

*The important concerns of Ministers, and the  
People of their charge, at the day  
of Judgment*

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Illustrated in a

## SERMON

delivered at Rutland,

ORANGE SOCIETY

August 22d, 1797, at the interment of the

*Rev. Abraham Carpenter*

THEIR WORTHY PASTOR

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1 Thessalonians II.19

*For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? are not even ye in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ at his Coming?*

The second coming of Christ is the source of peculiar joy and consolation to the people of God: it is a day in which their hopes and expectations will be fully answered. Tribulation attends the good men while in this life; the scenes of divine providence are mysterious, and many things unaccountable and insignificant without a day of judgment; they will then be explained and adjusted to the joy and admiration of all who love Christ appearing. Many of the events that take place in this life, stand in a solemn relation to the Judgment Day, unknown more so than the gospel ministry; hence it is that the attention of the true servants of Christ is so much taken up with a future state. St. Paul being detained from the church of Thessalonica, since this epistle as a token of his love and respect to them; in which he anticipates that blessed, when he should meet them at the bar of Christ, which would afford such joy and satisfaction asked you more than compensate for all their sorrow, more especially for his being prevented a personal interview with those to whom he wrote.

*For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? are not even ye in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ at his Coming?*

We have two very important ideas suggested in the words. One is, that ministers and their people must meet each other at the day of judgment.—The second is, that although ministers are often separated from their hearers in this life, Get the people of God among whom a pious creature finishes his work, will be a cause or crown of peculiar joy and satisfaction at the second coming of Christ.

With respect to the first point we may observe, to give us a striking contrast between this in the coming world, we are in the present state subject to many vicissitudes.

What changes are taking place in the empires, states, societies, and families? In nothing is this more observable been in matters relating to ministers and the people of their charge. A persecuting spirit, that prevailed in the apostolic age, was often the mean of parting friends, and especially of driving preachers from their churches: the same causes had influence in every age at the church; but if religious societies are so happy is to escape such a calamity, yet it pleases the great head of the church in his sovereign wisdom, to separate ministers and their people by death; this gets feeling to a pious preacher, And in some degree has influence and every sermon he delivers. That all mankind will be collected before the bar of Christ, to see the great and intricate affairs of the universe adjusted, is a plane dictate I've reason and scripture; but that many we'll meet there as having mutual concerns with each other as evident.

—More especially, ministers and the people one committed to their charge, doubtless will appear in some sense as distinct societies, as having particular and personal matters to attend to. —This supposes that they will have a knowledge of each other: for without this the purposes of their meeting in such a manner could not be answered. How far this will extend, or by what means it will be conveyed, is too curious to inquire.

It seems, unless we are able by some means to distinguish those from others with whom we have been intimate in this life, the designs of the future judgment once some measure be frustrated. The great end of that day is to illustrate divine truth, or make that appear conspicuous to creative intelligence; to affect this, god will make use of mankind is instruments; this is the method he takes in this life, and doubtless it will be most eligible in the world come. For our acquaintance to be summoned as witnesses for or against us at this court, we'll perhaps be the best means to administer conviction. In this way the great God can speak in language easy for finite creatures to understand.

One design of the world, being divided into distinct societies and communities, without was to prepare matters for the day of judgment. The relation between ministers and people is such as renders them capable of saying much about each other; in this way the justice and mercy of God will be illustrated, divine proceedings vindicated and every mouth stopped. It is our conduct in this life that will direct divine proceeding towards us at the final judgment; that the equity of God's administrations may appear, 'tis the salvation in damnation of many souls will be through the instrumentality of faithful and unfaithful watchmen: this is an idea contained in the charge God gave to Ezekiel, 32d chapter. It will be necessary that

the motives by which ministers have been influenced in their work, be brought out to view: for without sincerity of heart they can never execute their office with any degree of truth faithfulness, and are a high affront to God, and a vile imposition on the people.

At the day of judgment the doctrines with which a minister has entertained<sup>1</sup> his hearers must be examined. However, doctrinal preaching must be discarded by many in such words as metaphysical, abstruse, and etc., are often made use of to obstruct free and candid inquiry. Yeah it is evident that one great end of the gospel ministry is to disseminate right sentiments; hence it is that Paul's so often exhorts Timothy to take heed of his doctrine. Sound doctrine, as well as could practice, is necessary to constitute the Christian character. *Whoever transgresseth and abideth not in doctrine of Christ hath not God*, 2 John 9.

A careful inquiry will be made whether an empty parade of learning, elegancy of style, etc., have been the main things with which I people have been entertained; tending only to gratify vain curiosity, and to fix the attention of the hearers on the speaker. This made the St. Paul condemn such a mode of preaching, and determined not to know anything say Jesus Christ and him crucified. 1 Cor. 2:2.

Whether vague equivocal expressions have been used to convey, or whether to obscure the truths of the gospel; by which anything, and almost everything maybe understood. This is causing the trumpet to give an uncertain sound; and has no tendency to impress or give feeling to the mind, as is the case with the words of the wise, being as goads and nails, Ecclesiastes 12:11.

Whether to please man has had greater influence on our composing and delivering our sermons or the glory of God and the good of souls. People will be examined at the bar of Christ, whether they have not dealt plainly with —

[Whether they had] been told their characters and danger—that they are wholly opposed to God, destitute of everything that is holy, or morally good—

That they are by nature under the curse of God's law, exposed every moment endless well —that they are hopeless and helpless in themselves—

The necessity of the renewing influence of the Spirit—

The nature of their impudency, that it consists of an evil heart;

That they are therefore altogether inexcusable, and are criminal in proportion to the degree of their inability—

Nothing short of repentance toward God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ is the immediate duty of all that hear the gospel.

Ministers and their people must meet before the judgment seat of Christ to give an account whether the true character of God has in any good measure been investigated—

As a sin hating in sin and sin revenging God —

As one who in his sovereign wisdom and goodness has elected some to everlasting life, and others for the display of his power injustice to internal death—

That he governs all things by a fixed on alterable plan.

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<sup>1</sup> Here the word “entertained” means presented to; it has none of the modern connotations of being “entertaining” like a singer or performer. “To entertain” would mean how one would take care of a guest in one’s house.

That of him, and to him, and through are all things.

Without this, the character of God is kept out of sight, people left in the dark, and I'm not able to determine whether they love or hate the true God.

It must be known whether people have had the character and work of the Redeemer set before them —

The design of his sufferings;  
the efficacy of his blood,  
and the necessity of our union to him.

The manner in which divine truth has been delivered, will be a matter of serious examination at that day; whether with that earnestness and fervor becoming the vast importance celebrity of gospel truth, tending to effect the mind.

The deportment, or examples of ministers among their people will be closely attended to: their private visits, exhortations and reproof, holy desires and wrestlings for the souls of their hearers, we'll not escape notice; the improvement that people have made of such advantages will be brought into public view.

How often people attended on the ministration of the word, and the manner how, will be matters of serious concern at the Judgment Day. Those excuses that men make for neglecting public worship, will be weighed in at just scale.

Whether people have so far contributed to the temporal support of their ministers as to enable them to devote themselves to the service of Christ: or by to great neglect, have not obstructed the gospel, robbed God, wounded their own souls.

It will be useful that the time of the minister's continuance among the people be known, as it will serve to set the character of the gospel despisers in a true point of light. That ministers and the people of their charge will meet each other at the bar of Christ as suggested in my text and other parts of the sacred writings.—It has already been observed, that in this way truth will appear a conspicuous, and the conduct of God believe vindicated, and the designs of the Judgment Day in the best manner answered.

It may be further observed, the two matters relating to the gospel ministry are of such magnitude it appears important that it will be attended to; they concern a Judgment Day an eternal state. On ministers and people meet in the house of God it is an acknowledgment that they believe in the future state of retribution, And as a sort appeals to the day of judgment. The influence of a faithful or unfaithful minister is such as to the fact unborn ages; April commonly determine the sentiments and characters of their successors; and in this way they maybe doing good or evil after they are dead and even to the second coming of Christ.

That God's hatred towards false teachers and against those who choose them, together with their criminality may appear, it will be necessary that these matters I laid open at the tribunal of Christ—. As a proof of the matter under consideration I may only add: that there always has been an important controversy and a greater or lesser degree between ministers and part of their people; it is so with faithful preachers and some of their hearers; wicked man oppose the doctrines they preach, and will not be convinced. Unfaithful preachers, they have advocates and opposers; the dispute involved the character of Christ, it cannot be settled in this world: how necessary that ministers and their people meet at the great day to have the matter decided, the doctrines of Christ vindicated, and the characters of ministers or people exonerated.

II.

Another important idea contained in the text is, that the church, or people of God, among whom a faithful minister finishes his work, will be a cause our crown of peculiar joy or rejoicing at the coming of Christ. It will be a matter of great satisfaction to sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and other saints of that day, but the scriptures represent that godly ministers what arrive peculiar joy from the pious parts of their congregations. Daniel 12:3; 2 Corinthians 1:14; Philippians 2:16. Reflecting on past providences will be a source of great joy at the day of judgment and as many things have taken place between the minister and his people in which they are more particularly conversant and interested, when they come to be explained, it will afford special joy and admiration, as they have been companions and tribulation, send now it is likely they will be in a more peculiar sense hope enjoy, and help each other in magnifying the Lord for special favors, and displays of divine power and grace on their behalf.

For those of or whom the Holy Ghost has made them overseers in particular: how God will give their hearers weapon converted through their instrumentality as a kind of reward and fruit of their travel or labor. When it appears that God has made use of the true ministers of Christ the conversion of some of the sauce wants committed to their charge it will excite wonder, joy, and humility in the minds of pious teachers, that God should deign to honor them as instruments of such glorious work, by which they will be led to adore sovereign grace and condescending love.

It is often through the painful labors of Christ's servants that souls are brought home to God, doubtless he would approve of such virtues by conveying signal honors I'm such you have turned many to righteousness, who will shine as stars forever and ever.

Pious people will give such account of their faithful teachers as will meet with approbation of God, which will be expected by that heavenly plaudit, "Well done good and faithful servant!"

Their mutual accounts will be given up with joy, and not with grief, Hebrews 13:17. The hopes and expectations of such ministries are great, As the apostle suggest in the text— For what is our hope, or Joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye? He speaks of it as the earnest hope and expectation of all Christ's ministers, by calling it *our* hope. They reflect with pleasure on the approaching happy moment, when it comes it will greatly gratis five their holy desires.

That it will be possible to hold equal communion with all the saints, especially at one time in the invisible world, perhaps is not admissible. It appears that the wicked, weapon associates and sin here, we'll be companions of torments hereafter. Luke 16:28.

They are to be gathered like the standing corn, and to be bound in bundles to burn. It is more than possible that the righteous who have live together in this life will have a more intimate access to each other in the world come.

It will be useful for them to meet in some sense as distinct societies, perhaps it will subserve the interest of the universe that they in a degree continue so. It is the character of the true Church of Christ that they treat his ministers with respect in this life, accounting them as the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. 1 Corinthians 4:1. They help them in their work. 2 Corinthians 1:11. God will in the great day reward people for such kindness; is hereby they express their love to Christ. Matthew 25:40. This will gratify the benevolent feelings of Christ servant; at the same time fill them with holy admiration, and deep humility, that what has been done to such poor sinful creatures should be taken notice of.

Ministers and the people of their charge will assist each other, and be united in bringing a verdict against the wicked and impenitent, among whom they live while on earth. The saints are to judge the world. 1 Corinthians 6:2. one way by which they will do this, without wispy to declare before angels and men what they know about them, or their conduct in this life. And attachment to divine justice will make this delightful work. Ministers must declare what and how they have preached to them, and the bad improvement they have made of the gospel, so far as it has come under their observations; how they have despised and mock the messengers of the Lord, contemned his word and ordinances. Pious hearers and witness to the same things,

and in this way the mutual testimony of godly ministers and people will be strengthened and supported, and divine proceedings against in penitent sinners vindicated that's the church will be a crown of joy to her faithful ministers.

## IMPROVEMENT

1. We may infer from the subject, that the gospel ministry is of God, and that we are to seek its welfare, and use suitable exertion support support.

The scripture and reason dictate that it is of so much importance, especially as it relates to a Judgment Day, we may conclude that God would not do without it, and we may see divine wisdom and goodness in the institution. Nothing more conducive of divine glory, and salutary to men, the preaching of the gospel.— Without these glad tidings proclaimed, the Incarnation of Christ is vain.

Nothing but opposition to God, and disregard to his glory, will make them indifferent to the preaching of the gospel. Rejection of Christ and his ministers, have commonly vice and open profanity, for their inseparable companions. The opposition that the impenitent part of mankind have made to the servants of Christ has doubt listen some measure had its rise from a consciousness that they must meet them at the bar of Christ to their disadvantage.

We may conclude that since the gospel ministry is so very useful, that will be continued to the end of the world.

2. When a faithful minister is taken away it ought seriously to be regarded. But few ways perhaps that God shows greater displeasure against people than in calling his ambassadors home. By this he threatens to put an end to his treaty of peace and become irreconcilable. It may sometimes be the case that God has no more chosen or elect ones among them. When Paul and Barnabas were preaching at Antioch, as many as were ordained to eternal life believed — then they departed. Acts 13. All the encouragement for a minister to preach among a people, so far as salvation of souls ought to be a motive, is the doctrine of election. After the death of a faithful minister, there is less of a people.

We may further observe when it is considered that we are to meet them no more in the house of God, to hear them declare unto us the words of reconciliation; but our next interview will be at the tribunal of Christ, to hear them testify, for or against us, how affecting the consideration! It is more solemn to die then if we had never been favored with the gospel ministry. People, whether they here or forebear, shown no too their joy or sorrow that there has been a profit among them. Ezekiel 2:5.

3. This subject affords a direction how minister should preach and how are people ought to hear, that is, with death and judgment in view. It is this that makes preaching and hearing a serious matter, and renders the house of God so very solemn. We must soon meet before the bar of Christ, I'm perhaps before the next Sabbath, to have our sermons and our hearing examined by him who is infinite and knowledge and in present and every congregation. Did we always consider these things, it would tend to abolish that coldness, drowsiness and indifference that too often attend the ministers of the gospel, and that formal spirit which is too apparent among hearers. *How dreadful is this place!* is a reflection suitable on all occasions, and more especially when we meet for public devotion.

4. The surviving widow when children will for a moment suffer a word of exhortation. Are you not in some sense his hope and joy? The Attended to smooth the rugged Road true death that he should meet you before the bar of Christ, And that you should be a crown of rejoicing in that day? If ministers and people are to meet each other before the tribunal of Christ, as having special business together, then we may conclude that this will be the case with particular families, such as husbands and wives, parents and children; you can say much about each other up on that occasion, having for so long the time composed one family on earth.

You who are this day call to mourn, must give an account how you have improved his public and especially this providence [that is, his death]. The present occasion, however Saalam, what appear more so at the great day. Consider that although he is gone to return Nellemore, get God the source of consolation ever lives—his promises are always new to the widow and the fatherless. God's people always die in the best time, manner in place. Love only to take up the body and bury it, set your house is in order, and follow him. Manifest your love to the deceased by preparing to meet him, and make his heart glad in the day of the Lord Jesus. Contemplate the rectitude of divine government and a future world and be still.

Let children remember that you have a pious faithful parent taken away is an unspeakable loss. Your father has done much for your bodies, but we trust more for your souls; never, never forget his prayers and admonitions. Can you, dare you meet him at the bar of Christ in impenitence? This be the case, instead of those endearing and parental caresses that you have received from him in this life, he will join with the judge of all in saying, *Depart!* He has done for you and condemn you. Let your mother experience that tender regard and kind assistance during her short continuance with you as becomes dutiful obedient children. Make her heart clad by a holy life, and let your father lives daily before her eyes in your pious examples.

5. Let me say one word to the church and the congregation in this place: dear friends, I am not a stranger to those mournful sensations at the present melancholy Providence tends to inspire. I trust I am a hearty mourner with you and am a sharer in your loss.

By the foregoing observations you have reason to conclude that you have lost a faithful minister.

You can't forget those solemn and affectionate warnings that he has given you from the desk: never those pious examples he has set before you. He has preached his last sermon. Your next meeting must be before the tribunal of Christ, Where are those sermons you have heard him deliver in this life Will come to view any improvement you have made of them.

Will you, my brethren, be his crown of rejoicing in that day? If you were his hope and joy in this life, you doubtless are still. It is with satisfaction we trust that he this moment looks forward to this day, when he expects to see this dear people want so committed to his charge; and doubtless he hopes to meet some of you as crowns of rejoicing. Oh, do not disappoint the hope and expectation of your Rev. Pastor. Manifest your love to him by imitating his holy examples and by having those heavenly instructions pretty so often inculcated always in your remembrance; and by preparing to give him joy in the day of the Lord Jesus.

Examine what improvements you have made of the gospel ministry while you had: and whether to great inattention has not had influence and it's being removed. Have you ever experienced the power and efficacy of the gospel ministry upon your own souls? Have you by the Holy Spirit been formed into the moral likeness of the blessed God, and into the image of his Son Jesus? Or have you been contented with the mere form of godliness? Have you not true sloth and unbelief, neglected attending on the preaching of the gospel, during the residents of your pastor among you? Oh! what account will such gospel despiser will have to give another day. Consider, I am treat you, how dreadful it will be to have these things brought interview, when you come to meet your minister, who was once, & perhaps is now, an eye-witness of your conduct and will testify against you to your everlasting condemnation!

Your minister, though dead, now speaks. He preaches the most solemn lecture to us all this day on mortality.

You will, as it were, hear his voice when you look on the place of public worship, where he an you so often attended. When you look on his grave, which is here among you. And when you look to the second coming of Christ. Think often of that day. Let the Sabbath and the worship of God be still dear onto you; and remember him who has spoken onto you the word of God: who says follow.

**MEMOIRS OF THE LIFE OF THE  
REV. ABRAHAM CARPENTER**

He was born on 23 September 1739 at Rehoboth, Massachusetts: was son of Mr. Abiel Carpenter of that place; who was a man of piety and industry; by which means his family received to religious education, the fruit of which was conspicuous in his children, especially his son, the subject of these memoirs, who dates 's conversion in the 23rd year of his age, when he became a member of the church under the pastoral care of Rev. Mr. Rogerson. He was married to Miss Elizabeth Bliss, daughter of Mr. John Bliss of Rehoboth, in his 21st year. They had 10 children, four sons and six daughters; their mother and six children only survive.

It is 24th fourth year he moved to Killingsly, in Connecticut, where he recited for eight years, and commenced a preacher of the gospel. Soon after he removed to Plainfield, New Hampshire, where you had a call to settle and the work of gospel ministry, which he accepted; any continued pastor of a church there for 15 years, and was much esteemed by his people and acquaintances.

Some divisions are rising in the town respecting a place to build the meeting house, together with the great depreciation of numbers in the church, an ecclesiastical council was called, and for the reasons set forth above, thought it expedient to dismiss him from his pastoral relation to that people.

The church at the same time cordially united in, "Recommending him as on who had approved himself able and faithful in his work, during the time of his having exercised the pastoral care of the church among them." The counsel at the same time concurred with the church and recommending their pastor, so far as their acquaintance what admit. This appears from a result Council left among Mr. Carpenter's papers. He removed to Rutland, State of Vermont, March 13, 1789, and was again settled in the work of ministry, and discharge the duties to which he was called, to the great satisfaction of his people, and gain the love and esteem of all new him.

But few give greater evidence of this left to Christ in the souls of men than Mr. Carpenter, both in his public ministry and private department. He always discovered that simplicity ensure fullness, mixed with Christian sobriety, as endeared him to all his acquaintance, to those especially with whom he conversed, we may say without flattery, that he was a rare example of piety. His health evidently began to decline several months before his death, which at times impeded his public ministry. Love to his divine master and to the souls of men often urged him on beyond his strength. For some weeks before his death he was much troubled with a bilious disorder, to which yet been much subjective, which greatly debilitated his constitution, but had in some Measure recovered; when he was seized with a violent diarrhea, which carried him off on the evening of 2 August, 1797, and is 58th year.

He was speechless for sometime previous to this accident; But while able to speak, manifested the most placid resignation to the will of God; earnestly exhorted others to prepare for death. He said,

*He had no will as to living or dying, but chose to submit the matters to that God, to whom belong the issues I've life and death, but the great truths That he had preached to others, where those in which he could now venture his soul for eternity; that he had no desire to outlive his usefulness.*

We trust he has fallen asleep in Jesus.