

CHARITY & ITS FRUITS

Sermon 13- Grace Never Overthrown

“Love...endures all thing” 1 Cor. 13:7

In 1 Corinthians 13 Paul uses 3 very similar statements (love is patient, love bears all things, love endures all things) that all, according to Edwards, have a different point of emphasis. Edwards writes, “All of these seem commonly to be taken as so many synonymous expressions, as though the Apostle in all of them only said the same things over and over in different words. But this doubtless is from a misunderstanding of Paul...And this expression, ‘endureth all things’...expresses the _____ and abiding nature of a principle of true grace or charity; how that, whatever opposition it meets with it does not fail, but remains or endures.”

Edwards says of this true grace, “whatever attempts are made against it, whatever assaults are made upon it, yet it remains, it endures, it does not cease, but _____ under all this opposition.”

Doctrine-True Christian grace is that which nothing that opposes it can ever overthrow.

“There are many things which do greatly oppose the grace which is in the heart of a Christian. This holy principle has innumerable enemies, as it were, constantly watching and warring against it. The Christian is encompassed around with enemies on every side. Being a pilgrim and a stranger in the earth he is, as it were, in an enemy’s country. There are thousands of devils that are bitter enemies to the grace which is in the heart of a Christian, and do all in their power against it. And the world is an enemy to it. It abounds with persons and things that make opposition to it. And the Christian not only has many enemies without, but multitudes within his own breast which he carries about with him, of which he cannot divest himself; many corruptions which have footing in his heart, which are the _____ enemies of grace...”

“All the opposition which is made against true grace can never overthrow it...Thus as the gates of hell can never prevail against the church of Christ, so neither can they prevail against grace in the heart...grace shall at last have victory, though it may pass through a long train of _____, and may suffer many disadvantages, and receive many wounds; yet it will live, and not only so but will finally prosper and prevail and triumph, and all its invaders shall be subdued under its feet.”

He then gives two reasons why this grace will remain despite all the attacks against it:

- 1. True grace brings with it a change of nature-** “There is much more in the nature of true grace which tends to perseverance than in false grace. False grace is a superficial thing, consisting in external show, or in superficial affections and not in any change of nature. But true grace reaches the bottom of the _____, consisting in a new nature; and therefore it is no wonder that it is more abiding.”

“True grace is of a powerful nature, it is something divine, something supernatural and heavenly. True grace naturally causes desires of perseverance and hungerings and thirstings after it, and makes men sensible of the dangers with which they are encompassed, and has a tendency to excite more to _____, and care, and diligence in order to perseverance, and to look to God for help, and trust in Him for preservations from the many enemies which oppose it.”

- 2. God upholds true grace-** “God will uphold true grace where He has implanted it against all the opposition which is made to it, and will _____ suffer it to be overthrown.”

“Though there be much more in true grace which tends to perseverance than in counterfeit grace, yet merely what is in the nature of grace considered abstractly from God’s powerful influence to uphold it would not be sufficient to render it unconquerable, or effectually to secure it from final overthrow. ‘We are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation’ (1 Peter 1:5). An holy principle in the hearts of our first parents, where it had not corruption to conflict with, was overthrown. Much more might we expect that a little seed of grace in the heart of fallen man in the midst of so much corruption and exposed to such violent opposition against it, would be overthrown, did not God uphold it. But God will uphold it. He has undertaken to defend it from all its enemies, and to give it victory at last; and therefore it surely never shall be overthrown...God has _____ that grace never shall be overthrown.”

Edwards then gives 7 reasons why God will keep grace from being overthrown:

1. **Our redemption in Christ is a complete redemption-** Edwards argues that “if it brought us no further than the state in which we were at first, and left us as liable to fall as before, then all this redemption might be made void, and come to nothing. If man before he fell, being left to the freedom of his own will, fell from his steadfastness, and lost his grace when he was comparatively strong, and had not those enemies to encounter, what then would fallen man with weak imperfect grace do in the midst of his great and manifold enemies, if his perseverance was left only to him? Certainly a redemption which did not secure this would be very _____.”
2. **The covenant of grace cannot fail-** The covenant of works was liable to be broken because it “had a head and surety which was liable to fail; therefore God has provided one which _____ fail, even His own Son.”
3. **The covenant of grace is about grace and not works-** “It is a covenant of works and not a covenant of grace, which suspends eternal life on that which is the fruit of a man’s own strength to keep him from falling. If all be of free and sovereign grace, then free grace has undertaken the matter to _____ it, and has not left it to men themselves, to the freedom of their own wills, as under the first covenant.”
4. **Christ has already triumphed-** “Our second surety has persevered already, and done what our first surety failed of, and therefore we shall surely persevere. Adam, our first surety, did not persevere, and so all fell with him. But if he had persevered, all would have stood with him, and never would have fallen. So our second surety has already persevered, and therefore all who have Him for their surety will persevere with Him... The fact that He, as the covenant head of His people, has fulfilled the terms of that covenant makes it _____ that they shall persevere.”
5. **The saints have been justified-** “The believer is _____ actually justified to life, and therefore God will not suffer him to come short of life.”
6. **The saints share in Christ’s resurrection-** “The Scripture teaches that the believer has grace and spiritual life as partaking of the life of Christ’s resurrection, which is _____, and everlasting life.”
7. **God will not see His own grace in the hearts of His people be overthrown-** “The enemies of God and the soul used their utmost endeavors to hinder grace being implanted in the heart. But God manifested His glorious, all-conquering grace in introducing it there in spite of them. And therefore will not at last suffer Himself to be conquered by their expelling that which he has brought in by His mighty _____.”

Application-

1. This knowledge helps us to understand why the devil so opposes people being converted. Once a person is converted they are _____ put out of His dominion. The devil “knows the truth of the doctrine we have insisted on, that if once grace be infused he can never overthrow it, that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”
2. This knowledge helps us understand that people who _____ fall away from the faith never really had true grace to being with.
3. This knowledge brings much joy to the saints because it brings _____ and confidence in God.
4. This knowledge also brings encouragement to the saints to keep _____ sin because we know that we will have the victory.