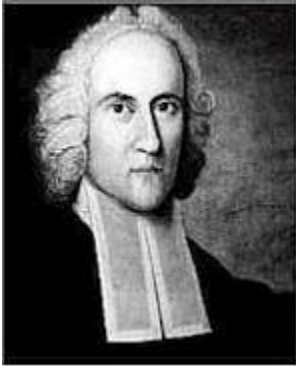


SINNERS IN THE HANDS OF AN ANGRY GOD

A Sermon by Jonathan Edwards

"Modernized" with shorter sentences, but eliminating none.
by [JD Wetterling](#)

FOREWORD



If you live at the turn of the third millennium after Christ walked this earth, you've probably never heard a sermon like this one. Jonathan Edwards was a renowned Puritan preacher, philosopher, theologian, and the leading intellectual figure of colonial America. He graduated from Yale at age 17, became a preacher like his father and grandfather, and is today considered one of the theological titans, along with Augustine, Luther and Calvin, of the Reformed faith. *SINNERS IN THE HANDS OF AN ANGRY GOD* was delivered during a time called the Great Awakening, when revival was sweeping the continent and thousands were daily coming to Christ. Two-hundred-fifty years later it is generally recognized as the greatest sermon ever preached on the North American continent, and one of the prime manifestations of the Holy Spirit that brought about the first Great Awakening. While Edwards was equally fervent and eloquent in his preaching on all of God's infinite attributes, especially His love and mercy, he is remembered most for this powerful portrayal of God's infinite hatred of sin.

Edwards was not considered a charismatic orator. He read his sermons, and when he looked up at all it was to stare at the rope for the church bell on the back wall. He knew that in order for lost sinners to come to Christ, their only hope for salvation, they must first be brought to the realization of the desperate state they were in and the horrendous eternal consequences of it. He brought many of his listeners to that realization this day with "remarkable effect." Such was the power and passion of his words that moans and groans filled the sanctuary and people fainted as he spoke.

The "h-word" is used more often here than I have heard in 52 years of church attendance—it sets the standard for "fire and brimstone." Jesus himself talked about hell more than anyone else in the Bible, and Edward's biblical support for his awesomely graphic metaphors is correct, complete and convicting, and elicits a sense of urgency rarely heard in church pulpits today.

My goal in this sanctifying exercise was to make the sermon more readable. The attention span and grammatical practice of the late 20th century man is such that, when reading 18th century intellectual discourse, the subject is often forgotten before the predicate is found. Such was the case, at least, with this reader, so basically I have broken it into shorter sentences and eliminated none, with a minimum of word changes, hopefully without changing the meaning.

This is not a paraphrase. My source was taken from Jonathan Edwards on Knowing Christ, published by Banner of Truth Trust in 1958. It has been a laborious blessing to this editor. I feel like I've spent 50 hours inside the head of a great Bible scholar. I've gained a deeper love and appreciation for a Holy God and a profoundly more urgent sense of my great commission (Matthew 28:19), especially as it pertains to those whom I love very much. May it be a blessing to you, too, dear reader, and may it be for His glory alone.

JD Wetterling, Elder
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Preached at Enfield, Connecticut, July 8, 1741, at a time of great awakenings; and attended with remarkable impressions on many of the hearers. First published July 12, 1749.

Deuteronomy 32:35
In due time their foot will slip;

(The complete verse reads: *It is mine to avenge; I will repay.
In due time their foot will slip; their day of disaster is near
and their doom rushes upon them.*)

In this verse God threatens vengeance upon the wicked unbelieving Israelites, who were God's people and who lived under the means of grace. But, in spite of God's wonderful works toward them, they remained, as it says in verse 28, "...without sense, having no understanding of the blessings." As verses 32-33 say, their work brought forth bitter and poisonous fruit. "Their vine comes from the vine of Sodom and from the fields of Gomorrah.... Their wine is the venom of the serpents, the deadly poison of cobras." The expression I have chosen for my text—"...in due time their foot will slip...", seems to imply the following things concerning the punishment and destruction these wicked Israelites faced:

1. They faced the risk of destruction like one who walks in slippery places faces the risk of falling when his foot slips. We see the same metaphor in Psalm 73:18—"Surely you place them on slippery ground, you cast them down to ruin."
2. It implies that they are always exposed to sudden, unexpected destruction. One who walks in slippery places is at any moment apt to fall. He cannot know if his next step will allow him to stand or fall, and when he does fall, it's instantly and without warning. Again as in Psalm 73:18 and 19, "Surely you place them on slippery ground; you cast them down to ruin. How suddenly are they destroyed...."

3. Another thing implied is that their fall will be of their own doing—no one will push them. One who walks in slippery places needs nothing but his own weight to cause him to fall.
4. The only reason they have not fallen already, and do not fall now, is that God's appointed time has not yet come. The passage says "in due time," that is, in God's appointed time, they WILL slip. And they will fall of their own weight. God will cease holding them up in slippery places. He will let them go and in that very instant they shall fall into destruction. A man who stands on slippery, declining ground at the edge of a pit cannot stand without someone holding him, and when he is let go he immediately falls and is lost.

My interpretation of these words, of which I am convicted, is this—"There is nothing that keeps wicked men at any one moment out of hell, but the mere pleasure of God." By the mere pleasure of God, I mean his SOVEREIGN pleasure, his arbitrary will, restrained by not obligation, hindered by nothing. The truth of this interpretation is made clearer by the ten following considerations:

1. God does not lack the power to cast wicked men into hell at any time. The strongest man has no power against God. He is not only able to cast wicked men into hell, he can do it easily. Sometimes earthly princes have trouble subduing a large band of rebels, but not so with God. There is no fortress that can defend against the power of God. Though vast multitudes of God's enemies band together, he easily breaks them into pieces. They are no more than huge piles of light chaff before a whirlwind, or stacks of dry wheat stubble before a raging fire. We find it very easy to step on an earthworm on the sidewalk, or cut a slender thread that anything hangs by. And it's that easy for God, whenever he pleases, to cast his enemies down to hell. Who are we to stand before him, at whose rebuke the whole earth trembles?
2. They deserve to be cast into hell. Justice calls loudly for an infinite punishment of their sins. In Luke 13:7, the divine justice proclaimed by Jesus says of the tree that brings forth such poisonous grapes of Sodom, "Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?" The sword of divine justice at all times waves menacingly over their heads, and ONLY the hand of God's arbitrary mercy and divine will hold it back.
3. They are already condemned to hell. They deserve to be sent there. That eternal and immutable rule of righteousness that God has fixed between him and man finds them guilty, so that they are already bound over to hell. As Jesus says in John 3:18, "... whoever does not believe stands condemned already...." Every unconverted person properly belongs in hell—that is his place, that is where he came from. Jesus said to the Jews in John 13:23, "You are from below...." And that is where they are headed. It is the place where justice and God's word and the sentence of his unchangeable law have assigned them.

4. They are at this very moment the objects of that anger and wrath of God expressed in the torments of hell. And the reason they do not go down to hell this very moment is NOT because God is not angry with them, as he is with many miserable creatures already tormented there by the fierceness of his wrath. In fact God is considerably more angry with great numbers that are now on earth. Some of them are undoubtedly sitting at ease with themselves in this very congregation. It is not because God is ignoring their wickedness and therefore doesn't resent it that keeps him from loosening his grip and letting them fall. God is not like man, though many men believe him to be. The wrath of God burns against them, his damnation of them doesn't slumber. The pit is prepared, the fire is made ready, the furnace is right now white hot, ready to receive them. The flames rage and glow as we speak. The glistening sword is sharpened and held over them, and the pit has opened its mouth under them.
5. The devil stands eagerly ready to pounce upon them and seize them as his own as soon as God permits him. They belong to him. He owns their souls. He controls them. They are his property. The devils stand behind each of them and watch them like greedy, hungry lions stalking their prey, held back only by God's restraining hand. And if God should withdraw his hand, they would instantly pounce upon their poor souls. The old snake lies in wait for them, hell opens its mouth wide to receive them, and if God permits they will be swallowed up and lost in the blink of an eye.
6. In the souls of wicked men hellish tendencies reign that would soon flame up into hell-fire if not for God's restraint. The very nature of carnal man, powerful and exceedingly violent, propels him toward the torments of hell. Isaiah compares the souls of the wicked to the raging waves of a stormy sea, and God says, "To here you shall come, and no further." But if God should withdraw his restraint, the sea would wash away everything, Sin is the ruin and misery of the soul. It is destructive by nature, and without God's restraint, it would need nothing else to make itself perfectly miserable. The corruption of the heart of man is huge and boundless in its fury. While wicked men live on earth it is like a fire contained by God's restraint, but if it were let loose it would inflame all of nature. And as the heart is now a cesspool of sin, if the sin were not restrained it would immediately turn the soul into a fiery oven...a furnace of fire and brimstone.
7. Wicked men are not safe for a moment just because they cannot see any sign of impending death around them. Natural man is not safe just because he is healthy and sees no imminent danger in his vicinity. The many and continual experiences of men throughout the ages proves that apparent health and safety do not mean that their next step will not be into another world. The unseen and unthought of ways of leaving this world are innumerable and inconceivable. Unsaved men walk over the pit of hell on a rotten covering, and there are innumerable places in this covering so weak they will not bear a man's weight, but no one

can see them. All the means of taking sinners out of this world are in God's hands, and they are universally and absolutely subject to his power and determination.

8. Natural men's caution and care to preserve their own lives, or the care of others to keep them alive, do not make them safe for a moment. Divine providence and universal experience bear testimony to this. There is abundant evidence that a man's wisdom provides no security from death. If it were otherwise we would see wise men living longer than fools, but that is not the case. As the teacher says in Ecclesiastes 2:16, "Like the fool, the wise man too must die!"
9. All the scheming wicked men do to escape hell while they continue to reject Christ will not secure them from hell one moment. Almost every natural man that hears of hell fools himself into thinking he shall escape it. He flatters himself in what he has done, what he is doing and what he will do to insure his safety. Everyone figures out in his own mind how he will avoid damnation, and convinces himself he's a pretty smart guy and his schemes will not fail. They hear that few are saved, and that the majority of men through the ages have gone to hell, but each imagines he's smarter than the rest and he will escape. But foolish people miserably delude themselves. They place their confidence in their own strength and wisdom, but they are trusting a shadow. If we could speak to those now in hell, and ask each of them whether they expected, while alive and listening to preachers talk of hell, that they would ever end up in such a place, they would probably all reply, "No, I never planned to come here. I had planned otherwise. I thought I had planned well and my scheme was good. I intended to be careful, but it came upon me unexpectedly...like a thief. Death outwitted me. God's wrath was too quick for me. Oh, my cursed stupidity! I was flattering myself, dreaming of what I would do in heaven, and when I was saying, 'Peace and safety,' sudden destruction came upon me."
10. God is under NO OBLIGATION, by any promise, to keep any natural man out of hell for one second. God certainly has made no promises whether of eternal life or deliverance from eternal death, but those which are contained in the covenant of grace, the promises that are given in Christ, in whom all the promises will most surely come to pass.

Whatever some have imagined and pretended about promises made to natural men's earnest seeking and knocking, it is crystal clear that whatever actions a natural man takes in religion, whatever prayers he makes, until he believes in Christ, God is under no obligation to keep him a moment from eternal destruction.

Natural men are held over the pit of hell in the hand of God. They deserve the fiery pit and are already sentenced to it, and God is dreadfully provoked. The devil is waiting for them, hell is gaping for them, the flames rise and flash about them. The fire pent up in their own hearts is struggling to break out, they have no interest in Christ the Mediator, and there are no means within reach that can be of any security to them. In short, they have no refuge, nothing to take

hold of. All that preserves them every moment is the mere arbitrary will, and uncovenanted, unmerited forbearance of an incensed God.

APPLICATION

I am dwelling on this awful subject so that unsaved people in this congregation might be awakened. What you have heard is the life story of every one of you who does not know Christ as your savior. That world of misery, that lake of burning brimstone lies below you, and there is nothing between you and that hell but air—it is only the power and pleasure of God that hold you up.

You are probably not aware of this. You are not now in hell, but you do not see that it is the hand of God that holds you back. You're counting on the good state of your health and your self-reliance. But that is nothing. If God should withdraw his hand, your self-reliance would no more keep you from falling than this air could hold up a person suspended in it.

Your wickedness makes you as heavy as lead, and presses you downwards toward hell, and if God should let you go, you would immediately sink swiftly into the bottomless gulf. And your healthy constitution, your self-reliance, your best schemes, your self-righteousness, would no more hold you up and keep you out of hell, than a spider's web would stop a falling rock. Were it not for the sovereign pleasure of God, the earth would not tolerate you for one moment, for you are a burden to it. All of creation groans with you. All living things are subject to the bondage of your corruption, and not willingly. The sun does not willingly shine upon you to give you light to serve sin and Satan. The earth does not willingly yield her increase to satisfy your lusts, nor is it willingly a stage for your wickedness to be acted upon. The air does not willingly provide you breath to maintain the flame of life in you while you spend it in the service of God's enemies. The world would spew you out were it not for the hand of God. The black clouds of God's wrath are right now hanging directly over your heads, full of the dreadful storm and rumbling with thunder. Were it not for God's restraining hand, it would immediately burst forth upon you. The sovereign pleasure of God, for the time being, holds back the tornado, otherwise it would come with fury and your destruction would come like a whirlwind, and you would be like dust on the floor.

The wrath of God is like a dam on a flooded river, holding back roaring waters rising higher and higher. The longer the river is held back the more ferocious the water when the floodgate is finally opened. It is true that judgement against your evil works has not been executed so far. The floods of God's vengeance have been withheld, but your guilt in the meantime is constantly increasing and you are every day treasuring up more wrath. The flood waters are constantly rising and building more and more strength, and there is nothing but the mere pleasure of God that holds the roaring water back as it strains mightily against the dam. If God should only remove his hand from the floodgate, it would fly open and the fiery floods of the fierceness and wrath of God would rush forth with inconceivable fury and engulf you with omnipotent power.

And if your strength were ten thousand times greater than it is...even ten thousand times greater than the strongest devil in hell, it would be as nothing to withstand it.

The bow of God's wrath is bent, and the arrow of justice is aimed directly at your heart, and the bow quivers with pent-up power. And it is nothing but the mere pleasure of God, an angry God, who owes you nothing, that keeps the arrow from getting drunk on your blood. Thus all of you whose hearts have never been softened by the Holy Spirit, all of you that have not been born again, and made new creatures, and raised from the dead in sin, are in the hands of an angry God. However you may have changed your ways, and maintained a religious façade, bringing your family to church on Sunday, and sitting in the house of God with your most pious Sunday face, it is nothing but God's mere pleasure that keeps you this moment from being swallowed up in everlasting destruction. However unconvinced you may now be of the truth of what you are hearing, there is coming a time when you will be fully convinced. Those who have gone before you in similar circumstances can testify to that, for destruction came suddenly upon most of them, when they expected no such thing. And while they were saying, "Peace and safety," they now sadly know that the things that they depended on for peace and safety were but thin air and shadows.

The God that holds you over the pit of hell like some spider or loathsome insect over a fire, abhors you and is dreadfully provoked. His wrath burns like fire and he considers you worthy of nothing else but fuel for the fire. His holy eyes cannot bear to even look at you. You are ten thousand times more abominable in his sight than the most hated venomous snake is to us. You have offended him infinitely more than the most stubborn rebel ever did his earthly prince, and yet it is nothing but his hand that holds you above the fire at every moment. There is no other explanation why you did not go to hell last night when you went to sleep. There is no other explanation why you were allowed to awake this morning, and no other reason why you have not dropped into hell since you arose this morning, but that God's hand has held you up. There is no other reason why you have not gone to hell since you sat down in your pew in God's house this morning, provoking his pure and holy eyes by your sinful wicked manner of attending his solemn worship. Yes, there is no other reason why you do not drop down this very moment into the depths of hell.

Oh sinner, think about the fearful danger you are in. It is a great furnace of wrath, a wide and bottomless pit, full of the fire of wrath that you are held over in the hand of God, whose wrath is as provoked and incensed by you as any of the damned in hell. You hang by a slender thread, with the flames of divine wrath licking about it, and ready at any moment to burn it in two. In spite of that you have no interest in Christ the Mediator, and nothing with which to save yourself, nothing to keep away the flames of wrath. Nothing of your own, nothing you have ever done, nothing you can ever do will induce God to spare you one moment. Now consider these four points very carefully:

1. Whose wrath is it? It is the wrath of an infinite God. If it were only the wrath of man, even the most powerful man on earth, it would be insignificant by comparison. In the olden days

that wrath of absolute monarchs was dreaded since they had the possessions and lives of their subjects completely in their power to do with as they wished. Proverbs 20:2 says, “A king’s wrath is like the roar of a lion; he who angers him forfeits his life.” Anyone who enrages the monarch is apt to suffer the most extreme torment the human mind can conceive and inflict. But the most powerful despot on earth, in his greatest majesty and strength and armed with his greatest tortures is but a feeble despicable worm in the dust compared to the great almighty Creator and King of the universe. All the worst kings of history are as grasshoppers before God...they are nothing...they are less than nothing. The wrath of the great King of kings is as much more terrible as his majesty is greater. Jesus tells us in Luke 12:4-5, “I tell you, my friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that can do no more. But I will show you whom you should fear: Fear him who, after the killing of the body, has power to throw you into hell. Yes, I tell you, fear him.”

2. It is the fierceness of his wrath that you are exposed to. We often read of the fury of God, as in Isaiah 59:18. “According to what they have done, so will he repay wrath to his enemies...” And in Isaiah 66:15, “See, the Lord is coming with fire, and his chariots are like the whirlwind: he will bring down his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire.” And, among many other places in the Bible, Revelations 19:15, “...He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty.” The words are exceedingly terrible. If it had only said, “the wrath of God,” the words would have implied something infinitely dreadful, but it says, “the fierceness and wrath of God.” The fury of God! The fierceness of Jehovah! How incomprehensibly dreadful must that be? Who can conceive what that means? But it also says, “the fierceness and wrath of ALMIGHTY God.” Oh, what will be the consequence? What will become of the poor worm who suffers such? To what dreadful, inexpressible, inconceivable depth of misery will the object of such wrath be sunk?

Please carefully consider this, you who are here today who are not saved. That God will execute the fierceness of his anger implies that he will inflict wrath without any pity. When God sees the indescribable agony you are in, and the torment that so vastly exceeds your ability to endure, and when he sees how your poor soul is crushed, he will have no compassion on you; he will not call off your torment, or even lighten it. There will be no moderation of mercy, but he will see to it that you will NOT SUFFER BEYOND WHAT STRICT JUSTICE REQUIRES. Nothing will be withheld because it is so hard for you to bear. God says in Ezekiel 8:18, “Therefore I will deal with them in anger: I will not look upon them with pity or spare them. Although they shout in my ears I will not listen to them.” Today God stands ready to pity you. This is a day of mercy. You may cry now with some hope of receiving mercy. But once the day of mercy is past, your most lamentable and mournful cries and shrieks will be in vain. You will be forever lost and thrown away by God with no regard for your welfare. God will have no other use for you than to serve as a vessel

for his wrath. He will be so far from pitying you that when you cry to him, he will only laugh and mock you as it says in Proverbs 1:26.

How awful are God's words in Isaiah 63:3. "I have trodden the winepress alone...I trampled them in my anger and trod them down in my wrath; their blood spattered my garments and I stained all my clothing." It is impossible to conceive of words that could carry any greater intensity of contempt, hatred, and fierceness of indignation. If you cry to him for pity, he will be so far from pitying you in your miserable condition that he will only step on you. And even though he knows that you cannot bear the weight of omnipotent God on you, he will crush you anyway under his feet without mercy. He will crush out your blood and make it fly and it will splatter on his robe and stain it red. He will not only hate you he will have the utmost contempt for you, and the only place fit for you will be under his feet, to be mashed down like mud on the streets.

3. The misery that you are exposed to was designed by God to show you the degree of his wrath. God's immutable plan is to show all men both the excellence of his love and the terribleness of his wrath. Sometimes earthly kings like to show how terrible their wrath is by some extreme punishment of those who provoke them. Nebuchadnessar, that mighty, arrogant monarch of Babylon, tried to show his wrath when upset by Shadrach, Mesheck, and Abednego. He thus gave the order to heat up the fiery furnace to seven times normal, probably the hottest that was humanly possible. But God is also willing to show his wrath, and magnify his awful majesty and mighty power in the extreme suffering of his enemies. Romans 9:22 says, "What if God, choosing to show his wrath and make his power known, bore with great patience the objects of his wrath—prepared for destruction?" And since this is his plan, to show how terrible is the unrestrained wrath, the fury and fierceness of his wrath, he will do it. What will come to pass will be horrible to behold. And when he has done it, he will call on the whole universe to witness the awful majesty and might power in it. As it is written in Isaiah 33:12-14, "The peoples will be burned as if to lime; like cut thorn bushes they will be set ablaze. You who are far away hear what I have done; you who are near acknowledge my power! The sinners in Zion are terrified; trembling grips the godless; who of us can dwell with the consuming fire? Who of us can dwell with everlasting burning?"

Thus it will be for you here today who are in an unsaved state, if you continue in it. The infinite might, majesty, and terribleness of the omnipotent God will be magnified on you in the unbearable agony of your torments. You shall be tormented in the presence of holy angels, in the presence of the Lamb. The glorious inhabitants of heaven will gaze upon you in that state of suffering, and they will see the wrath and fierceness of Almighty God. When they have seen that awful spectacle they will fall down and adore that great power and majesty. As it is written in Isaiah 66:23-24, the last two verses of a powerfully prophetic book, "From one new moon to another and from one Sabbath to another, all mankind will

come and bow down before me,' says the Lord. 'And they will go out and look upon the dead bodies of those who rebelled against me; their worm will not die, nor will the fire be quenched, and they will be loathsome to all mankind.' ”

4. It is EVERLASTING wrath. It would be dreadful to suffer this fierceness and wrath of Almighty God for one moment, but you must suffer it for all eternity. There will be no end to this perfectly horrible misery. When you look forward you will see a long forever, a boundless duration before you that will swallow up your thoughts and amaze your soul. And you will absolutely despair of every having any deliverance, any end, any mitigation, any rest at all. You will know with certainty that you must wear out long ages, millions and millions of ages in wrestling and fighting with this almighty merciless vengeance. And when you have done it, you will know that is all was just the blink of an eye compared to what remains. Your punishment will be infinite. Oh, who can fathom the state of the soul in such circumstances? All that we can possibly say about it is the dimmest of descriptions. It is inexpressible and inconceivable, for “who can know the power of God’s anger?”

How awful is the condition of those who are daily and hourly in danger of this great wrath and infinite misery. But this is the dismal case of every soul in this congregation that has not been born again, however moral and strict, sober and religious they otherwise might be. Oh, please give it your most careful consideration, whether you be young or old. There is reason to think that many of you who are in this congregation hearing me talk will actually be the subjects of this very misery for all eternity. We don’t know who they are, in which seats they are sitting, or what they are thinking. It may be that they are perfectly content, hearing all of this without alarm, and are flattering themselves that they are not the persons we’re talking about...they shall escape. If we knew that there was one person, and only one, in this whole congregation that would be the subject of such misery, what an awful thought that would be. If we knew who it was, what an awful sight it would be to see such a person. But, such a pity, instead of one, how many are there here who will likely remember this sermon in hell? Most likely some here today will be in hell in a very short time, perhaps before the year is over. And it would be no surprise if some people sitting here today in this church, in health, peaceful and secure, should be there before tomorrow morning! Surely you know some people that never deserved hell more than you, and looked as likely to be still alive today as you are. But now they are past hope, in hell for all eternity, crying in their extreme misery and abject despair, wishing they were here in your place. YOU are in the land of the living, and in the house of the Almighty God, and have the opportunity to obtain salvation. What would those poor, damned, hopeless souls give for one hour’s opportunity such as you now enjoy?

And now you have an extraordinary opportunity, a day wherein Christ has thrown the door of mercy wide open, and stands calling, and crying with a loud voice to poor sinners. This is a day where many are flocking to him, and being welcomed into the kingdom of God. Many that are daily coming from the east, west, north and south; many that were recently in the same miserable

condition as you, are now in a happy state. Their hearts are filled with love for him who loved them first, and washed their sins away with his own blood, and they are rejoicing in hope of the glory of God. How awful it is to be left behind on such a day! To see so many others feasting while you are pining away and perishing. Are not your souls as precious as those already saved by faith in Jesus Christ?

Are there not many older people here who are not yet born again...who are aliens to the Commonwealth of God's Chosen...and have done nothing since the day they were born but treasure up wrath against the day of judgment? Oh, dear friends, your situation is extremely dangerous! Your guilt and hardness of heart are extremely severe. You need to **WAKE UP!!!!** And you, young men and women, will you ignore this priceless opportunity, while so many others of your age are renouncing youthful vanities and flocking to Christ? And you children, who have not yet confessed Jesus as your Lord and Savior, do you not know that you are going down to hell, to bear the dreadful wrath of God, who is now angry with you every day and every night? Will you be content to be children of the devil, when so many of your friends are coming to Christ and are becoming holy and happy children of the King of Kings?

And let everyone here who does not yet know Christ as savior, and are hanging out over the pit of hell, whether they be old, middle aged, young, or children, **NOW RESPOND TO THE LOUD CALL OF GOD'S WORD AND PROVIDENCE**. This year of the Lord, a day of such great favor to some, will doubtless be a day of remarkable vengeance to others. Men's hearts harden and their guilt grows on such a day as this, if they neglect their souls. Never was there such great danger of such people with hardened hearts and blinded minds. God now seems hastily gathering in his chosen people all over this country, and probably the majority of adults that shall be saved will be brought in very shortly. It will be like the early days of the apostles, when the Holy Spirit entered the hearts of great multitudes. The chosen will be saved and the rest will be blinded. If this should be the case with you, you will eternally curse this day, and will curse the day you were born, because you witnessed such a great season of the pouring out of God's Spirit, yet your heart was never softened. You will wish you had died and gone to hell before you witnessed it. Now, undoubtedly, just like in the days of John the Baptist, the awesome, divine axe is brought to bear on the forest, and every tree that does not bear good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.

Therefore, let anyone who does not now know Christ awake and fly from the wrath to come. The wrath of Almighty God is now undoubtedly hanging over a great part of this congregation. Let everyone fly out of Sodom!! Run for your lives! Don't look back! Escape to the mountain, lest you be consumed!

Editor's note

In spite of its being recognized as the greatest sermon ever delivered on the North American continent, the "fire and brimstone" tone of "Sinners..." has perpetuated the negative image of

Puritanism among the uniformed. Another sermon entitled, The Christian Pilgrim, reveals another side of Jonathan Edwards--a compassionate shepherd of the flock. His love for the "God of all comfort" (1 Cor. 1:3) and his heart for the lost demonstrates how his sermons, though not delivered with the oratorical flourish of a George Whitefield, for example, so profoundly moved his listeners and readers to this day.

The Christian Pilgrim
or
The True Christian's Life a Journey Toward Heaven

by
Jonathan Edwards

Dated September 1733; 1753. Preached at Boston and at New Haven; preached to Stockbridge Indians.

FOREWORD

Jonathan Edwards is best known for his sermon entitled, Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God. In spite of its being recognized as the greatest sermon ever delivered on the North American continent, the "fire and brimstone" tone has perpetuated the negative image of Puritanism among the uniformed. The following sermon reveals another side of Jonathan Edwards--a compassionate shepherd of the flock. His love for the "God of all comfort" (1 Cor. 1:3) and his heart for the lost demonstrates how his sermons, though not delivered with the oratorical flourish of a George Whitefield, for example, so profoundly moved his listeners and readers to this day. More than anything else, the body of Edwards' sermons focused on the "sweetness and excellency" of Jesus. I first read this sermon while enroute to a funeral of a beloved uncle, the best possible time in God's providence for maximum impact. May it work in your heart and bring you comfort as well. I have modernized the language a bit--breaking long sentences into two or more shorter and eliminating none--for ease of reading.

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And confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. (Hebrews 11:13, 14)

Subject: This life ought so to be spent by us as to be only a journey towards heaven.

The apostle is here setting forth the excellencies of the grace of faith, by the glorious effects and happy issue of it in the saints of the Old Testament. He had spoken in the preceding part of the chapter particularly, of Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and Sarah, Isaac, and Jacob. Having enumerated those instances, he takes notice that “these all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers,” etc. - In these words the apostle seems to have a more particular respect to Abraham and Sarah, and their kindred, who came with them from Haran, and from Ur of the Chaldees, as appears by the 15th verse, where the apostle says, “and truly if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.”

Two things may be observed here:

1. What these saints confessed of themselves, *viz. that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.* - Thus we have a particular account concerning Abraham, “I am a stranger and a sojourner with you.” (Gen. 23:4) And it seems to have been the general sense of the patriarchs, by what Jacob says to Pharaoh. “And Jacob said to Pharaoh, The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years; few and evil have the days of years of my life been, and have not attained to the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage.” (Gen. 47:9) “I am a stranger and a sojourner with thee, as all my fathers were.” (Psa. 39:12)

2. The inference that the apostle draws from hence, *viz. that they sought another country as their home.* “For they that say such things, declare plainly that they seek a country.” In confessing that they were strangers, they plainly declared that this is not their country; that this is not the place where they are at home. And in confessing themselves to be pilgrims, they declared plainly that this is not their settled abode, but that they have respect to some other country, which they seek, and to which they are traveling.

SECTION I

That this life ought to be so spent by us as to be only a journey or pilgrimage towards heaven.

HERE I would observe,

1. That we ought not to rest in the world and its enjoyments, but should desire heaven. We should “seek first the kingdom of God.” (Mat. 6:33) We ought above all things to desire a heavenly happiness; to be with God and dwell with Jesus Christ. Though surrounded with outward enjoyments, and settled in families with desirable friends and relations; though we have companions whose society is delightful, and children in whom we see many promising qualifications; though we live by good neighbors, and are generally beloved where known; we ought not to take our rest in these things as our portion. We should be so far from resting in

them, that we should desire to leave them all, in God's due time. We ought to possess, enjoy and use them, with no other view but readily to quit them, whenever we are called to it, and to change them willingly and cheerfully for heaven.

A traveler is not wont to rest in what he meets with, however comfortable and pleasing, on the road. If he passes through pleasant places, flowery meadows, or shady groves, he does not take up his content in these things, but only takes a transient view of them as he goes along. He is not enticed by fine appearances to put off the thought of proceeding. No, but his journey's end is in his mind. If he meets with comfortable accommodations at an inn, he entertains no thoughts of settling there. He considers that these things are not his own, that he is but a stranger, and when he has refreshed himself, or tarried for a night, he is for going forward. And it is pleasant to him to think that so much of the way is gone.

So should we desire heaven more than the comforts and enjoyments of this life. The apostle mentions it as an encouraging, comfortable consideration to Christians, that they draw nearer their happiness. "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." - Our hearts ought to be loose to these things, as that of a man on a journey, that we may as cheerfully part with them whenever God calls. "But this I say, brethren, the time is short, it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away." (1 Cor. 7:29-31) These things are only lent to us for a little while, to serve a present turn, but we should set our *hearts* on heaven, as our inheritance forever.

2. We ought to seek heaven, by traveling in the way that lead thither. This is a way of holiness. We should choose and desire to travel thither in this way and in no other, and part with all those carnal appetites which, as weights, will tend to hinder us. "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race set before us." (Heb 12:1) However pleasant the gratification of any appetite may be, we must lay it aside if it be a hindrance, or a stumbling block, in the way to heaven.

We should travel on in the way of obedience to all God's commands, even the difficult as well as the easy, denying all our sinful inclinations and interests. The way to heaven is ascending. We must be content to travel up hill, though it be hard and tiresome, and contrary to the natural bias of our flesh. We should follow Christ: the path he traveled, was the right way to heaven. We should take up our cross and follow him, in meekness and lowliness of heart, obedience and charity, diligence to do good, and patience under afflictions. The way to heaven is a heavenly life, an imitation of those who are in heaven in their holy enjoyments, loving, adoring, serving, and praising God and the Lamb. Even if we *could* go to heaven with the gratification of our lusts, we should prefer a way of holiness and conformity to the spiritual self-denying rules of the gospel.

3. We should travel on in this way in a laborious manner. - Long journeys are attended with toil and fatigue, especially if through a wilderness. Persons in such a case expect no other than to suffer hardships and weariness. - So we should travel in this way of holiness, improving our time and strength, to surmount the difficulties and obstacles that are in the way. The land we have to travel through, is a wilderness. There are many mountains, rocks, and rough places that we must go over, and therefore there is a necessity that we should lay out our strength.

4. Our whole lives ought to be spent in traveling this road. - We ought to begin *early*. This should be the *first* concern, when persons become capable of acting. When they first set out in the *world*, they should set out on *this* journey. - And we ought to travel on with *assiduity*. It ought to be the work of every day. We should often think of our journey's end; and make it our daily work to travel on in the way that leads to it. - He who is on a journey is often thinking of the destined place, and it is his daily care and business to get along and to improve his time to get towards his journey's end. Thus should heaven be continually in our thoughts, and the immediate entrance or passage to it, *viz.* death, should be present with us. - We ought to *persevere* in this way as long as we live.

“Let us run with patience the race that is set before us.” (Heb. 12:1) Though the road be difficult and toilsome, we must hold out with patience, and be content to endure hardships. Though the journey be long, yet we must not stop short, but hold on till we arrive at the place we seek. Nor should we be discouraged with the length and difficulties of the way, as the children of Israel were, and be for turning back again. All our thought and design should be to press forward till we arrive.

5. We ought to be continually growing in holiness, and in that respect coming nearer and nearer to heaven. - We should be endeavoring to come nearer to heaven, in being more heavenly, becoming more and more like the inhabitants of heaven in respect of holiness and conformity to God, the knowledge of God and Christ, in clear views of the glory of God, the beauty of Christ, and the excellency of divine things, as we come nearer to the beatific vision. - We should labor to be continually growing in divine love - that this may be an increasing flame in our hearts, till they ascend wholly in this flame - in obedience and a heavenly conversation, that we may do the will of God on earth as the angels do in heaven, in comfort and spiritual joy, [and] in sensible communion with God and Jesus Christ. Our path should be as “the shining light, that shines more and more to the perfect day.” (Pro. 4:18) We ought to be hungering and thirsting after righteousness: after an increase in righteousness. “As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the work, that ye may grow thereby.” (1 Pet. 2:2) The perfection of heaven should be our mark. “This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things that are before, I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 3:13, 14)

6. All other concerns of life ought to be entirely subordinate to this. - When a man is on a journey, all the steps he takes are subordinated to the aim of getting to his journey's end. And if he carries money or provisions with him, it is to supply him in his journey. So we ought wholly

to subordinate all our other business, and all our temporal enjoyments, to this affair of traveling to heaven. When anything we have becomes a clog and hindrance to us, we should quit it immediately. The use of our worldly enjoyments and possessions should be with such a view, and in such a manner, as to further us in our way heavenward. Thus we should eat, and drink, and clothe ourselves, and improve the conversation and enjoyment of friends. And whatever business we are setting about, whatever design we are engaging in, we should inquire with ourselves, whether this business or undertaking will forward us in our way to heaven? And if not, we should quit our design.

SECTION II

Why the Christian's life is a journey or pilgrimage.

1. THIS world is not our abiding place. Our continuance here is but very short. Man's days on the earth, are as a shadow. It was never designed by God that this world should be our home. Neither did God give us these temporal accommodations for that end. If God has given us ample estates, and children, or other pleasant friends, it is with no such design, that we should be furnished here, as for a settled abode, but with a design that we should use them for the present, and then leave them in a very little time. When we are called to any secular business, or charged with the care of a family, [and] if we improve our lives to any other purpose than as a journey toward heaven, all our labor will be lost. If we spend our lives in the pursuit of a temporal happiness, as riches or sensual pleasures, credit and esteem from men, delight in our children and the prospect of seeing them well brought up and well settled, etc. - all these things will be of little significancy to us. Death will blow up all our hopes, and will put an end to these enjoyments. "The places that have known us, will know us no more" and "the eye that has seen us, shall see us no more." We must be taken away forever from all these things, and it is uncertain when: it may be soon after we are put into the possession of them. And then, where will be all our worldly employments and enjoyments, when we are laid in the silent grave! "So man lieth down, and riseth not again, till the heavens be no more." (Job 14:12)

2. The future world was designed to be our settled and everlasting abode. There it was intended that we should be fixed, and there alone is a lasting habitation and a lasting inheritance. The present state is short and transitory, but our state in the other world is everlasting. And as we are there at first, so we must be without change. Our state in the future world, therefore, being eternal, is of so much greater importance than our state here, that all our concerns in this world should be wholly subordinated to it.

3. Heaven is that place alone where our highest end and highest good is to be obtained. God has made us for himself. "Of him, and through him, and to him are all things." Therefore, then do we attain to our highest end, when we are brought to God: but that is by being brought to heaven, for that is God's throne, the place of his special presence. There is but a very imperfect union with God to be had in this world, a very imperfect knowledge of him in the midst of much

darkness: a very imperfect conformity to God, mingled with abundance of estrangement. Here we can serve and glorify God, but in a very imperfect manner: our service being mingled with sin, which dishonors God. - But when we get to heaven (if ever that be), we shall be brought to a perfect union with God and have more clear views of him. There we shall be fully conformed to God, without any remaining sin: for “we shall see him as he is.” There we shall serve God perfectly and glorify him in an exalted manner, even to the utmost of the powers and capacity of our nature. Then we shall perfectly give up ourselves to God: our hearts will be pure and holy offerings, presented in a flame of divine love.

God is the highest good of the reasonable creature, and the enjoyment of him is the only happiness with which our souls can be satisfied. - To go to heaven fully to enjoy God, is *infinitely* better than the most pleasant accommodations here. Fathers and mothers, husbands, wives, children, or the company of earthly friends, are but shadows. But the enjoyment of God is the substance. These are but scattered beams, but God is the sun. These are but streams, but God is the fountain. These are but drops, but God is the ocean. - Therefore it becomes us to spend this life only as a journey towards heaven, as it becomes us to make the seeking of our highest end and proper good, the whole work of our lives, to which we should subordinate all other concerns of life. Why should we labor for, or set our hearts on anything else, but that which is our proper end, and true happiness?

4. Our present state, and all that belongs to it, is designed by him that made all things, to be wholly in order to another world. - This world was made for a place of preparation for another. Man’s mortal life was given him, that he might be prepared for his fixed state. And all that God has here given us, is given to this purpose. The sun shines, the rain falls upon us, and the earth yields her increase to us for this end. Civil, ecclesiastical, and family affairs, and all our personal concerns, are designed and ordered in subordination to a future world, by the maker and disposer of all things. To this therefore they ought to be subordinated by us.

SECTION III

Instruction afforded by the consideration that life is a journey or pilgrimage towards heaven.

1. THIS doctrine may teach us moderation in our mourning for the loss of such dear friends, who while they lived, improved their lives to right purposes. If they lived a holy life, then their lives were a journey towards heaven. And why should we be immoderate in mourning, when they are got to their journey’s end? Death, though it appears to us with a frightful aspect, is to them a great blessing. Their end is happy, and better than their beginning. “The day of their death, is better than the day of their birth.” (Ecc. 7:1) While they lived, they desired heaven, and chose it above this world or any of its enjoyments. For this they earnestly longed, and why should we grieve that they have obtained it? - Now they have got to their Father’s house. They find more comfort a thousand times now [that] they are gone home, than they did in their journey. In this world they underwent much labor and toil: it was a wilderness they passed

through. There were many difficulties in the way: mountains and rough places. It was laborious and fatiguing to travel the road, and they had many wearisome days and nights: but now they have got to their everlasting rest. “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 labors; and their works do follow them.” (Rev. 14:13) They look back upon the difficulties, and sorrows, and dangers of life, rejoicing that they have surmounted them all.

We are ready to look upon death as their calamity, and to mourn that those who were so dear to us should be in the dark grave: that they are there transformed to corruption and worms, taken away from their dear children and enjoyments, etc. as though they were in awful circumstances. But this is owing to our infirmity. They are in a happy condition, inconceivably blessed. They do not mourn, but rejoice with exceeding joy: their mouths are filled with joyful songs, and they drink at rivers of pleasure. They find no mixture of grief that they have changed their earthly enjoyments, and the company of mortals, for heaven. Their life here, though in the best circumstances, was attended with much that was adverse and afflictive, but now there is an end to all adversity. “They shall hunger no more nor 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 waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.” (Rev. 7:16, 17)

It is true, we shall see them no more in this world, yet we ought to consider that we are traveling towards the same place; and why should we break our hearts that they have got there before us? We are following after them, and hope as soon as we get to our journey’s end, to be with them again, in better circumstances. A degree of mourning for near relations when departed is not inconsistent with Christianity, but very agreeable to it. For as long as we are flesh and blood, we have animal propensities and affections. But we have just reason that our mourning should be mingled with joy. “But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them that are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others that have no hope:” (1 Thes. 4:13) *i.e.* that they should not sorrow as the heathen, who had no knowledge of a future happiness. This appears by the following verse; “for if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him.”

2. If our lives ought to be only a journey towards heaven, how ill do they improve their lives, that spend them in traveling towards hell? - Some men spend their whole lives, from their infancy to their dying day, in going down the broad way to destruction. They not only draw nearer to hell as to time, but they every day grow more ripe for destruction. They are more assimilated to the inhabitants of the internal world. While others press forward in the straight and narrow way to life and laboriously travel up the hill toward Zion, against the inclinations and tendency of the flesh, these run with a swift career down to eternal death. This is the employment of every day, with all wicked men, and the whole day is spent in it. As soon as ever they awake in the morning, they set out anew in the way to hell and spend every waking moment in it. They begin in early days. “The wicked are estranged from the womb, they go astray as soon as they

are born, speaking lies.” (Psa. 58:3) They hold on it with perseverance. Many of them who live to be old, are never weary in it. Though they live to be an hundred years old, they will not cease traveling in the way to hell till they arrive there. And all the concerns of life are subordinated to this employment. A wicked man is a servant of sin, [and] his powers and faculties are employed in the service of sin and in fitness for hell. And all his possessions are so used by him as to be subservient to the same purpose. Men spend their time in treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath Thus do all unclean persons, who live in lascivious practices in secret: all malicious persons, all profane persons that neglect the duties of religion. Thus do all unjust persons, and those who are fraudulent and oppressive in their dealings. Thus do all backbiters and revilers, [and] all covetous persons that set their hearts chiefly on the riches of this world. Thus do tavern-haunters, and frequenters of evil company, and many other kinds that might be mentioned. Thus the bulk of mankind are hastening onward in the broad way to destruction, which is, as it were, filled up with the multitude that are going in it with one accord. And they are every day going to hell out of this broad way by thousands. Multitudes are continually flowing down into the great lake of fire and brimstone, as some mighty river constantly disembogues its water into the ocean.

3. Hence when persons are converted they do but begin their work and set out in the way they have to go. - They never till then do anything at that work in which their whole lives ought to be spent. Persons before conversion never take a step that way. Then does a man first set out on his journey, when he is brought home to Christ, and so far is he from having done his work, that his care and labor in his Christian work and business, is then but begun, in which he must spend the remaining part of his life.

Those persons do ill, who when they are converted and have obtained a hope of their being in a good condition, do not strive as earnestly as they did before, while they were under awakenings. They ought, henceforward, as long as they live, to be as earnest and laborious, as watchful and careful as ever: yea, they should increase more and more. It is no just excuse that now they have obtained conversion. Should not we be as diligent as that we ourselves may be that we may serve and glorify God, happy? And if we have obtained grace, yet we ought to strive as much that we may obtain the other degrees that are before, as we did to obtain that small degree that is behind. The apostle tells us that he forgot what was behind and reached forth towards what was before. (Phil. 3:13)

Yea, those who are converted have now a further reason to strive for grace. For they have seen something of its excellency. A man who has once tasted the blessings of Canaan, has more reason to press towards it than he had before. And they who are converted, should strive to “make their calling and election sure.” All those who are converted are not sure of it, and those who are sure, do not know that they shall be always so, and still, seeking and serving God with the utmost diligence, is the way to have assurance and to have it maintained.

SECTION IV

An exhortation to spend the present life that it may be only a journey towards heaven.

Labor to obtain such a disposition of mind that you may choose heaven for your inheritance and home, and may earnestly long for it and be willing to change this world, and all its enjoyments, for heaven. Labor to have your heart taken up so much about heaven, and heavenly enjoyments, as that you may rejoice when God calls you to leave your best earthly friends and comforts for heaven, there to enjoy God and Christ.

Be persuaded to travel in the way that leads to heaven: *viz.* in holiness, self-denial, mortification, obedience to all the commands of God, following Christ's example [and] in a way of a heavenly life, or imitation of the saints and angels in heaven. Let it be your daily work, from morning till night, and hold out in it to the end. Let nothing stop or discourage you, or turn you aside from this road. And let all other concerns be subordinated to this. Consider the reasons that have been mentioned why you should thus spend your life: that this world is not your abiding place, that the future world is to be your everlasting abode, and that the enjoyments and concerns of this world are given entirely in order to another. And consider further for motive.

1. How worthy is heaven that your life should be wholly spent as a journey towards it. - To what better purpose can you spend your life, whether you respect your duty or your interest? What better end can you propose to your journey, than to obtain heaven? You are placed in this world with a choice given you, that you may travel which way you please, and one way leads to heaven. Now, can you direct your course better than this way? All men have some aim or other in living. Some mainly seek worldly things. They spend their days in such pursuits. But is not heaven, where is fullness of joy forever, much more worthy to be sought by you? How can you better employ your strength, use your means, and spend your days, than in traveling the road that leads to the everlasting enjoyment of God: to his glorious presence, to the new Jerusalem, to the heavenly mount Zion, where all your desires will be filled and no danger of ever losing your happiness? - No man is at home in this world, whether he choose heaven or not: here he is but a transient person. Where can you choose your home better than in heaven?

2. This is the way to have death comfortable to us. - To spend our lives so as to be only a journeying towards heaven, is the way to be free from bondage and to have the prospect and forethought of death comfortable. Does the traveler think of his journey's end with fear and terror? Is it terrible to him to think that he has almost got to his journey's end? Were the children of Israel sorry after forty years' travel in the wilderness, when they had almost got to Canaan? This is the way to be able to part with the world without grief. Does it grieve the traveler when he has got home, to quit his staff and load of provisions that he had to sustain him by the way?

3. No more of your life will be pleasant to think of when you come to die, than has been spent after this manner. - If you have spent none of your life this way, your whole life will be terrible to you to think of, unless you die under some great delusion. You will see then, that all of your life that has been spent otherwise, is lost. You will then see the vanity of all other aims that

you may have proposed to yourself. The thought of what you here possessed and enjoyed will not be pleasant to you, unless you can think also that you have subordinated them to this purpose.

4. Consider that those who are willing thus to spend their lives as a journey towards heaven may have heaven. - Heaven, however high and glorious, is attainable to such poor worthless creatures as we are. We may attain that glorious region which is the habitation of angels: yea, the dwelling-place of the Son of God, and where is the glorious presence of the great Jehovah. And we may have it freely, without money and without price. If we are but willing to travel the road that leads to it and bend our course that way as long as we live, we may and shall have heaven for our eternal resting place.

5. Let it be considered that if our lives be not a journey towards heaven, they will be a journey to hell. All mankind, after they have been here a short while, go to either of the two great receptacles of all that depart out of this world: the one in *heaven*; whither the bulk of mankind throng. And one or the other of these must be the issue of our course in this world.

I shall conclude by giving a few *directions*:

1. Labor to get a sense of the vanity of this world, on account of the little satisfaction that is to be enjoyed here, its short continuance, and unserviceableness when we most stand in need of help, *viz.* on a death-bed. - All men, that live any considerable time in the world, might see enough to convince them of its vanity, if they would but consider. - Be persuaded therefore to exercise consideration when you see and hear, from time to time, of the death of others. Labor to turn your thoughts this way. See the vanity of the world in such a glass.

2. Labor to be much acquainted with heaven. - If you are not acquainted with it, you will not be likely to spend your life as a journey thither. You will not be sensible of its worth, nor will you long for it. Unless you are much conversant in your mind with a better good, it will be exceeding difficult to you to have your hearts loose from these things, to use them only in subordination to something else, and be ready to part with them for the sake of that better good. - Labor therefore to obtain a realizing sense of a heavenly world, to get a firm belief of its reality, and to be very much conversant with it in your thoughts.

3. Seek heaven only by Jesus Christ. - Christ tells us that he is the way, and the truth, and the life. (John 14:6) He tells us that he is the door of the sheep. "I am the door, by me if any man enter in he shall be saved; and go in and out and find pasture." (John 10:9) If we therefore would improve our lives as a journey towards heaven, we must seek it by him and not by our own righteousness, as expecting to obtain it only for his sake: looking to him [and] having our dependence on him, who has procured it for us by his merit. And expect [that] strength to walk in holiness, the way that leads to heaven, only from him.

4. Let Christians help one another in going this journey. - There are many ways whereby Christians might greatly forward one another in their way to heaven, as by religious conference,

etc. Therefore let them be exhorted to go this journey as it were in company: conversing together, and assisting one another. Company is very desirable in a journey, but in none so much as this. - Let them go united and not fall out by the way, which would be to hinder one another, but use all means they can to help each other up the hill. - This would ensure a more successful traveling and a more joyful meeting at their Father's house in glory.

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