
THE BELIEVER'S DELIGHT | *In the Beauty of Divine Things*

By Jonathan Edwards

The joy, and spiritual delight and pleasure of the saints has its first foundation not in any consideration or conception of their interest in divine things; but it primarily consists in the sweet entertainment their minds have in the view of contemplation of the divine and holy beauty of these things, as they are in themselves.

And this is indeed the very main difference between the joy of the hypocrite, and the joy of the true saint. The former rejoices in himself; self is the first foundation of his joy: the latter rejoices in God. The hypocrite has his mind pleased and delighted, in the first place, with his own privilege, and the happiness which he supposes he has attained to, or shall attain to.

True saints have their minds, in the first place, inexpressibly pleased and delighted with the sweet ideas of the glorious and amiable nature of the things of God. And this is the spring of all their delights, and the cream of all their pleasures: it is the joy of their joy. This sweet and ravishing entertainment they have in the view of the beautiful and delightful nature of divine things, is the foundation of the joy that they have afterwards, in the consideration of their being theirs. But the dependence of the affections of hypocrites is in a contrary order: they first rejoice and are elevated with it, that they are made so much of by God; and then on that ground he seems, in a sort, lovely to them.

The first foundation of the delight a true saint has in God, is his own perfection; and the first foundation of the delight he has in Christ, is his own beauty; he appears in himself the chief among ten thousand, and altogether lovely. The way of salvation by Christ is a delightful way to him, for the sweet and admirable manifestations of the divine perfections in it: the holy doctrines of the gospel, by which God is exalted and man abased, holiness honored and promoted, and sin greatly disgraced and discouraged, and free and sovereign love manifested, are glorious doctrines in his eyes, and sweet to his taste, prior to any conception of his interest in these things.

Indeed the saints rejoice in their interest in God, and that Christ is theirs: and so they have great reason, but this is not the first spring of their joy. They first rejoice in God as glorious and excellent in himself, and then secondarily rejoice in it, that so glorious a God is theirs.—They first have their hearts filled with sweetness, from the view of Christ's excellency, and the excellency of his grace and the beauty of the way of salvation by him, and then they have a secondary joy in that so excellent a Savior, and such excellent grace are theirs.