

Quotes on Love of/to God

by

Jonathan Edwards

You never have exercised the least degree of love to God; and therefore it would be agreeable to your treatment of him, if he should never express any love to you. When God converts and saves a sinner, it is a wonderful and unspeakable manifestation of divine love. When a poor lost soul is brought home to Christ, and has all his sins forgiven him, and is made a child of God, it will take up a whole eternity to express and declare the greatness of that love. And why should God be obliged to express such wonderful love to you, who never exercised the least degree of love to him in all your life? You never have loved God, who is infinitely glorious and lovely; and why then is God under obligation to love you, who are all over deformed and loathsome as a filthy worm, or rather a hateful viper? You have no benevolence in your heart towards God; you never rejoiced in God's happiness; if he had been miserable, and that had been possible, you would have liked it as well as if he were happy; you would not have cared how miserable he was, nor mourned for it, any more than you now do for the devil's being miserable. And why then should God be looked upon as obliged to take so much care for your happiness, as to do such great things for it, as he doth or those that are saved?

Consider how much God hath done for us, how greatly he hath loved us, what he hath given us, when we were so unworthy, and when he could have no addition to his happiness by us. Consider that silver, and gold, and earthly crowns, were in his esteem but mean things to give us, and he hath therefore given us his own Son. Christ loved and pitied us, when we were poor, and he laid out himself to help, and even did shed his own blood for us without grudging. He did not think much to deny himself, and to be at great cost for us vile wretches, in order to make us rich, and to clothe us with kingly robes, when we were naked; to feast us at his own table with dainties infinitely costly, when we were starving; to advance us from the dunghill, and set us among princes, and make us to inherit the throne of his glory, and so to give us the enjoyment of the greatest wealth and plenty to all eternity...Considering all these things, what a poor business will it be, that those who hope

to share these benefits, yet cannot give something for the relief of a poor neighbour without grudging.

God's grace and love towards sinners is in itself very wonderful, as it redeems from dreadful wrath. But men cannot be sensible of this until they perceive in some adequate degree how dreadful the wrath of God is. God's redeeming grace and love in Christ is free and sovereign, as it is altogether without any worthiness in those who are the objects of it. But men cannot be sensible of this, until they are sensible of their own unworthiness. The grace of God in Christ is glorious and wonderful, as it is not only as the objects of it are without worthiness, but as they deserve the everlasting wrath and displeasure of God. But they cannot be sensible of this until they are made sensible that they deserve God's eternal wrath.

God's excellence is the supreme excellence. When the understanding of the reasonable creature dwells here, it dwells at the fountain, and swims in a boundless, bottomless ocean. The love of God is also the most suitable entertainment of the soul of man, which naturally desires the happiness of society, or of union with some other being. The love of so glorious a being is infinitely valuable, and the discoveries of it are capable of ravishing the soul above all other love. It is suitable to the nature of an intelligent being also, as it is that kind of delight that reason approves of.

It is not to bring forth fruit to God, for men to pray, and read, and hear, and to be strict and diligent in religious and moral duties, merely from the fear of hell. What thanks are due to you for not loving your own misery, and for being willing to take some pains to escape burning in hell to all eternity? There is ne'er a devil in hell but would gladly do the same....There is no fruit brought forth to God, where there is nothing done in any wise from love to God, or from any true respect to him. God looketh at the heart. He doth not stand in need of our services, neither is he benefited by anything that we can do. He doth not receive any thing of us, because it benefits him, but only as a suitable testimony of our love and respect to him. This is the fruit that he seeks. Men themselves will not accept of those shows of friendship, which they think are hypocritical, and come not from the heart. How much less should God, who searcheth the hearts and trieth the reins of the children of men!

Hence we may learn how dreadful Christ's last sufferings were. We learn it from the dreadful effect which the bare foresight of them had upon him in his agony. His last sufferings were so dreadful, that the view which Christ had of them before overwhelmed him and amazed him, as it is said he began to be sore amazed. The very sight of these last sufferings was so very dreadful as to sink his soul down into the dark shadow of death; yea, so dreadful was it, that in the sore conflict which his nature had with it, he was all in a sweat of blood, his body all over was covered with clotted blood, and not only his body, but the very ground under him with the blood that fell from him, which had been forced through his pores through the violence of his agony. And if only the foresight of the cup was so dreadful, how dreadful was the cup itself, how far beyond all that can be uttered or conceived!..... From what has been said, we may see the wonderful strength of the love of Christ to sinners.

How is your doing, as you do, consistent with loving God above all? If you have not spirit to love God above your dearest earthly friends, and your most pleasant earthly enjoyments; the scriptures are very plain, and full in it, that you are not true Christians. But if you had indeed such a spirit, would you thus grow weary of the practice of drawing near to him.

It is not according to the nature of the human soul, to love an object which is entirely unknown. The heart cannot be set upon an object of which there is no idea in the understanding. The reasons which induce the soul to love must first be understood, before they can have a reasonable influence on the heart... Such is the nature of man that nothing can come at the heart, but through the door of the understanding: and there can be no spiritual knowledge of that of which there is not first a rational knowledge. It is impossible that any one should see the truth or Excellency of any doctrine of the gospel, who knows not what that doctrine is... Without knowledge in divinity, none would differ from the most ignorant and barbarous heathens. The heathens remain in gross heathenish darkness, because they are not instructed, and have not obtained the knowledge of the truths of divinity. So if we live under the preaching of the gospel, this will make us to differ from them, only by conveying to us more knowledge of the things of divinity.

Think it not strange that God should deal so severely with thee or that the wrath which thou shalt suffer should be so great. For as great as it is, it is no greater than that love of God which thou hast despised. The love of God, and his grace, condescension, and pity to sinners in sending his Son into the world to die for them, is every whit as great and wonderful as this inexpressible wrath. This mercy hath been held forth to thee, and described in its wonderful greatness hundreds of times, and as often hath it been offered to thee; but thou wouldst not accept Christ; thou wouldst not have this great love of God; thou despisedst God's dying love; thou trampledst the benefits of it under foot. Now why shouldst thou not have wrath as great as that love and mercy which thou despises and rejectest? Doth it seem incredible to thee, that God should so harden his heart against a poor sinner, as so to destroy him, and to bear him down with infinite power and merciless wrath? And is this a greater thing than it is for thee to harden thy heart, as thou hast done, against infinite mercy, and against the dying love of God? The strength of Christ's love more especially appears in this, that when he had such a full view of the dreadfulness of the cup that he was to drink, that so amazed him, he would notwithstanding even then take it up, and drink it. Then seems to have been the greatest and most peculiar trial of the strength of the love of Christ, when God set down the bitter portion before him, and let him see what he had to drink, if he persisted in his love to sinners; and brought him to the mouth of the furnace that he might see its fierceness, and have a full view of it, and have time then to consider whether he would go in and suffer the flames of this furnace for such unworthy creatures, or not. This was as it were proposing it to Christ's last consideration what he would do; as much as if it had then been said to him, 'Here is the cup that you are to drink, unless you will give up your undertaking for sinners, and even leave them to perish as they deserve. Will you take this cup, and drink it for them, or not? There is the furnace into which you are to be cast, if they are to be saved; either they must perish, or you must endure this for them. There you see how terrible the heat of the furnace is; you see what pain and anguish you must endure on the morrow, unless you give up the cause of sinners. What will you do? is your love such that you will go on? Will you cast yourself into this dreadful furnace of wrath?

That it was so strong as to carry him through that agony that he was then in. The suffering that he then was actually subject to, was dreadful and amazing, as has been shown; and

how wonderful was his love that lasted and was upheld still! The love of any mere man or angel would doubtless have sunk under such a weight, and never would have endured such a conflict in such a bloody sweat as that of Jesus Christ. The anguish of Christ's soul at that time was so strong as to cause that wonderful effect on his body. But his love to his enemies, poor and unworthy as they were, was stronger still. The heart of Christ at that time was full of distress, but it was fuller of love to vile worms: his sorrows abounded, but his love did much more abound. Christ's soul was overwhelmed with a deluge of grief, but this was from a deluge of love to sinners in his heart sufficient to overflow the world, and overwhelm the highest mountains of its sins. Those great drops of blood that fell down to the ground were a manifestation of an ocean of love in Christ's heart.