

# CHARITY & ITS FRUITS

A Study of 1 Corinthians 13 based on the sermons of Jonathan Edwards

## Sermon 1

“Love the Sum of all Virtue”

### 1 Corinthians 13:1-3

This sermon can be seen as dividing up into 3 parts: Introduction, Doctrine, Application

#### Introduction

Edwards begins this sermon by stating that to Christ and the Apostles “there is no virtue so much \_\_\_\_\_ on by them.” (37)

The word “\_\_\_\_\_” is to be understood as the word “love.” (38)

In the portion before us (13:1-3) Edwards points out that the most excellent things that the natural man can possess are vain without love. Edwards says, “Here are mentioned the most excellent privileges with which the natural men have ever been favored: great knowledge. The most excellent performances: giving all goods to feed the poor. Such things are mentioned as natural men are prone to \_\_\_\_\_ in...and so natural men are very ready to trust in their performances, especially such extraordinary performances as are here mentioned: giving all their goods to feed the poor.” (38-39) Men may have many wonderful abilities and gifts but without love (a divine Christian love) they are all vain.

Doctrine—“All that virtue which is saving, and distinguishing of true Christians from others, is summed up in Christian or divine love.”

“By the Apostle mentioning so many and so great things, and then saying of them all that they profit nothing without charity, we may understand that there is \_\_\_\_\_ which avails anything without it. Let men have what he will, and let him do what he will, it signifies nothing without charity...it (love) is the life and soul of all religion...” (39)

Edwards then begins to explain why it is necessary for a Christian to be loving when he says, “The Spirit of God is a spirit of love. And therefore when the Spirit of God enters into the soul, love enters...the nature of the Holy Spirit is love; and it is by communicating Himself, or His own nature, that the hearts of the saints are filled with love or charity. Hence the saints are said to be ‘partakers of the divine nature’ (2 Peter 1:4).” (40-41) The Spirit brings love for God and others into the soul. The new birth is the bringing into the soul \_\_\_\_\_ where before all that dwelt in the human soul was \_\_\_\_\_ for God and others.

Now Edwards makes sure to point out that the Spirit brings both a love for God and others at the \_\_\_\_\_ time. People cannot claim to love God but hate their neighbor. He writes, “Christian love to both God and men is wrought in the heart by the same work of the Spirit.” (41)

The more we grow in our love to God the more we will grow in our love for our neighbor. He writes, “Love to God is the foundation of a gracious love to men.” (42)

Love of God and \_\_\_\_\_ of God go together. A lover of God will be someone who delights in worshipping and praising His name. “Love to God will dispose a man to give honor to God. Love will dispose to worship and adore Him, heartily to acknowledge His greatness and glory and dominion.” (42)

Love of God and \_\_\_\_\_ unto God go together. “Love will dispose the heart to submission to the will of God. Persons are more willing that the will of those whom they love should be done than that of others.” (42)

Love of God and \_\_\_\_\_ before God go together. “Love to God will dispose to walk humbly with God...a true Christian delights to have God exalted to his abasement, because he loves God...it is with delight that he casts himself in the dust before God, because he loves God.” (43)

Love of God and humility before \_\_\_\_\_ go together. "Love will dispose to walk humbly among men. For real and dear love will dispose men to high thoughts of them; and Christian love disposes men to think others better than themselves. Love will dispose men to honor one another." (43)

Love does no \_\_\_\_\_ to its neighbor. "Love destroys enmity...love has not bitterness in it. It is altogether a sweet disposition and affection of the soul. Love will prevent broils and quarrels, and will dispose to peaceableness. Love will dispose men to forgive injuries, which they receive from their neighbors." (43)

All obedience should flow from love. "Thus love would dispose to all duties, both towards God and towards men. And if love will dispose of all duties, then it follows that love is a \_\_\_\_\_ and spring...of all virtues." (44)

Love is what differentiates \_\_\_\_\_ faith from simple head knowledge. "Love is centered in a true and living faith, and it is the proper life and soul of it, without which faith is dead, as the body is without the spirit; and that it is the most distinguishing thing of saving faith from other faiths." (45)

Love of God will always lead to \_\_\_\_\_ in God which again is a mark of saving faith. "He who does not love God will not trust God." (45)

"Love appears to be the sum of all virtue and duty which God requires of us; and therefore must undoubtedly be the most \_\_\_\_\_ thing, or the sum of all that virtue which is essential and distinguishing in real Christianity." (46-47)

### Application

Edwards closes this first sermon out by asking some pointed and soul-searching questions mixed with several exhortations:

"Have we this love to all who are children of God? This love, also, leads those who possess it to \_\_\_\_\_ in God, and to worship and magnify Him." (49)

"Do we \_\_\_\_\_ in God, and rejoice in His worship, and in magnifying His holy name? This love, also, leads those who possess it sincerely to desire and earnestly to endeavor to do good to their fellow man." (50)

"Is this spirit, which dwelt in Jesus Christ, the spirit that reigns in our hearts, and is seen in our \_\_\_\_\_ life?"

Edwards calls the Christian to \_\_\_\_\_ about the God of love. "God and Christ in the gospel revelation appear as clothed with love, as being as it were on a throne of mercy and grace, a seat of love encompassed about with pleasant beams of love. Love is the light and glory which are about the throne on which God sits." (52)

If our God is a God of love, who loves us completely, Christians should not act in unloving ways but should seek to be an \_\_\_\_\_ of God (Eph. 5:1) "Contention is a thing which tends so much to the ruin of religion...what a watch and guard should they (Christians) keep against envy and malice, or any bitterness of spirit against any of their neighbors, because those things are the very reverse of that great and distinguishing thing in Christianity of which we have heard, the very essence of Christianity...An envious Christian, a malicious Christian, a cold and hard-hearted Christian is the greatest absurdity and contradiction. It is as if one should speak of dark brightness, or a false truth!" (54-55)

"If you call yourself a Christian, where are your works of love?...Do you love God? What have you done for Him, for His glory, for the advancement of His kingdom in the world?" (56)