

CHARITY
AND ITS FRUITS;

OR,

CHRISTIAN LOVE AS MANIFESTED IN THE
HEART AND LIFE.

BY

JONATHAN EDWARDS,

SOMETIME PASTOR OF THE CHURCH AT NORTHAMPTON, MASSACHUSETTS, AND
PRESIDENT OF THE COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY.

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WITH AN INTRODUCTION,

BY THE

REV. TRYON EDWARDS, D.D.

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LECTURE XIII.

ALL THE GRACES OF CHRISTIANITY CONNECTED.

“Charity . . . believeth all things, hopeth all things.”—1 Cor. xiii. 7.

IN these words, the apostle is commonly understood to mean, that charity disposes us to believe the best, and hope the best concerning our neighbours, in all cases. But it appears to me that this is not his meaning in this place; but rather that he intends to say, that charity is a grace which cherishes and promotes the exercise of all other graces, as, particularly, of the graces of faith and hope. Mentioning the graces of believing and hoping, or of faith and hope, the apostle here shows how the exercise of these is promoted by charity. My reasons for understanding the apostle in this sense, are the following:—

First, He had just before mentioned that fruit of charity whereby it leads us to think the best of our neighbours, in saying that it “*thinketh no evil;*” and we have no reason to think he would repeat the same thing over again in these words.

Second, It seems plain that the apostle had finished speaking of the fruits of charity toward our neighbours, when he summed them all up, as we have seen, in saying, that it “*rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;*” that is, that it tends to prevent all evil behaviour, and to promote all good behaviour. So that in this verse we might expect him to proceed to mention some fruits of charity of another kind, such, for example, as its tendency to promote the graces of faith and hope, which are such great graces of the gospel.

Third, We find that the apostle does, in this chapter, more than once mention the three graces of faith, hope, and charity, together. And it is but reasonable to suppose, that each time he does so, he means the same three graces. In the last verse of the chapter, we find these three mentioned and compared together; and there, by “*faith*” and “*hope,*” the apostle plainly does not mean believing or hoping the best respecting our neighbours, but he does intend those great graces of the gospel that have God and Christ for their main and immediate object. And so when, in this place, he mentions the same three graces as in the last verse of the chapter, why should we not believe that he means the same three things in the former place as in the latter, since it is in the same chapter, and the same discourse, and in the course of the same argument? And again,

Fourth, This view is agreeable to the drift and aim of the apostle throughout the chapter, which is to show the relation of charity to the other graces, and particularly to faith and hope. This is what the apostle is aiming

at in all that he says: and therefore, when he comes to the conclusion of the matter in the last verse, and says that, of faith, hope, and charity, the last is the greatest, he seems to have reference to what he had said in the words of the text, viz. that charity “believeth all things, and hopeth all things,” meaning that charity is greater than the other two, as it has the most effectual influence in producing them, and is that by which they are cherished and promoted in the soul.

For these reasons, the doctrine I would draw from the text, is this:

THAT THE GRACES OF CHRISTIANITY ARE ALL CONNECTED TOGETHER, AND MUTUALLY DEPENDENT ON EACH OTHER.

That is, they are all linked together, and united one to another and within another, as the links of a chain are; and one does, as it were, hang on another, from one end of the chain to the other, so that, if one link be broken, all fall to the ground, and the whole ceases to be of any effect. And in unfolding this thought, I would, first, briefly explain how the graces of Christianity are all connected, and then give some reasons why they are so. And I would,

I. *Briefly explain the manner in which the graces of Christianity are connected.*—And this may be shown in three things.

1. *All the graces of Christianity always go together.*—They so go together, that where there is one, there are all, and where one is wanting, all are wanting. Where there is faith, there are love, and hope, and humility; and where there is love, there is also trust; and where there is a holy trust in God, there is love to God; and where there is a gracious hope, there also is a holy fear of God. “The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him in those that hope in his mercy” (Ps. cxlvii. 11). Where there is love to God, there is a gracious love to man; and where there is a Christian love to man, there is love to God. Hence we find that the apostle John at one time gives love to the brethren as a sign of love to God, saying, “If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar” (1 John iv. 20); and then, again, speaks of love to God as a sign of love to the brethren, saying, “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep his commandments” (1 John v. 2). It is also, true,

2. *That the graces of Christianity depend upon one another.*—There is not only a connexion, whereby they are always joined together, but there is also a mutual dependence between them, so that one cannot be without the others. To deny one, would in effect be to deny another, and so all; just as to deny the cause would be to deny the effect, or to deny the effect would be to deny the cause. Faith promotes love, and love is the most effectual ingredient in a living faith. Love is dependent on faith; for a being cannot be truly loved, and especially loved above all other beings, who is not looked upon, as a real being. And then love, again, enlarges and promotes faith, because we are more apt to believe and give credit to, and more disposed to trust in,

those we love, than in those we do not. So faith begets hope, for faith sees and trusts in God's sufficiency to bestow blessings, and in his faithfulness to his promises, that he will do what he has said. All gracious hope is hope resting on faith; and hope encourages and draws forth acts of faith. And so love tends to hope, for the spirit of love is the spirit of a child, and the more any one feels in himself this spirit toward God, the more natural it will be to him to look to God, and go to God as his father. This childlike spirit casts out the spirit of bondage and fear, and gives the Spirit of adoption, which is the spirit of confidence and hope. "Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (Rom viii. 15); and the apostle John tells us, "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear" (1 John iv. 18). And so, again, a true and genuine hope tends greatly to promote love. When a Christian has most of a right hope of his interest in God's favour, and in those eternal blessings that are its fruits, this tends to draw forth the exercise of love, and oftentimes does draw it forth; as says the apostle Paul, "Tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not ashamed: because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts" (Rom. v. 3-5).

Faith, too, promotes humility; for the more entirely anyone depends on God's sufficiency, the more will it tend to a low sense of his own sufficiency. And so humility tends to promote faith; for the more anyone has an humble sense of his own insufficiency, the more will his heart be disposed to trust only on God, and to depend entirely on Christ. So love promotes humility; for the more the heart is ravished with God's loveliness, the more will it abhor itself, and abase and humble itself for its own unloveliness and vileness. Humility promotes love; for the more anyone has an humble sense of his own unworthiness, the more will he admire God's goodness to him, and the more will his heart be drawn out in love to him for his glorious grace. Love tends to repentance; for he that truly repents of sin, repents of it because it is committed against a being that he loves. And repentance tends to humility; for no one can be truly sorry for sin, and self-condemned in view of it, without being humbled in heart for it. So repentance, faith, and love, all tend to thankfulness. He that by faith trusts to Christ for salvation, will be thankful to him for salvation. He that loves God will be disposed thankfully to acknowledge his kindness. And he that repents of his sins will be disposed heartily to thank God for the grace that is sufficient to deliver him from their guilt and power. A true love to God tends to love to men who bear the image of God; and a spirit of love and peace toward men cherishes a spirit of love to God, as love to the image cherishes love to the original. And so it might be shown how all the graces depend one upon another, by mentioning many other particulars. Humility cherishes all other graces, and

all other graces promote humility; and so faith promotes all other graces, and all other graces cherish and promote faith. And the like is true of every one of the graces of the gospel.

3. *The different graces of Christianity are, in some respects, implied one in another.*—They are not only mutually connected and dependent, and each promotive of the others, but are in some respects implied in the nature of each other. In respect to several of them, it is true, that one is essential to another, or belongs to its very essence. Thus, for example, humility is implied in the nature of a true faith, so as to be of the essence of it. It is essential to a true faith, that it be an humble faith; and essential to a true trust, that it be an humble trust. And so humility belongs to the nature and essence of many other true graces. It is essential to Christian love, that it be an humble love; to submission, that it be an humble submission; to repentance, that it be an humble repentance; to thankfulness, that it be an humble thankfulness; and to reverence, that it be an humble reverence.

And so love is implied in a gracious faith. It is an ingredient in it, and belongs to its essence, and is, as it were, the very soul of it, or its working, operative nature. As the working, operative nature of man is his soul, so the working and operative nature of faith is love; for the apostle Paul tells us that “faith worketh by love” (Gal. v. 6); and the apostle James tells us, that faith, without its working nature, is dead, as the body is without the spirit (James ii. 26). And so faith is, in some respects, implied in love; for it is essential to a true Christian love, that it be a believing love. So saving repentance and faith are implied in each other. They are both one and the same conversion of the soul from sin to God, through Christ. The act of the soul in turning from sin to God through Christ, as it respects the thing from which the turning is, viz. sin, is called repentance; and as it respects the thing to which, and the mediation by which it turns, it is called faith. But it is the same motion of the soul; just as, when a man turns, or flees from darkness to the light, it is the same act and motion, though it may be called by different names, according as it respects the darkness fled from, or the light fled to; in the one case, being called avoiding, or turning from, and in the other, receiving or embracing.

And so there is love implied in thankfulness. True thankfulness is no other than the exercise of love to God on occasion of his goodness to us. So there is love in a true and childlike fear of God; for a childlike fear differs from a slavish, for a slavish fear has no love in it. And all these three graces of love, humility, and repentance, are implied in gracious childlike submission to the will of God. And so weanedness from the world, and heavenly-mindedness, do consist mainly in the three graces of faith, hope, and love. And so a Christian love to man is a kind of mediate or indirect love to Christ; and that justice and truth towards men, that are truly Christian grac-

es, have love in them and essential to them. Love and humility, again, are the graces wherein consists meekness toward men. And so it is love to God, and faith, and humility, that are the ingredients of Christian patience and contentment with our condition, and with the allotments of providence toward us. Thus it appears that all the graces of Christianity are concatenated and linked together, so as to be mutually connected and mutually dependent. I proceed, then, as proposed,

II. *To give some reasons of their being thus connected and dependent.*—
And,

1. *They are all from the same source.*—All the graces of Christianity are from the same Spirit; as says the apostle, “There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; . . . diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all” (1 Cor. xii. 4, 6). The graces of Christianity are all from the same Spirit of Christ sent forth into the heart, and dwelling there as a holy, and powerful, and divine nature; and therefore all graces are only the different ways of acting on the part of the same divine nature; as there may be different reflections of the light of the sun, and yet all in origin the same kind of light, because it all comes from the same source or body of light. Grace in the soul is the Holy Spirit acting in the soul, and thus calumniating his own holy nature. As it is with water in the fountain, so here it is all one and the same holy nature, only diversified by the variety of streams sent forth from it. These streams must all be of the same nature, seeing they all thus come from the same source; and the difference of many of them, whereby they have different names, is chiefly relative, and more from reference to their various objects and modes of exercise, than from a real difference in their abstract nature. So, also,

2. *They are all communicated in the same work of the Spirit, namely, in conversion.*—There is not one conversion of the soul to faith, and another conversion to love to God, and another to humility, and another to repentance, and still another to love to man; but all are produced by one and the same work of the Spirit, and are the result of one and the same conversion, or change of the heart. And this proves that all the graces are united and linked together, as being contained in that one and the same new nature that is given us in regeneration. It is here as it is in the first generation—that of the body, in which the several faculties are communicated in one and the same generation; the senses of seeing, hearing, feeling, tasting, and smelling, and so the powers of moving, breathing, &c., all being given at the same time, and all being but one human nature, and one human life, though diversified in its modes and forms. It is further true of the Christian graces,

3. *That they all have the same root and foundation, namely, the knowledge of God’s excellence.*—The same sight or sense of God’s excellency begets faith, and love, and repentance, and all the other graces. One

sight of this excellence will beget all these graces, because it shows the ground and reason of all holy dispositions, and of all holy behaviour toward God. They that truly know God's nature will love him, and trust in him, and have a spirit to submit to him, and serve, and obey him. "They that know thy name will put their trust in thee" (Ps. ix. 10). "Whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him" (1 John iii. 6). "Every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God" (1 John iv. 7). It is also true of the Christian graces,

4. *That they all have the same rule, namely, the law of God.*—And therefore they must be linked together; for, seeing they all have respect to this rule, they all tend to confirm the whole of the rule, and to conform the heart and life to it. He that has a true respect to one of God's commands, will have a true respect to all; for they are all established by the same authority, and are all jointly an expression of the same holy nature of God. "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all; for he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law" (James ii. 10, 11).

5. *All the Christian graces have the same end, namely, God.*—He is their end, for they all tend to him. As they are all from the same source, rising from the same fountain; and all stand on the same foundation, growing from the same root; and are all directed by the same rule, the law of God;—so they are all directed to the same end, namely, God, and his glory, and our happiness in him. And this shows that they must be nearly related, and very much linked together. And once more, it is true,

6. *That all the Christian graces are alike related to one and the same grace, namely, charity, or Divine love, as the sum of them all.*—As we have before seen, charity, or love, is the sum of all true Christian graces, however many names we may give them. And however different the modes of their exercise, or the ways of their manifestation, if we do but carefully examine them, we shall find they are all resolved into one Love, or charity, is the fulfilling of them all, and they are but so many diversifications, and different branches, and relations, and modes of exercise, of the same thing. One grace does, in effect, contain them all, just as the one principle of life comprehends all its manifestations. And hence it is no wonder that they are always together, and are dependent on and in one another.

In the application of this subject,

1. *It may aid us to understand in what sense old things are said to be done away, and all things become new, in conversion.*—This is what the apostle teaches us is the fact. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. v. 17). Now the doctrine of the text, and what has been said under it, may in

some measure show us how this is; for by this we learn, that all the graces of Christianity are at once imparted in conversion, inasmuch as they are all linked together, so that, when one is bestowed, all are bestowed, and not a single one merely. A true convert, the moment he is converted, is possessed not of one or two, but of *all* holy principles, and all gracious dispositions. They may be feeble, indeed, like the faculties and powers of an infant child, but they are all truly there, and will be seen flowing out progressively in every kind of holy feeling and behaviour toward both God and man. In every real convert there are as many graces as there were in Jesus Christ himself, which is what the evangelist John means, when he says, “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth; . . . and of his fullness have all we received, and grace for grace” (John i. 14, 16). And, indeed, it cannot be otherwise, for all true converts are renewed in Christ’s image, as says the apostle—“And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of him that created him” (Col. iii. 10). But that is no true image or picture of another, which has some parts or features wanting. An exact image has a part answerable to each part in that of which it is an image. The copy answers to the original throughout, in all its parts and features, though it may be obscure in some respects, and not represent any part perfectly, as grace answers to grace. Grace in the soul is a reflection of Christ’s glory, as appears by 2 Cor. iii. 18. It is a reflection of his glory, as the image of a man is reflected from a glass that exhibits part for part.

It is in the new birth as it is in the birth of the infant child. He has all the parts of a man, though they are as yet in a very imperfect state. Not a part is wanting, but there are as many members as to a man of full stature and strength. And therefore what is wrought in regeneration is called “the new man;” not only new eyes, or new ears, or new hands, but a new man, possessing all the human faculties and members. But all the graces of the Christian are new. All of them are members of the individual after conversion, and none of them were members before conversion. And because there is, as it were, a new man, with all these members, begotten in conversion, therefore Christians are said to be sanctified wholly, in soul, body, and spirit, as in 1 Thess. v. 23. And so old things pass away, and all things become new, because, as the new man is put on, the old man is put off, so that the man in a sense becomes new all over.

And if there be all graces alive in this new man, it will follow that all corruptions are mortified; for there is no one corruption but what has a grace opposite to, or to answer it; and the bestowment of the grace mortifies the opposing corruption. Thus faith tends to mortify unbelief; love, to mortify enmity, to mortify pride; meekness, to mortify revenge; thankfulness, to

mortify a thankless spirit, &c. And as one of these takes its place in the heart, the opposite gives way, just as darkness in a room vanishes when a light is brought in. Thus old things pass away. All old things, in a measure, pass away, though none perfectly, on earth; and so all things become new, though also imperfectly. This shows that conversion, whenever and wherever it is wrought, is a great work and a great change. Though grace may be very imperfect, he must needs have a great change wrought in him who before had no corruption mortified, and now has all mortified; and who before had not one grace, and now has all graces. He may well be called a new creature, or, as in the original, a new creation in Christ Jesus.

2. Hence, also, they that hope they have grace in their hearts may try one grace by another; for all graces go together.—If persons think they have faith, and therefore think they have come to Christ, they should inquire whether their faith was accompanied with repentance; whether they came to Christ in a broken-hearted manner, sensible of their own utter unworthiness and vileness by sin; or whether they did not come in a presumptuous, Pharisaical spirit, taking encouragement from their own supposed goodness. They should try their faith, by inquiring whether it was accompanied with humility; whether or no they trusted in Christ in a lowly and humble manner, delighting to renounce themselves, and to give all the glory of their salvation to him. So they should try their faith by their love; and if their faith has in it only light, but no warmth, it has not the true light; neither is it genuine faith, if it does not work by love.

And so persons should examine their love by their faith. If they seem to have an affectionate love toward God and Christ, they should inquire whether or no this be accompanied with a real conviction of soul of the reality of Christ, and of the truth of the gospel that reveals him, and with the full conviction that he is the Son of God—the only, and glorious, and all-sufficient Saviour. Herein is one great difference between false affections and true ones, that the former are not accompanied with this conviction, and they do not withal see the truth and reality of divine things. And therefore such affections are very little to be depended on. They are very much like the affection which we may have towards a person we are reading of in a romance, and whom we at the same time suppose to be no other than a feigned person. Such affections as are not accompanied with conviction will never carry men very far in duty, or influence them to any great extent, either in doing or suffering.

So, again, persons should examine themselves as to that in them which seems to be the grace of hope. They should inquire whether their hope is accompanied with faith, and arises from faith in Jesus Christ, and from a trust in his worthiness, and in his only. Is their hope built on this rock, or is it rather founded on a high opinion of something they think good in them-

selves? And so they should examine in what way their hope works, and what influence it has upon them, and whether or no it be accompanied with humility. A true hope leads its possessor to see his own unworthiness, and, in view of his sins, to reflect on himself with shame and brokenness of heart. It lies in the dust before God, and the comfort that arises from it is a lowly, humble, joy and peace. On the contrary, a false hope is wont to lift its possessor up with a high conceit of himself and of his own experience and doings. We should also inquire whether our hope be accompanied with a spirit of obedience, and self-denial, and weanedness from the world. A true hope is accompanied with these other graces, linked to, and dependent upon it, whereas a false hope is without them. It does not engage the heart in obedience, but flatters and hardens it in disobedience. It does not mortify carnal appetites, and wean from the world, but indulges the appetites and passions that are sinful, and chooses them, and makes men easy while living in them.

So, again, persons should examine their weanedness from the world, by inquiring whether it be accompanied with such a principle of love as draws their hearts off from the things of the world to those spiritual and heavenly objects which a true divine love carries the soul out to, more than to the things of the world. They should not only ask if they have something that appears like a true love, but they should hear Christ asking of them, as he did of Peter, "Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me *more than these?*" Herein a true weanedness from the world differs from a false weanedness. The latter is not from love to God and heavenly things, but commonly either from fear and distress of conscience, or perhaps from some outward affliction, whereby persons have their minds drawn off for a time from the world to something that they are constrained to feel is better, though it is not really sweeter to them; and they are only drawn, or beaten, or torn off from the world, while their hearts would still cleave to it just as much as ever, if they could but enjoy it free from these terrors and afflictions. But they, on the other hand, that have a true weanedness from the world, are not wedded to worldly things even in their best and most inviting forms, because their hearts are drawn off by the love of something better. They are so in love with God, and with spiritual things, that their affections cannot fasten on the things of the world.

In the same way, persons should try their love to God by their love to the people of God; and also their love to their fellow-Christians by their love to God. False grace is like a defective or monstrous picture or image, wherein some essential part is wanting. There is, it may be, an appearance of some good disposition toward God, while at the same time there is a destitution of Christian dispositions toward men. Or if there appears to be a kind, just, generous, goodhearted disposition toward man, there is a want of right feeling toward God. On this account, we find God complains of Ephraim, that

“he is a cake not turned” (Hosea vii. 8); that is, that his goodness is partial and not consistent; that he is good in one thing and bad in another, like a cake not turned, which is generally burnt on one side and raw on the other, and good for nothing on either. Such a character we should studiously avoid, and endeavour that each grace that we have may testify to the genuineness of all our other graces, so that we may be proportioned Christians, growing in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto perfect men, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.