

He Being Dead Yet Speaketh

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In 1744 Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) preached the following sermon, "Christ in His Sufferings Suffered Extremely from the Hand of God the Father," in the Congregational Church of Northampton, Massachusetts.¹ Edwards had been the sole pastor of this church since the death of Solomon Stoddard in 1729. This sermon has never, to my knowledge, appeared in print before this time. It appears here as part of my ongoing interest in the writings and influence of Edwards, after having successfully pursued doctoral studies on Edwards. The manuscript from which this transcription is taken is part of the wonderful collection of Edwards' papers housed at the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library of Yale University. This sermon was transcribed by me as a labor of love and is a precursor to a complete volume of previously unpublished sermons that is scheduled to appear in 2003 from Broadman and Holman Publishers, as part of the celebration commemorating the 300th anniversary of Edwards' birth.

There has never been any lack of material on Jonathan Edwards, but in the twentieth century that stream became a flood and there seems to be no decline in this present one. Jonathan Edwards is unique in several respects. One of those ways is the sheer volume of material that has appeared, portraying Edwards as so much more than an eighteenth-century colonial minister who possessed an amazing mind. He has been depicted, amongst other things, as a bogeyman, philosopher, man of letters, theologian, natural scientist, supporter of missions, and tragedy.

An excellent illustration of the degree of continuing interest in Jonathan Edwards and his importance can be seen in the range and quantity of scholarly periodicals that contain articles on him and his thought; the result reads like a fairly comprehensive index of theological, philosophical, and historical journals. I have included below a representative sample of periodical titles, together with the dates that an

¹ Edwards' sermon is largely transcribed just as it was written in his manuscript. That is to say, only some punctuation was added, but no considerable effort was made to make sentences out of sentence fragments, nor to add words to make his notes or statements read smoother, etc.

article on Edwards appeared. One should bear in mind that several articles were often printed in one volume, and that this list is by no means exhaustive: *Accent* (1948); *American Historical Review* (1930); *American Literature*; *American Quarterly* (1951); *American Theological Review* (1861); *Andover Newton Quarterly* (1975); *Andrews University Seminary Studies* (1977); *Anglican Theological Review* (1990); *Bibliotheca Sacra* (1976); *British and Foreign Evangelical Review* (1860); *Calvin Theological Journal* (1996); *Center Journal* (1982); *Christian Century* (1993); *Christian Education Journal* (1990); *Christianity and Literature* (1998); *Christianity Today* (1958); *Church History* (1965); *Church Quarterly Review* (1966); *Cithara* (1987); *Concordia Theological Quarterly* (1984); *Congregationalist and Christian World* (1903); *Continental Monthly* (1862); *Crane Review* (1959); *Criticism* (1973); *Crux* (1988); *Dialog: A Journal of Theology* (1976); *Duke Divinity School Review* (1966); *Early American Literature* (1970); *Epworth Review* (1998); *Evangelical Quarterly* (1990); *Expository Times* (1994); *Faith and Philosophy* (1990); *Fides et Historia* (1989); *Fides Reformata* (1998); *Forum* (1926); *Foundations* (1978); *Fundamentalist Journal* (1985); *Great Thoughts* (1900); *Hartford Seminary Record* (1903); *Harvard Theological Review* (1988); *Historical Magazine* (1868); *History of European Ideas* (1990); *Hudson Review* (1950); *International Bulletin of Missionary Research* (1997); *Interpretation* (1985); *ISIS* (1951); *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* (1966); *Journal of American History* (1983); *Journal of American Studies* (1980); *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* (1973); *Journal of Presbyterian History* (1967); *Journal of Psychology and Theology* (1978); *Journal of Religion* (1989); *Journal of Religious Ethics* (1991); *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* (1972); *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* (1995); *Journal of the History of Ideas* (1972); *Journal of the History of Philosophy* (1969); *Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society* (1961); *Lucas* (1993); *Munsey's Magazine* (1906); *Nassau Review* (1976); *New England Quarterly* (1949); *New Englander* (1884); *Ohio Journal of Religious Studies* (1976); *Open Court* (1908); *Philosophical Review* (1948); *Preaching* (1992); *Presbyterian* (1998); *Pro Ecclesia* (1995); *Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts* (1931); *Publications of the Massachusetts Historical Society* (1902); *Princeton Seminary Bulletin* (1999); *Princeton University Library Chronicle* (1953); *Reformation and Revival*(1995); *Reformed Review* (1965); *Religion and American Culture* (1993); *Religion in Life* (1958); *Religious Studies Review* (1998); *Review of Metaphysics* (1976); *Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses* (1996); *Scientific Monthly* (1949); *Scottish Bulletin of Evangelical Theology* (1997); *Scottish Journal of Theology* (1961); *Soundings*

(1969); *Southern Baptist Journal of Theology* (1999); *Southern Quarterly* (1977); *Southern Review* (1875); *St. Luke's Journal of Theology* (1990); *Studia Mystica* (1985); *Theological Studies* (1981); *Theologische Zeitschrift* (1978); *Theology Today* (1953); *This World* (1989); *Trinity Journal* (1982); *Union Seminary Quarterly Review* (1975); *Wesleyan Theological Journal* (1984); *Westminster Theological Journal* (1984); *Urban Mission* (1994); *William and Mary Quarterly* (1949); *Word and World* (1984); and *Worldview* (1975).

Who was Jonathan Edwards and why such interest? Tradition has so often represented Edwards as a sort of bloodless specter with a pale drawn face, whereas recent scrutiny has found a mind more congruous with the beaming eye and sensitive mouth of the portrait.² Puritanism, said T. Schafer,³ was the skeleton of skeletons in the national closet, until studies in the mid-twentieth-century by men like S. E. Morison, H. W. Schneider, R. B. Perry and especially Perry Miller, seemed to show that the Puritans, in spite of their quaint ideas, were intellectually respectable and even occasionally, good company. The similar argument then is also made that Edwards too needs to be “freed from the dust of the past,”⁴ for, argues Ola Winslow, “He is one of the few men of the far past who still have something to say to men of the present hour.”⁵ The current writer also agrees with Bogue’s view, *viz.* that the unfortunate plight of Edwards since his own day is that most people have an opinion about him. But apart from the serious student of Edwards, few of them have ever read his writings. Bogue is further correct, regrettably, when he says that the image of Edwards hangs suspended by the single thread of one sermon over the pit of popular condemnation.⁶ However, those who have set aside the stereotype of the hell-fire preacher and “encountered Edwards’ penetrating mind and breathtaking power of literary expression find he exerts a fascination that belies all expectation.”⁷ This is not to say that all can or actually do this. Edwards has always had and probably always will have his detractors. C. Darrow denounces Edwards the hell-fire preacher when he says, “Nothing but a distorted or diseased mind could have produced his ‘Sinners in the Hands of an angry God.’”⁸ For Darrow, as for many others, Edwards’ “main business in the world was scaring silly women and little children; and blaspheming the God he

² I. W. Riley, “The Real Jonathan Edwards,” *Open Court* 22 (1908), 705.

³ T. Schafer, “MS Problems in the Yale Edition of Jonathan Edwards,” *Early American Literature* 3 (1968/9), 159.

⁴ Riley, “Edwards,” 705.

⁵ O. Winslow, *Jonathan Edwards: Basic Writings* (New York, 1960), xvii.

⁶ C. W. Bogue, *Jonathan Edwards and the Covenant of Grace* (Cherry Hill NJ, 1975), 3.

⁷ D. E. Laurence, “The Foolishness of Edwards,” *Worldview* 18 (1975), 49.

⁸ C. Darrow, “The Edwardses and the Jukeses,” *American Mercury* 6 (1925), 153.

professed to adore.”⁹

However, one should also note that the genius or otherwise of Edwards, as displayed in his writings, is not the only way he has been viewed as being of great value and influence. In the early literature on Edwards one finds, for example, that he was adopted by a generation of eugenists who discoursed at seemingly interminable length on the worthiness of his “germ plasm.” Both E. A. and A. E. Winship argued with vigor, that Edwards’ most important contribution to the world was not the written product of his mind, but his genetic structure. In 1900, A. E. Winship contrasted 1400 descendants of Jonathan Edwards with 1200 descendants of the pseudonymous “Max Jukes” in a study of intelligence, morality and character.¹⁰

Three years later, E. A. Winship presented a representative array of Edwards’ illustrious descendants.¹¹ In this article, Winship believes that Edwards’ teachings excited no more than a passing interest, and that only students of literary history read his writings. However, the writer, in common with the other eugenists, sees his influence as being paralleled by very few men. Winship argues that what Edwards bequeathed to his lineal descendants is shown by the striking story of what they have done.

The writer then proceeds to prove the argument by listing the achievements of Edwards’ offspring. Direct descendants became, for example, presidents of Princeton, Hamilton, Union, Amherst, Johns Hopkins, Litchfield Law School, Andover Theological Seminary, Tennessee University, and the University of California. They also became missionaries in Asia Minor, Africa, India, China, Hawaii and the South Sea Islands. Also numbered among his descendants were sixty eminent physicians, more than one hundred lawyers, thirty judges, city attorneys of New York, Philadelphia, and Chicago, mayors of Cleveland, Troy, and New Haven, governors of Connecticut, South Carolina and Ohio, several U.S. representatives, senators, and ambassadors. This was a very detailed work and illustrated with many such examples of the amazing achievements of the Edwards family. Those mentioned above are only examples of many more. Three years later, D. Lowell produced a similar contribution to this line of argument.¹² Lowell’s argument, however, is more specific. Edwards passed to his offspring, a hereditary gene, he says, whose main result was the production of college presidents! Of the five generations that followed Jonathan Edwards,

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ A. E. Winship, *Jukes-Edwards: A Study in Education and Heredity* (1900).

¹¹ E. A. Winship, “The Human Legacy of Jonathan Edwards,” *World’s Work* 6 (1903), 3981-3984.

¹² D. Lowell, “The Descendants of Jonathan Edwards,” *Munsey’s Magazine* 35:3 (1906), 263-273.

argues Lowell, never was a college president lacking among his direct descendants. Moreover, many of the direct descendants who were disqualified through accident of sex, have, in Lowell's terminology, made college presidents of their husbands!

Not to be outdone, Lowell adds to his list Rutgers, Yale (3), Columbia, and the Carnegie Institution. He then turns from presidents of colleges and universities to presidents of the Association of American Anatomists, the Boston Society of Natural History, a bank, and three railroads; he then tops the list off with the inclusion of one Vice-President and one President of the United States.

What is one to say of these studies? One marvels at the time spent on the collection of the data and respects the utter seriousness with which the material is presented. Is it something that has been outgrown as it were? The answer appears to be no, for similar pieces have continued to appear, drawing the family line even as far as Winston Churchill as a descendant.

On January 18, 1758, Jonathan Edwards paid a last visit to his friend Samuel Hopkins. Edwards had taken several of his own manuscripts with him and he left them with Hopkins for safekeeping. On January 19, Edwards left promising to return in the spring. It is said that Hopkins felt a chill of foreboding and that same day wrote to Joseph Bellamy, saying that, Mr. Edwards "expects not to return till next May," but he grimly added, "Alas his mantle has gone with him."¹³ The spring came but Edwards never returned.

Samuel Hopkins wrote the first full biography of Jonathan Edwards in 1765. The fact that the record of received subscriptions for Hopkins' planned *Life* of Edwards was very poor could be used to argue that the lack of interest in Edwards that would be displayed later had in fact already begun. Hopkins was not deterred, however, and began to edit several of Edwards' writings for publication. But he soon recorded that "they would not be sold and . . . turned his mind to other projects."¹⁴

The Boston publishers seemed to have met the local demand for Edwards' writings, but the evidence suggests he became better known throughout Europe. That the latter is true is proven by the great number of editions of his works which were published in London, Glasgow and Edinburgh, and the frequent translation of them into Dutch, French and German. In fact, ten of his works were translated early on into French, German, Arabic, Gaelic, Dutch, Welsh and even Choctaw.¹⁵

¹³ S. Hopkins to J. Bellamy 1/19/1758 in "Bellamy Papers" as quoted in C. Dennison and R. Gamble, *Pressing Toward The Mark* (1986), 1.

¹⁴ E. A. Park, "Memoir of S. Hopkins," in *The Works of S. Hopkins*. Vol. 1 (Boston, 1854), 219.

¹⁵ T. Johnson, *The Printed Writings of Jonathan Edwards* (New York, 1940), vii.

The lack of American interest may account for the fact that the first collected edition of Edwards' works would not appear for another forty years after Hopkins' *Life*. Even then they would not appear from American presses but British ones. The first American edition was printed two years later in 1808 at Worcester, Massachusetts. However, by the end of the nineteenth century, Edwards' works had been more widely printed than those of any other American whatsoever (except Franklin).¹⁶ Murray argues that the lack of American interest is due directly to the lack of spirituality in America at that time.¹⁷

Since the "rehabilitation" of Edwards and the Puritans in the twentieth century, Jonathan Edwards has become a man to be reckoned with. Yale University has named one of its colleges after him. Princeton has exhibitions in his honor. Wheaton holds conferences on him, as do Yale and Fairleigh Dickinson Universities. Doctoral dissertations appear at ever increasing rates, with numbers doubling every decade, and theses completed twenty or thirty years ago are being revised for publication as Edwards becomes increasingly topical and marketable. Scarcely a work now appears in the fields of American theology, the history of American philosophy, psychology, religion, literature, and culture that does not have something to say about Jonathan Edwards.

The problem is that all this material that has been and is being written on Jonathan Edwards exhibits the great differences of opinion that are held concerning him. It is not a problem in the sense that it makes for good scholarship, but it seems that Edwards can almost be anything to everyone. How can this be? Are they all talking and writing about the same man and the same writings? Probably the outlook and stance of the writers themselves contribute to the latter problem.

The Yale edition of the *Works of Jonathan Edwards*, which produced its first offering in 1957 with *The Will*, has as one of its chief aims, if not the primary one, to let Edwards speak for himself in a way that he has never before been able to or allowed. The Yale editors promise, in fact, "a full and complete exposure of his ideas in a manner never before possible."¹⁸ The need for such an edition has long been felt. Over one hundred years have passed, says Morris,¹⁹ since the first suggestion for its publication was made. In fact, there has been no newly collected edition of Edwards' works since the Dwight edition of 1830. Moreover, is it not ironic, that the president of Yale in 1787 assigned Edwards' writings to the rubbish of libraries? Now, that very same university is

¹⁶ T. H. Johnson, "Jonathan Edwards' Background of Reading," *Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts* 28 (1931), 196.

¹⁷ I. H. Murray, *Jonathan Edwards: A New Biography* (Edinburgh, 1987), 454.

¹⁸ S. J. Stein (ed.), *Apocalyptic Writings* by Jonathan Edwards (New Haven, 1977), x.

¹⁹ W. S. Morris, "The Reappraisal of Edwards," *New England Quarterly* 30 (1957), 515.

entrusted with the task of publishing a completely new edition of those writings. Surely the new edition will mean that we will be obliged to re-examine long-held assumptions concerning Jonathan Edwards and his thought. This can only be for the good. For, the present writer's ongoing research on Edwards confirms what he has always suspected, *viz.* that Edwards has been much maligned, often quoted, unfairly caricatured, highly misrepresented, heavily criticized, but hardly ever read. If I have any single aim in my labor of love on the unpublished writings of Edwards, it would be to help counter the misuse of his thought. Edwards deserves to be read, even and especially by those who believe they are opposed to the viewpoint of Edwards.

Christ in His Sufferings Suffered Extremely from the Hand of God the Father

Jonathan Edwards

Isaiah 53:10, "When Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin He shall see His seed."

This chapter is the plainest and fullest account of the sufferings of Christ that there is in all the Old Testament. We have a very particular description of His sufferings and the ends and benefit thereof and then in these three last verses we have an account of the reward of His sufferings. There are three things that are mentioned in this verse which are the promised rewards of Christ's sufferings.

1. That He shall see His seed. That His death and sufferings shall be successful for the actually bringing in of many souls to salvation.
2. The second reward here promised is His resurrection and Eternal Life. And this is signified in the expression, "He shall prolong His days." The prophet had been giving an account of His death. He tells us in verse 7 that He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter. In verse 8, that He was cut off out of the land of the living. In verse 9, that He made His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death because He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth. And then in this verse, that He shall make His soul an offering for sin and yet here the prophet says, "He shall prolong His days." This is a plain prophecy of His resurrection and that the whole human nature shall after His death have eternal life.
3. The third reward promised is His advancement to the rule of the world for God and His success therein. The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hands, implies that that matter shall be committed into Christ's

hands. It shall be left with him to fulfill the pleasure of God to govern the world and accomplish God's decrees and good pleasure in it and that Christ shall successfully and prosperously manage the government of the world, so that God's pleasure shall be done and His glory advanced.

But to return to the first of these rewards that we are chiefly concerned with at this time, viz. that Christ shall see His seed. By the seed of Christ are here less meant believers on Him, these are said to be Christ's seed, Galatians 3:29, "If Christ's then ye are Abraham's seed." They are called His children. Hebrews 2:13, "Behold I and the Children which God hath given me."

As we by nature are the children of the first Adam, so by grace are we the children of the Second Adam. As our animal nature is derived from the first Adam, so is our spiritual nature. As the old man is derived from Adam, we proceed from the first Adam by a natural generation, so believers proceed from Christ by regeneration by being born of the Word and Spirit. Christ shall see His seed, that is, He shall see them born. And therefore 'tis added that He shall prolong His days as a man. He can't see His posterity multiply unless He lives long. So Christ could not see that glorious success which there was to His Gospel unless He rose from the dead and had His days prolonged that He might see it. This is what is promised to Christ as a reward for His making His soul an offering for sin. He should see His blest ones, those that the Father had given him: born, brought home and saved by Himself.

Doctrine: That Christ should see sinners converted and saved was part of the reward that God promised Him for His sufferings. Two propositions:

1. God the Father promised Jesus Christ a reward, if He would undertake to suffer for us. God the Father sought our redemption and His Only Begotten Son was the Person whom He chose to work it out and He appointed Him to it. It is a great and difficult work. It was necessary that He that was the Redeemer should become the Surety of the redeemed and should take their guilt upon Him and suffer their punishment. This was a very great and difficult and costly undertaking and God the Father saw meet that His Son that He appointed to it, should have a reward for it answerable to the merit and gloriousness of the work and also answerable to the difficulty and expense of it.

It was fit that such a work should be rewarded for as Christ undertook the work for mans' sake, so it was for God's sake to glorify, and it is a work whereby God is glorified in a peculiar and most distinguishing manner. This work is above all others to God's glory and therefore 'tis fit that God should reward it. It was a work wherein Christ showed

superlative love to God. Christ, under no natural obligation to undertake such sufferings, expressed an infinite love herein to the Father.

God by His love to His Son, was inclined to reward such a glorious undertaking to which He had appointed Him and which He had undertaken. And this reward was ascertained to Christ beforehand by promises and had respect to this reward. Hebrews 12:2, "Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the Cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

Question: When did God the Father make this promise?

Answer: From all Eternity. The redemption of fallen man was a thing that was upon the heart of God from all Eternity. It was purposed and determined before the world was; there was a consultation among the Persons of the Trinity about it before the world was. Christ by the Covenant of Redemption was appointed the Mediator of the elect but He was appointed their Mediator before the world was. By which expression in Scripture, we are to understand from all Eternity, the beginning of the world being the first thing in time. What before is from all Eternity, 2 Timothy 1:9, "Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." Titus 1:2, "Which God that cannot lie promised before the world began." He could not promise before the world in any other covenant but the Covenant of Redemption.

Question: In what manner was the reward promised to Jesus Christ?

Answer: In a covenant that was made between the Father and the Son, called the Covenant of Redemption. There was a Covenant that was entered into between the Father and the Son about the redemption of man. God was determined that man should be redeemed and He in infinite wisdom, pitched upon His own Eternal Son to do the work. But this Person could no otherwise be appointed to such an undertaking than by agreement or covenant. The Father could not appoint Him by authority and therefore it must be by covenant or agreement. The Son is naturally not subject to any proper authority of the Father, for He too is God, equal with God. Indeed He is subject as Mediator, but he doesn't become Mediator any otherwise, than by this covenant or agreement whereby He voluntarily undertook.

After the Covenant is passed then He is become Mediator, then He becomes subject and is appointed by command, because this was part of the agreement that He should be subject in that work to the Father.

Therefore it must be by agreement or covenant that Christ first was appointed and undertook such a covenant that is plainly intimated to be between the Father and Son. Zechariah 6:12,13, The Prophet there is speaking of Christ the Branch. How He shall arise and build the Temple of the Lord. He says the counsel of peace shall be between them both, that is, between the Lord whose Temple He shall build and which intimates a consultation or agreement of peace or redemption between the Father and Son. Luke 22:29, "I appoint unto you a Kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me." The word in the original properly signifies to make over by covenant. In Psalm 40:6,7 the covenant between Christ and the Father is compared to the covenant there was between the servant and his master that chose to serve his master forever. That had his ear bored. Mine ear hast thou bored. Then said I, Lo! I come. In this covenant Christ promised to and God the Father promised Him, a glorious reward.

Question: What was the reward promised?

Answer: Christ's mediating glory. The thing that Christ undertook and promised the Father was that glory which He should have as Mediator. Christ as God is not capable of a reward but Christ as Mediator is. He was humbled, He was subject and He may be exalted. He is capable of receiving honor and glory.

The promised rewards are summed up in the text and the two following verses. We often have an account of the promises of God made to Christ, that He shall sit at God's right hand till His enemies be made His footstool. Give the heathen for thine inheritance. Highly exalted. Give him a name above every name. All power in heaven and on earth.

Proposition 2. This was a part of that joy that was set before Him that made Him to cheerfully undertake those sore and grievous sufferings that made Him endure the Cross and despise the shame; to see sinners converted and saved was part of that reward which Christ depended and earnestly expected; He had this in His view. This encouraged Him that the Father had faithfully promised Him that He should see this; He should see such a joyful sight as sinners coming out of a natural state and conditions coming to Him for eternal life, to see them brought out of such a miserable and undone state into a state of life and happiness. This was a great part of that joy that was set before Him.

Question: How has this the nature of a reward? What advantage is it to Christ to have sinners converted and saved? Christ has enough. His

exaltation to Heaven. His sitting at the right hand of God. His enjoying the Father. His being made head over the angels renders Him rich. He has no need of us poor worms. How can it be any reward for His suffering for us to be converted and saved?

Answer: Christ has so set His love upon men that the seeing of this sight is what He earnestly desired and greatly delights in. 'Tis that that makes it a reward. 'Tis not because He wants or is indigent, but 'tis His love that makes it joyful to Him to see such a sight. He looks upon it as a blessed sight. He tells us that before the world was made His delight was with the sons of men. Christ is the Good Shepherd that loves the sheep and therefore when He finds the sheep that was lost He layeth it on His shoulders rejoicing. Luke 15:4,5,6, "He leaveth the ninety and nine in the wild and goeth after that which was lost until He find it and when He hath found it, He layeth it on his shoulders rejoicing, and when he cometh home he calleth together his friends and neighbors, saying unto them, 'Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost.'" Love makes Him rejoice. Love makes a reward. The Father knew the love He had to men and therefore He promised.

2. 'Tis part of His Mediatorial Glory. As King over a multitude of subjects they, in coming in and in converting to Him, glorify Him and see His Glory. Their knees bow, tongues confess and extol, hearts love. Herein consists His Kingdom of Grace. These are His people. Zion is His Kingdom. Christ doth as it were adorn Himself with believers as the high priest was adorned with the precious stones of the breastplate, whereon were written the names of the twelve tribes.

Herein:

1. What Reason we have to love the Lord Jesus Christ that He should account it His reward for His great sufferings to see us converted and saved. That He should take such delight in seeing such a sight that it should be so pleasant to Him to behold us delivered from bondage, from blindness, from condemnation, from death and from Hell, as to esteem it His reward. That He should so desire it and with such earnestness expect it, that He esteemed it as a glorious reward when the Father told Him, "If Thou shalt make Thy soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed; He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand." The thought of this made Christ very cheerful in undertaking that terrible death that He suffered.

Why should Christ so set His heart upon us? Why should He account it such a sweet reward for His suffering, to see us converted and saved, to have us coming to Him? We are poor miserable worms; how great was

His love; how wonderful His condescension to us. And what cause have we reciprocally to love Christ? To thank Him that He should so set His heart upon us and esteem and prize us and take such delight in our happiness.

2. Hence doubtless God will continue to carry on the work of conversion in the world. For this is the reward that He has promised Christ. He told Him, "If He would make His soul an offering for sin He would see His seed, He would prolong His days, and the pleasure of the Lord would prosper in His hand." God won't fail His own dear Son. He won't withhold from Him that reward which He promised Him from all eternity and which He all along depended upon and which encouraged Him to undertake such hard work. Christ has well earned the reward He has suffered extremely. God will surely do as He said; He shall see His seed. The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in His hand. He hath built His Church upon this rock and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

He seeing that Christ so delights in seeing sinners coming out of darkness. He shall see it as long as the world stands. Multitudes shall be converted and saved. The devil and all his instruments shall not put a stop to the progress of this Work. God will raise up instruments. God will continue to pour out His Spirit however wickedness seems to prevail. There is no denying but that God will accomplish those things which He has spoken concerning the great increase of the number of those saved in the latter days.

We may be assured that the work shall be carried on, for God has committed this affair into Christ's own hand. John 17:2, "Given him power over all flesh that He should give eternal life to as many as God gave Him." Christ seeing the matter is left with Him will carry on this work that He so delights in and which is His own promised reward.

3. Hence those sinners that are seeking conversion should look to Christ for help. He is doubtless willing to help them in such an affair for converting men is a work that Christ greatly delights in. 'Tis His reward for His sufferings therefore He won't be backward. That is very great encouragement for poor Christ-less sinners to cry to Christ that He would enable them to come to Him.

4. Hence there can be no danger but that Christ will be ready to receive all that are willing to come to Him. Their coming won't be unwelcome; He'll be willing to save them. This is what He expected with pleasure. Before the world was He undertook those sorrows for the sake of these joys.

5. What Reason there is that all that are Christ's disciples should seek the conversion of sinners. Neighbors, children, ministers of their people. We should consider that herein we are honored in being made the instruments of Christ receiving His reward for His sufferings, how we should strive.

6. How we should rejoice when sinners are converted. Christians are members of Christ. When the Head rejoices they should all rejoice. His reward we should esteem our reward; there should be the same Spirit in the members as in the Head. When we hear therefore such names of any or have full evidence of a saving change it should rejoice our hearts for Christ herein has His reward for His sufferings.