

## CHARITY AND ITS FRUITS

Jonathan Edwards

### Lecture XI – All True Grace in the Heart Tends to Holy Practice in the Life

“Love . . . does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth.” 1 Cor 13:6

“Charity . . . rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth.”

“As if he (i.e. Paul in writing 1 Corinthians 13) had said, “I have mentioned many excellent things that charity has a tendency to, and shewn how it is contrary to many evil things. But I need not go on to multiply particulars, for, in a word, charity is contrary to everything in the life and practice that is evil, and tends to everything in the life and practice that is good—it rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth.”

**Truth** - Virtue and holiness (including both the knowledge and reception of all the great truths of the Scriptures and conformity to these in the life and conduct)

3 John 2-4: “<sup>2</sup>Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, as it goes well with your soul. <sup>3</sup>For I rejoiced greatly when the brothers came and testified to your truth, as indeed you are walking in the truth. <sup>4</sup>I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth.”

**Doctrine: That all true Christian grace in the heart tends to holy practice in the life.**

Titus 3:3-9 – “<sup>3</sup>For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another. <sup>4</sup>But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, <sup>5</sup>he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit, <sup>6</sup>whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, <sup>7</sup>so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. <sup>8</sup>The saying is trustworthy, and I want you to insist on these things, so that those who have believed in God may be careful to devote themselves to good works. <sup>9</sup>These things are good and profitable for people.”

#### I. Arguments in support of this doctrine.

1. Holy practice is the aim of that eternal election which is the first ground of the bestowment of all true grace.
2. Redemption, by which is the first ground of the bestowment of all true grace.
3. Effectual calling, or that saving conversion in which grace is commenced in the soul, is to the same end.
4. Spiritual knowledge and understanding, which are the inward attendants of all true grace in the heart, tend to holy practice.
5. From the immediate consideration of the principle of grace itself, from which it will be seen the tendency of all Christian grace is to practice.
  - a. Because the faculty which is the immediate seat of it is the faculty of the will, which is the faculty that commands all a man’s actions and practice.
  - b. It is the definition of grace, that it is a principle of holy action.
  - c. One more thing, by which that which is real and substantial is distinguished from that which is only a shadow or appearance, is, *that it is effectual*.
  - d. The nature of the principle of grace is to be a principle of life, or vital principal.
  - e. True Christian grace is not only a principle of life, but an exceedingly powerful principle.

## **II. Showing its truth with respect to particular graces.**

1. With respect to a true and saving faith in the LORD Jesus Christ.
  - a. The conviction of the understanding and judgment, which is implied in saving faith, tends to holy practice.
  - b. Act of the will, which there is in saving faith, tends to holy practice.
  - c. All the true trust in God, that is implied in saving faith, tends to holy practice.
2. With respect to all true love to God.
3. All true and saving repentance tends to holy practice.
4. All true humility tends to holy practice.
5. All true fear of God tends to holy practice.
6. The spirit of thankfulness and praise tends to holy practice.
7. Of a Christian weanedness from the world, and of heavenly mindedness, that they tend to holy practice.
8. Of the spirit of Christian love to men, that this also tends to holy practice.
9. To a true and gracious hope, that this also tends to holy practice.

## **III. Application.**

1. We may see one main reason why Christian practice and good works are so abundantly insisted on in the Scriptures as an evidence of sincerity in grace.
2. In view of this subject, let all examine themselves, whether their grace is real and sincere.
  - a. Has your supposed grace such influence as to render those things in which you have failed of holy practice, loathsome, grievous, and humbling to you?
  - b. Do you carry about with you, habitually, a dread of sin?
  - c. Are you sensible of the beauty and pleasantness of the ways of holy practice?
  - d. Do you find that you do particularly esteem and delight in those practices, in distinction from mere worldly morality?
  - e. Do you make a business of endeavoring to live holily, and as God would have you, in all respects?
  - f. Do you greatly desire that you may know all that is your duty?

## Lecture XII – Charity, or a Christian Spirit, Willing to Undergo All Sufferings in the Way of Duty

**Doctrine: That charity, or a truly Christian spirit, will make us willing, for Christ's sake, to undergo all sufferings to which we may be exposed in the way of duty.**

### I. Explanation of the doctrine.

1. That it implies that those that have the true spirit of charity, or Christian love, are willing not only to do, but also to suffer for Christ.
2. It is also implied in our doctrine, that they have the spirit to undergo all the sufferings to which their duty to Christ may expose them.
  - a. They are willing to undergo all sufferings, of all kinds, that are in the way of duty.
  - b. They are willing to undergo all sufferings, of all degrees, that are in the way of duty.

### II. Reason of proof of the doctrine.

1. If we have not such a spirit, it is evidence that we have never given ourselves unreservedly to Christ.
2. They that are truly Christians, so fear God, that his displeasure is far more terrible than all earthly afflictions and sufferings.
3. They that are truly Christians, have that faith whereby they see that which is more than sufficient to make up for the greatest sufferings they can endure in the cause of Christ.
4. If we are not willing to close with religion, notwithstanding all the difficulties attending it, we shall be overwhelmed with shame at last.
5. Without this spirit which the text implies, we cannot be said to forsake all for Christ.
6. Without this spirit, we cannot be said to deny ourselves in the sense in which the Scriptures require us to do it.
7. It is the character of all the true followers of Christ, that they follow him in all things.
8. It is the character of true Christians, that they overcome the world.
9. The sufferings in the way of duty are often, in the Bible, called temptations or trials, because by them God tries the sincerity of our character as Christians.

### III. Application.

1. Lead those who think themselves Christians to examine themselves, whether or not they have the spirit to undergo all sufferings for Christ.
2. Exhorts all professors of religion to cherish a ready spirit, for Christ's sake, to undergo all sufferings that may be in the way of duty.
  - a. How happy those persons are represented in the Scriptures to be, who have a spirit to suffer, and do actually suffer, for Christ.
  - b. What glorious rewards God has promised hereafter to bestow on those that do willingly suffer for Christ.
  - c. How the Scriptures abound with blessed examples of those that have suffered for Christ's sake.

## DISCUSSION:

### 1) The fear of God:

"The principal thing meant in the Scriptures by the fear of God, is a holy solicitude or dread lest we should offend God by sinning against him. Now, if a man do truly fear to offend God, and if he habitually dreads the thought of sinning against him, this will surely tend to his avoiding sin against him. That which men are afraid of they will shun." Jonathan Edwards

"FIRST. Then by this word *fear* we are to understand even God himself, who is the object of our fear. SECOND. By this word *fear* we are to understand the word of God, the rule and director of our fear." John Bunyan – *The Fear of God*

Discuss what the "fear of God" means and doesn't mean to the Christian. Why does Bunyan include the Bible when he defines fear?

Use the following verses for your discussion.

Ecclesiastes 12:13,14 <sup>13</sup>"The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. <sup>14</sup>For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil."

Psalms 130:3, 4 <sup>3</sup>"If you, O LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? <sup>4</sup>But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared."

Psalms 31:19 <sup>19</sup>"Oh how abundant is our goodness, which you have stored up for those who fear you."

Psalms 103:11, 13-14, 17-18 <sup>11</sup>"For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him. . . <sup>13</sup>As a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear him. <sup>14</sup>For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust. . . <sup>17</sup>But the steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him, and his righteousness to his children's children, <sup>18</sup>to those who keep his covenant and remember to do his commandments."

Isaiah 8:11-13 <sup>11</sup>"For the LORD spoke thus to me with his strong hand upon me, and warned me not to walk in the way of this people, saying <sup>12</sup>'Do not call conspiracy all that this people calls conspiracy, and do not fear what they fear, or be in dread. <sup>13</sup>But the LORD of hosts, him, you shall honor as holy. Let him be our fear, and let him be your dread.'"

## 2) Psalm 101:

<sup>1</sup>I will sing of steadfast love and justice; to you, O LORD, I will make music.

<sup>2</sup>I will ponder the way that is blameless. Oh when will you come to me?

I will walk with integrity of heart within my house;

<sup>3</sup>I will not set before my eyes anything that is worthless.

I hate the work of those who fall away; it shall not cling to me.

<sup>4</sup>A perverse heart shall be far from me;

I will know nothing of evil.

<sup>5</sup>Whoever slanders his neighbor secretly I will destroy.

Whoever has a haughty look and an arrogant heart I will not endure.

<sup>6</sup>I will look with favor on the faithful in the land,

That they may dwell with me;

He who walks in the way that is blameless shall minister to me.

<sup>7</sup>No one who practices deceit shall dwell in my house;

no one who utters lies shall continue before my eyes.

<sup>8</sup>Morning by morning I will destroy all the wicked in the land,

cutting off all the evildoers from the city of the LORD.

Regarding the verse in Lecture XI, "Love . . . does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth." 1 Cor 13:6  
Edwards says: "Negatively, the apostle declares that charity is opposed to all wickedness, or evil practice; and, positively, that it tends to all righteousness, or holy practice. And as the principle may be generalized, and also as charity has been shewn to be the sum of all true and saving grace."

Discuss the "I wills" and "I will nots" in Psalm 101. Is this a Biblical pattern for us to not rejoice in wrongdoing but rejoicing with the truth?