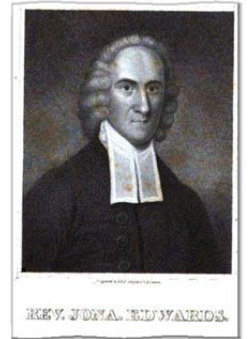


INTRODUCTORY NOTES FOR “HEAVEN IS A WORLD OF LOVE”

1. Historical background

- 1.1. Jonathan Edwards, 1703-58. He is the most important theologian and, some would add, philosopher from the American continent. His influence on American evangelicalism is great. He ministered in Northampton and Stockbridge.
- 1.2. The Great Awakening would begin around 1740 and last with vigor for a few years.
- 1.3. Edwards preached “Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God” in July 1741.
- 1.4. In 1734-6, before the Great Awakening, Edwards experienced a small “awakening” in Northampton. He wrote a letter about the events to a Boston pastor and this account was published in England in 1737 by Isaac Watts and another fellow under the title *A Faithful Narrative*. But while the account of the small revival was generating excitement overseas, Edwards was seeing worldliness return among his people. The first, smaller awakening was a memory in 1738. For example, the Northampton church had to rebuild their meeting house, and, as the seating arrangement reflected social status, there was fighting between families over where they would sit.
- 1.5. *Charity and Its Fruits* comprises fifteen sermons based on 1 Corinthians 13 and preached in 1738.
- 1.6. One scholar notes Edwards, despite his seemingly direct confrontation of the sins, had a “gentle tone.”¹
- 1.7. The loving nature of God was a cornerstone of Edwards’s theology. The very Trinity was an expression of eternal divine love, The Father and Son infinitely love each other, and the Holy Spirit is the Personified Love that binds them. The Triune God created the world itself to express the overflow of their love to their creatures.²



2. Editions

- 2.1. *Print*
 - 2.1.1. *Ethical Writings*, vol. 8 of *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, ed. Paul Ramsey (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1989).
 - 2.1.2. *Charity and Its Fruits: Christian Love as Manifested in the Heart and Life* (Carlisle, Penn.: Banner of Truth Trust, 1969).
 - 2.1.3. *Charity and Its Fruits* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Reformation Heritage, 2005).
- 2.2. *Online*
 - 2.2.1. Google Books: *Charity and Its Fruits*, ed. Tryon Edwards (New York: Robert Carter & Bros., 1852). <http://goo.gl/7RVU7>
 - 2.2.2. Monergism.com: “Jonathan Edwards on Charity” <http://goo.gl/V5xcO>
 - 2.2.3. Yale Works Online <http://goo.gl/WkduW>

3. The first three sermons lay foundational doctrines:³

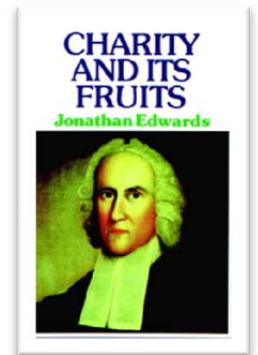
- 3.1. All that virtue which is saving, and distinguishing true Christians from others, is summed up in Christian or divine love (vv 1-3).
- 3.2. The ordinary influence of God’s Spirit, working saving grace . . . is a more excellent blessing than any of the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit (vv 1-2).
- 3.3. All which men can do, and all which they can suffer, will not make up for the want of sincerity in the heart (v 3).

4. The following six sermons address the work of divine love in loving others.

- 4.1. A Christian spirit disposes persons meekly to bear ill that is received from others, and cheerfully and freely to do good to others (v 4).
- 4.2. A truly Christian spirit is opposite to an envious spirit (v 5).
- 4.3. A Christian spirit is a humble spirit (vv 4-5).
- 4.4. A Christian spirit is opposite to a selfish spirit (v 5).
- 4.5. Charity contrary to an angry spirit (v 5).
- 4.6. That a Christian spirit is contrary to a censorious spirit; or in other words, it is contrary to a disposition uncharitably to judge others (v 5).
- 4.7. All true Christian grace tends to holy practice (v 6).

5. The next four sermons emphasize love to God.

- 5.1. They who are truly gracious have a spirit for Christ’s sake to undergo all sufferings to which they may be exposed in the way of their duty. (v 7).
- 5.2. There is a concatenation of the graces of Christianity (v 7).
- 5.3. True Christian grace is that which nothing that opposes it can overthrow (v 7).
- 5.4. That great fruit of the Spirit in which the Holy Ghost shall not only for a season but everlastingly be communicated to the church of Christ is divine love (v 8).



6. The final sermon, based on 1 Cor 13:8-10, revels in the glory of divine love in heaven: “Heaven is a world of love.”

- 6.1. The sermon has a great rhetorical power. Notice the word imagery.
- 6.2. Edwards believed that proportion was an essential quality of beauty.

¹ George Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards: A Life* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2003), 191.

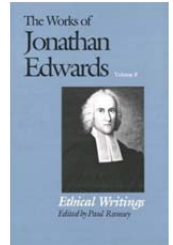
² *Ibid.*

³ The following scheme follows Paul Ramsey, “Editor’s Introduction,” in *Ethical Writings*, vol. 8 of *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1989), 59-61.

- 6.3. All graces—humility, justice, and truth—are perfected in heaven. Some virtues related exclusively to this life, like long-suffering, do not appear in heaven. The only “gift of the Spirit” that remains in heaven is love.
- 6.4. Edwards believed that glorified saints would enjoy different degrees of glory, yet no sin or envy is evoked between saints. He even believes that God loves some saints more than others, based on Dan 9:23 and John 19:26, but, again, this is no cause for sin, strife, or envy.
- 6.5. Of course, all blemishes are free from heaven.

7. Outline

- 7.1. **Introduction:** Explanation of 1 Cor 13:8-10
- 7.2. **Doctrine:** *Heaven is a world of love.* To better see this, I consider:
 - 7.2.1. . . . the great cause and fountain of love which is there.
 - 7.2.2. . . . heaven with regard to the objects of love which it contains.
 - 7.2.2.1. There are none but lovely objects in heaven.
 - 7.2.2.2. Not only shall all be lovely, but each shall be perfectly lovely.
 - 7.2.2.3. There are those objects upon which the saints have sets their hearts and loved above all others while in this world.
 - 7.2.3. . . . the love which is there with regard to the subject.
 - 7.2.4. . . . the principle, or the love itself, which is there in heaven.
 - 7.2.4.1. As to its nature, it is altogether holy and divine.
 - 7.2.4.2. With respect to the degree of their love, it is perfect.
 - 7.2.5. . . . the excellent circumstances in which love is there enjoyed and expressed.
 - 7.2.5.1. Love there always meets with answerable returns of love.
 - 7.2.5.2. The joy of heavenly love shall never be damped or interrupted.
 - 7.2.5.3. They shall have nothing within themselves to clog them in the exercises and expressions of love.
 - 7.2.5.4. In heaven love will be expressed with perfect decency and wisdom.
 - 7.2.5.5. There shall be nothing external to keep them at a distance or hinder the most perfect enjoyment of each other’s love.
 - 7.2.5.6. They shall all be united together in a very near relation.
 - 7.2.5.7. All shall have propriety one in another.
 - 7.2.5.8. They shall enjoy each other’s love in perfect and undisturbed prosperity.
 - 7.2.5.9. All things in that world shall conspire to promote their love . . .
 - 7.2.5.10. They shall know that they shall forever be continued in the perfect enjoyment of each other’s love.
 - 7.2.6. . . . the happy effect and fruits of all this.
 - 7.2.6.1. The most excellent and perfect behavior of the inhabitants of heaven toward God and one another.
 - 7.2.6.2. The other fruit of this love in heaven exercised in such circumstances is perfect tranquility and joy.



7.3. Application

- 7.3.1. Use may be of *instruction*.
 - 7.3.1.1. To see a reason why contention has such an influence as it has to darken persons’ evidences for heaven.
 - 7.3.1.2. To learn how happy those persons are who are entitled to heaven.
 - 7.3.1.2.1. They are those who have had a principle or seed of the very same love implanted in their hearts in a work of regeneration.
 - 7.3.1.2.2. They are those who have freely chosen that happiness which is to be had in the exercise and enjoyment of such love as is in heaven above all other conceivable happiness.
 - 7.3.1.2.3. They are those who from that love which is in them are in heart and practice struggling after holiness.
- 7.3.2. Use may be of *awakening to sinners*.
 - 7.3.2.1. What has been said on this subject may put Christless persons in mind of their misery, in that they have no portion or right in this world of love.
 - 7.3.2.2. You are in danger. Hell is a world of hatred.
- 7.3.3. Use may be of *exhortation* in two branches.
 - 7.3.3.1. Let the consideration of what has been said of heaven stir you up earnestly to seek after it.
 - 7.3.3.1.1. Do not let out your heart after the things of this world to indulge yourself in a pursuit of earthly things.
 - 7.3.3.1.2. You must in your meditations and holy exercises be much in conversing with heavenly persons and enjoyments.
 - 7.3.3.1.3. Be content to pass through all the difficulties in the way to haven.
 - 7.3.3.1.4. In all your way let your eye be to Jesus who is gone to heaven as your Forerunner.
 - 7.3.3.1.5. If you would be in the way to the world of love, you must live a life of love.
 - 7.3.3.2. The second exhortation is to all, to seek that they may live a life of love, a life of love to God and love to men.
 - 7.3.3.2.1. This is the way to be like the inhabitants of heaven.
 - 7.3.3.2.2. This is the way to have a sense of the glory of heavenly things, as of God and Christ, and holiness, and heavenly enjoyments.
 - 7.3.3.2.3. This is the way to have clear evidences of a title to heaven.
 - 7.3.3.2.4. By living a life of love, you will be in the way to haven.