

HEAVEN

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Jonathan Edwards

From Jonathan Edwards'
Charity and Its Fruits



THE BANNER OF TRUTH TRUST

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*HEAVEN, A WORLD OF
CHARITY OR LOVE*

Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

1 Corinthians 13:8–10

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*F*rom the first of these verses, I have already drawn the doctrine, that that great fruit of the Spirit in which the Holy Ghost shall not only for a season, but everlastingly, be communicated to the church of Christ, is charity or divine love. And now I would consider the same verse in connection with the two that follow it, and upon the three verses would make two observations.

First, that it is mentioned as one great excellence of charity, that it shall remain when all other fruits of the Spirit have failed. And,

Second, that this will come to pass in the perfect state of the church, when that

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which is in part shall be done away, and that which is perfect is come.

There is a twofold *imperfect*, and so a twofold *perfect* state of the Christian church. The church in its beginning, or in its first stage, before it was strongly established in the world, and settled in its New Testament state, and before the canon of Scripture was completed, was in an imperfect state – a state, as it were, of childhood, in comparison with what it was to be in its elder and later ages, when it should have reached its state of manhood, or of comparative earthly perfection. And so, again, this comparatively perfect church of Christ, so long as it remains in its militant state, that is, down to the end of time, will still be in an imperfect, and, as it were, in a childish state, in compar-