

The Indispensable Foundations of Liberty

“The propitious smiles of heaven can never be expected on a nation which disregards the eternal rules of order and right which heaven itself has ordained.”

“Look habitually to Jesus Christ. Let your whole soul be imbued with His spirit and manifested in all your actions.”

George Washington, Commander in Chief of the Continental Army, president of the Constitutional Convention, and first President of the USA

The founders of our nation appealed to “the Laws of Nature and of Nature’s *God*” to justify before the whole world their stand for liberty against the tyranny of King George. Their resolve to hazard all in defense of liberty was rooted in their conviction “that all men are **created** equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights . . .” Tragically, few today realize that it was a great spiritual awakening in the decades prior to 1776 which prepared our forefathers and gave them the fortitude to pass through that great crucible, the War for Independence, and not only emerge victorious, but with the wisdom to lay a bedrock foundation for the finest and freest Republic the world has ever seen. During the “Great Awakening,” the sermons of Pastor Jonathan Edwards were instrumentally used by God to bring many colonists to “repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 20:21). Without such an awakening, and so the “propitious smiles of heaven,” it is very likely our patriot forefathers would have never prevailed over the greatest political and military power of that day.

The following are excerpts taken from one of Jonathan Edwards’s works, dated August, 1736.

“For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son . . .” —Romans 5:10

God, though the Creator of all things, yet has some enemies in the world. — Men in general will own that they are sinners. There are few, if any, whose consciences are so blinded as not to be sensible [that] they have been guilty of sin. And most sinners will own that they have bad hearts. They will own that they do not love God so much as they should do; that they are not so thankful as they ought to be for mercies; and that in many things they fail. And yet few of them are sensible that they are God’s enemies. They do not see how they can be truly so called; for they are not sensible that they wish God any hurt, or endeavor to do him any.

But we see that the Scripture speaks of them as enemies to God. So in our text, and elsewhere, “And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works,” Col. 1:21. “The carnal mind is enmity against God,” Rom. 8:7. And that all natural or unregenerate men are indeed such, is what I shall endeavor now particularly to show.

Their *wills* are contrary to his will. God’s will and theirs are exceeding cross the one to the other. God wills those things that they hate, and are most averse to; and they will those things that God hates. Hence they oppose God in their wills.

They are enemies to God in their *affections*. There is in every natural man a seed of malice against God. And it often dreadfully breaks forth. Though it may in great measure lie hid in secure times, when God lets men alone, and they meet with no great disturbance of body or mind; yet, if God does but touch men in their consciences, by manifesting to them a little of his wrath for their sins, this oftentimes brings out the principle of malice against him. The alteration of a man’s circumstances will often discover the heart.

They are enemies in their *practice*. *They walk contrary to him*. In their enmity against God, they are exceeding active. They are engaged in war against God. Indeed they cannot injure God [for] he is so much above them; but yet they do what they can. They oppose themselves to his honor and glory. They oppose themselves to the interest of his kingdom in the world. They oppose themselves to the will and command of God.

They have *no love* to God; their enmity is mere enmity without any mixture of love. A natural man is wholly destitute of any principle of love to God, and therefore never had the least exercise of this love. Some natural men have better tempers than others; and some are better educated than others; and some live a great deal more soberly than others. But one has no more love to God than another; for none have the least spark of that. The heart of a natural man is as destitute of love to God, as a dead, stiff, cold corpse is of vital heat. John 5:42, “I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you.”

The divine nature being immortal, and infinitely out of our reach, there is no other trial possible, whether the enmity that is naturally in the heart against God, be mortal or no, but only for God to take on him the human nature, and become man; so as to come within man’s reach. There can be no other experiment. And what has been the event? Why, when once God became man, and came down to dwell here, among such vipers as fallen men, they hated and persecuted him; and never desisted till they had imbrued their hands in his blood. There was a multitude of them that appeared combined in this design. Nothing would do, but he must be put to death. All cry out, *Crucify him, crucify him. Away with him*. They had rather Barabbas who greatly deserved death, should live, than he should not die. Nothing would restrain them from it; even all his preaching, and all his miracles. But they would kill him. And it was not the ordinary kind of execution that would satisfy them; but it must be the most cruel and most ignominious they possibly could invent. And they aggravated it as

much as they could, by mocking him, and spitting on him, and scourging him. This shows what the nature and tendency of man's enmity against God is; here it appeared in its true colors.

The general reason is, that God is opposite to them in the worship of their idols. The apostasy of man summarily consists in departing from the true God, to idols; forsaking his Creator, and setting up other things in his room. When God at first created man, he was united to his Creator; the God that made him was his God. The true God was the object of his highest respect, and had the possession of his heart. Love to God was the principle in his heart, that rules over all other principles; and every thing in the soul was wholly in subjection to it. But when man fell, he departed from the true God, and the union that was between his heart and his Creator was broken. He wholly lost his principle of love to God. And henceforward man clave to other gods. He gave that respect to the creature, which is due to the Creator. — When God ceased to be the object of his supreme love and respect, other things of course became the objects of it.

Man will necessarily have something that he respects as his god. If man [does] not give his highest respect to the God that made him, there will be something else that has the possession of it. Men will either worship the true God, or some idol. It is impossible it should be otherwise. Something will have the heart of man. And that which a man gives his heart to, may be called his god.

And nothing will so soon excite enmity, as opposition in that which is dearest. Mat. 6:24, “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.” And this is the very reason that men hate God.

The gods which a natural man worships, instead of the God that made him, are himself and the world. He has withdrawn his esteem and honor from God, and proudly exalts himself. He gives his heart to the world, worldly riches, worldly pleasures, and worldly honors. They have the possession of that regard which is due to God. The apostle sums up all the idolatry of wicked men in their love of the world. 1 John 2:15-16, “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.” And the apostle James observes, that a man must necessarily be the enemy of the true God, if he be a friend of the world. “Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God,” Jam. 4:4.

All the sin that men commit, is what they do in the service of their idols. There is no one act of sin, but what is an act of service to some false god. And therefore wherein soever God opposes sin in them, he is opposite to their worship of their idols. On which account they are his enemies. God opposes them in their service of their idols, in the following respects: 1. He manifests his utter *abhorrence* of their attachment to their idols. He declares himself to be a holy and a jealous God; a God who is very jealous of his own honor; and that greatly abhors giving that honor to another. 2. He utterly *forbids* their cleaving to those idols, and all the service that they do to them. He not only shows that he dislikes it, but he utterly forbids it; and demands that they should worship him; serve him only, and give their hearts wholly to him: without tolerating any competitor. 3. He *threatens* them with everlasting damnation for their service of their idols. He threatens them for their *past* idolatry. He threatens them with his eternal wrath, for their having departed from him, and their having chosen to themselves other gods. He manifests that he will not tolerate any regard to them, but has fixed eternal death, as the wages of every degree of it. And he will not release them from their guilt; he holds them to their obligations; and he will accept of no atonement that they can make. He will not forgive them for whatever they do in religion; whatever pains they take; whatever tears they shed. He will accept of no money or price that they have to offer.

Consider, what will it be to have this enmity to be mutual, and maintained forever on both sides? For as God will forever continue an enemy to you, so you will forever continue an enemy to God. If you continue God's enemy until death, you will always be his enemy. And after death your enmity will have no restraint, but it will break out and rage without control. When you come to be a fire-brand [of] hell, you will be so in two respects, viz. as you will be full of the fire of God's wrath; and as you will be on a blaze with spite and malice towards God. You will be as full of the fire of malice, as you will with the fire of divine vengeance, and both will make you full of torment. Then you will appear as you are, a viper indeed. You are now under great disguise; a wolf in sheep's clothing. But then your mask will be pulled off. You shall loose your garments, and walk naked. Rev. 16:15. Then will you vent your rage and malice in fearful blasphemies. That same tongue, to cool which you will wish for a drop of water, will be eternally employed in cursing and blaspheming God and Christ. And that not from any new corruption being put into your heart; but only from God's withdrawing his hand from restraining your old corruption. And what a miserable way will this be of spending your eternity!

He now exercises abundance of mercy to you. He threatens you now; but it is in a way of warning, and so in a merciful way. He now calls, invites, and strives with you, and waits to be gracious to you. But hereafter there will be an end to all these things. In another world God will cease to show you mercy.

“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.” 1 Timothy 1:15