnight with this sound, that Christ appears in the clouds of heaven coming to judgment, it will be joyful news to them. It is probable many of the saints at that time will be found suffering persecution, for there are several things in Scripture which seem to declare, that the time when Christ is coming shall be a time when wickedness shall exceedingly abound, and the saints shall be greatly persecuted. But this shall set them at liberty; then they may lift up their heads out of prisons and dungeons, and many out of galleys, and mines, and shall see their Redeemer drawing nigh. This sight will drive away their persecutors, it will put an end to all their cruelties, and set God's people at liberty. And then when all the kindreds of the earth shall wail at the sight of Christ in the clouds of heaven, and wicked men everywhere shall be shrieking and crying with terrible amazement, the saints shall be filled with praise and transport. We read that, when Christ ascended into heaven, the disciples stood steadfastly looking on as he went up. But the saints then on earth shall view Christ with more steadfastness as he descends in his heavenly and exceeding glory. They shall feed and feast their eyes with this majestic sight, beholding in what solemn and glorious pomp their own blessed Redeemer descends. This sight shall put a final end to all sorrow, and their everlasting joy and glory will commence from it. The hope of the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Savior Jesus Christ, is said to be a blessed hope. Tit. 2:13, "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus

Christ." But when it comes it will be a more blessed sight.

IV. The dead in Christ shall arise at the sound of the last trumpet with glorified bodies, and the living saints shall see them. The holy and blessed souls of saints that descended from heaven with Christ, shall then be reunited to those bodies that shall be prepared by infinite wisdom and skill to be fit organs for a holy and happy soul. The body shall not rise as it was before; there shall be a vast difference in it. 1 Cor. 15:42, 43, 44, "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body." The glory of that body, that the saints shall rise with is what we now cannot conceive of. It shall not be such a dull and heavy-molded thing as it is now. It shall be active and vigorous as a flame of fire fit for the use of a glorified soul. It will be no clog or hindrance to the soul as it is now, but an organ every way fit for the use of a glorious spirit. It shall not be weak, infirm, and frail as it is now; for, though it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. Now the body is in need of food and sleep continually, to recreate it, but it shall not be so then. Now the body is subject to weariness, and to diseases, but it shall not be so then. Now if God lets in any great matter of divine light into the soul, the body is ready to sink under it, but it shall not be so then. The glorified body of the saints shall not then fail or flag at all by the most powerful exercises of mind. Now not many can see God and live, but the body shall not fail at all by the immediate beholding of God. Now the saints can see but little. When God a little reveals himself, as he doth at times, the saints are forced to beseech God either to strengthen them to see it, or to stay his hand. But then the body shall be so vigorous and spiritual, that the constant and everlasting view of the glory of God shall not in any wise overcome it, or cause it in the least to fail.

The body shall not only be raised in an exceeding strength, but in wonderful beauty, for we are told that their bodies shall be like to Christ's glorious body. The greatest beauty that ever any human body appeared in this world, is vile and base in comparison. The beauty of the bodies of the saints shall not only consist in the most lovely proportion of the features of their countenance and parts of their bodies, but in a semblance of the excellencies of their minds, which will appear exceedingly in their countenance.

Their air and mien will be such as will naturally result from the wisdom, purity, and love of the soul, and shall denote and hold forth an inexpressible sweetness, benevolence, and complacency. And if I may speak what appears to me probable, and what seems to be authorized by the Scriptures, their bodies shall be as it were clothed with garments of light. The prophet Daniel, speaking of the resurrection, says, Dan. 12:2, 3, "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.

And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever." And Christ, speaking of the end of the world, says, Mat. 13:43, "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father." And there is nothing to hinder our understanding this literally of their bodies, and especially when this shining of the saints is spoken of from time to time as what shall be at the resurrection, and not of their souls in a separate state.

Moses's face shone when he had been conversing with God in the mount. Much more may it be expected that the bodies of the saints shall shine, when they shall converse a thousand times more intimately with God, not in mount Sinai, but in heaven. We read of Christ, that when his body was transfigured, to teach us what the body of Christ should be in its glorified state, we are told that, when his body was transfigured, his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.

Mat. 17:2. But we are told that the bodies of the saints shall be made like unto Christ's glorious body. There therefore seems to be much ground to think, that at the resurrection the bodies of the saints shall shine with a glorious light, and that they shall be as it were clothed with light. Thus the departed saints shall arise with glorious bodies, they shall lift up their heads out of their graves with joyful and glorious countenances. And at the same time the bodies of the living shall in a moment be changed into the same strength, and activity, and incorruptibility, and beauty and glory, with which those that were dead shall arise. 1 Cor. 15:51, 52, 53, "Behold, I show you a mystery, we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump (for the trumpet shall sound); and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."

V. Then all the saints shall mount up, as with wings, to meet the Lord in the air, and to be forever with him. After the dead in Christ are risen, and the living saints changed, then they will be prepared to go to Christ, and to meet the bridegroom. The world will be about to be destroyed, and the wicked shall be in dreadful amazement, but the saints shall be delivered. Dan. 12:1, "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people, and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book." They shall take an everlasting farewell of this evil world where there is so much sin, and where they have met with so much trouble, and they shall be caught up in the clouds, and there they shall meet their glorious Redeemer; and a joyful meeting it will be. They shall go to Christ, never any more to be separated from him. 1 Thes. 4:16, 17, "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we, which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

VI. Then shall the good works, which the saints have done, be declared to their peace and glory. We are often told that every man shall be judged according to his works, and Christ keeps a book of remembrance of the good works of the saints as well as of the sins of the ungodly. And however mean and polluted that which the saints do is in itself, yet all the pollution that attends it is hid, and everything they do for God that has the least sincerity in it is precious in God's eyes.

Through his infinite grace it shall in no wise lose its reward, neither shall it in any wise lose its honor. At the day of judgment they shall receive praise and glory in reward for it. Christ will declare all the good they have done to their honor; what they did secretly and the world knew it not, and when they did not let their left hand know what their right had did. Then shall they receive praise and honor for all their labor, for all their self-denial, and all their suffering in the cause of Christ; and those good works of theirs that were despised, and for which they were condemned, and suffered reproach, shall now be set in a true light.

And however they were reproached and slandered by men, they shall receive praise of God in the sight of angels and men. 1 Cor. 4:5, "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall every man have praise of God." Those righteous men that have been condemned here before unjust judges, shall be acquitted and honored then before the righteous Judge of heaven and earth.

Heb. 6:10, "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed towards his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister." Then will be the time when their Lord and Master will say unto them, "Well done, good and faithful servants." Thus, in the description

of the day of judgment in the 25th chapter of Matthew, Christ rehearses the good works of the saints. "For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me."

And though the saints there reply, "Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? when saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?" Though they thought that nothing that they had done was worthy to be so accounted of as it was by Christ, yet Christ of his grace esteemed it highly, and highly honored them for it, as it there follows, 40th verse, "And the King shall answer, and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

And if the sins of the saints shall be rehearsed, it shall not be for their shame, but for the glory of divine grace, to give opportunity to them to plead the atonement of that Savior who will be the Judge, to give occasion to them to produce Christ's righteousness, which will surely be accepted by himself.

VII. The saints shall sit on thrones with Christ, to judge wicked men and devils. Christ will put that honor upon them on that day, he will cause them to sit on his right hand as judges with him, and so the saints shall judge the world. Mat. 19:28, "And Jesus said unto them, verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon two

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/jonathan-edwards/the-portion-of-the-righteous/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net