

A Sermon
from 1 Cor: XIII, 13.

And now abide faith,
hope, charity, these three;
but the greatest of these is
charity.

In considering the subject of true
religion we should be careful to ascer-
tain what is not essential in it,
its leading characteristics its fun-
damental nature. To have a right
comprehension of its ^{principal doctrines on which others rest} chief ^{graces} and of its
virtues from which all others flow
and to unite them in their true
order & relative bearing is of the
utmost importance. In so doing
we shall not mistake the external
for the internal part, or men outward
acts & observances, for its reality &

vitality, nor forms & rites & ordinances
for their spiritual nourishing & interest.
We shall not lay an undue stress
on matters of minor & secondary
consideration, however laudable &
desirable, in comparison to leading
and fundamental doctrines. Certain
means privileges & advantages which
we may enjoy above others will not
be taken as in themselves entitling
giving us a claim to superiority, if
apart from their right & diligent
use. Nor will certain ~~striking~~
acts of apparent devotion self-
denial generosity benevolence
courage & fortitude be judged
of as decisive of a man's Christian
character, unless springing from a
heart possessed of the fundamental
graces of religion. Neither gifts
of an extraordinary nature, nor superior
talents, or ^{nor profound or superior eloquence} ~~extraordinary~~ knowledge, or
^{a ready comprehension of} ~~the solution of certain mysterious subjects,~~
nor any other performance that strikes
the senses and attracts men's observation

can substitute the part of true religion.
It is against such errors, mistakes and
deceptions that the Apostle cautions
his Corinthian readers throughout several
chapters. It must be borne in mind
that the Lord vouchsafed to the primi-
tive Church special privileges and
advantages, intended evidently to con-
tinue but for a time, in order to
such were the ~~miraculous~~ ^{extraordinary} gifts of
healing of working miracles of
speaking with tongues & prophesying,
in order to afford the world the
strongest & the most unanswerable proofs
of the Divine origin and authority
of the truths of the Gospel; the world
should see that God specially
and signally was present with
the Church and had given evidence
the followers of Christ with more than
ordinary gifts & powers. These signs
and wonders were designed as a
confirmation of the truth here faith
and would give a mighty influence
and stability to Christ's religion.

But means are not to be mistaken
for the end of true religion, and
wonderful gifts were not to be desired
above these graces & virtues which
alone can prove ~~our sincerity~~ and
vital spiritual Christianity and
sincerity. The Corinthians were cor-
ractly too eager after such mani-
festations of Divine extraordinary
gifts whilst they neglected to culti-
vate such graces as would evince
their heartfelt conversion & saving
faith. It is possible that those
intimates that men may be possessors
of wonderful powers which the Lord
has so abundantly bestowed on
his Church and yet if not altogether
might be greatly wanting, in the
genuine characteristics of a true
believer. A man might apparently
be possessor of some striking talents
and yet be destitute of spiritual
mildness, or saving faith. Men
may show more for a display
of powers & gifts than heartfelt

religion, when tirelessly arduous &
pious work, and not further
humility & meekness, it is possible
some counterfeit gifts and spurious
powers may take the place of genuine
graces & Divine manifestations. There
was at any rate great danger of
men neglecting their own salvation
their own soul whilst they were making
best to minister for others and
make an arduous display of that
which was intended for the glory of
God alone and not the honor of man.
Yea a man might think & speak
much of his faith and hope by which
he is inspired and yet might be
deceivably, he might fancy he steadfastly
relied on God's word & promises
and might assert it with some measure
of truth and yet fall far short
of that grace which connects ~~and~~ ^{beautifies}
a man's all his heartfelt religion
and evidences the genuine & vital
character of faith & hope. Now ~~affairs~~
this gift & grace the apostle urges his

readers, chiefly to desire or covet.
This best gift, this men excellent way
he shows is charity, throughout the whole
of the chapter of our best and in our
best. He denominates it the greatest
gift. When the emphatic language
with which the Apostle appears, this
chapter. "Though I speak with the
tongues of men & angels, and have
not charity, I am become as sounding
brass or a tinkling cymbal". As if he
meant to say, if I could command all
the eloquence & languages of mankind
and unite to the same even the higher
and more eloquent sources of angelic
spirits, and yet were void of charity
I should resemble but a rude inferior
instrument of music without
meaning, without harmony without
any powerful attractions.

Nay more the Apostle continues, if one
man had the gift of prophecy, understood
all mysteries, had all knowledge and
a wonderful faith to remove mountains,
or if he gave up all his goods for the

relief of the poor and even delivered his
body to be burned as a martyr
for his religious profession all would be
of no avail without charity. Why charity
is so essential to all important as the
leading grace of all graces the Apostle more
fully explains, we shall afterwards again
recur to it. I would only observe here that
the term charity must not be taken in its
limited meaning as at present commonly
applied, it signifies not merely an act
of kindness & pity towards those who are
in distress & need or forbearance towards
the failings of others; but its proper signi-
fication is love, that brotherly & Christian
love which exists itself towards God
and our brethren and which has its
origin in the Divine love shed abroad
in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given
to every true believer.

We shall proceed then to consider those
chief or cardinal graces & virtues which
the Apostle so strongly recommends as
abiding, as for the present incumbent
upon us to examine our service and
heartfelt religion, of which charity
or love is said to be the greatest.

Agreeably to the order of our text
I, then, we consider faith
II, hope and
III, love & why it is the greatest.
^{or charity or}

And may God graciously direct
us in our meditation by his Spirit
and render it instructive and
profitable for our growth in
true & spiritual religion!

I) In considering the meaning
of faith I would observe that
hope & love are closely allied
to the former, that indeed no one
of the three Christian graces can
exist or be rightly exercised without
the other. They are so inseparable as
often not to be distinguished from
each other, and men or men exert
their joint influence on our whole
conduct & actions, being the effects
and evidences of the new Divine life
implanted in the soul. Both in our
relation to God and to man, in the acts
of worship & communion towards God &
the saints & the

In fact many
things which in
doctrinal
language we
often become
in practical
word the same
things which we are each of the soul.

and in ^{their own} kind & benevolent performance
to our neighbours their respect we being
will be convinced. To elucidate these
remarks take for instance the relation
existing between a good master and
a faithful servant or that of a kind
father & a ^{disciple, affectionate} ~~good~~ ~~obedient~~ child. The
servant who knows & appreciates the
kindness, faithfulness and kindness
of a master relies on his word & prunes
his present obedience, and hope for the future
are sustained by the goodness and the
honorable faithful dealing of his master
towards him and his ^{his confidence} produces within
him ~~therefore~~ ^{at the same time} love, attachment grati-
tude. So likewise a good child, son
he feels aware of his father's good-
will ^{towards him} and thus his expectations as to the
future are raised. nor can he fail to
love him on whom ^{dependence is upon him} he relies. May
more the servant & the child will with
such feelings of trust and affection
to the master or father readily evince
kindness & love towards other members
of the same household & family loved
equally as themselves by the head
of the family. At least such, if truly

really ~~their professions~~ are sincere. However,
their ~~superior, not true~~ will be their
encouragements such their shewing, though
they might fall short at times, through
the infirmities of selfish nature.

Now so it is exactly with those who are
truly God's servants & ^{by the nature of} children of the
Kingdom. ~~in its nature to be produced by~~
~~faith necessarily accompanied by~~
~~hope~~ present blessings are taken as
pledges for future & greater ones
and this confidence in our Heavenly
Father is undoubtedly production of
love, if not it cannot be genuine. Now
the man thus influenced by
faith & hope & love to God fails to
win a brotherly feeling towards
his fellow men, men especially, if
believers, as reckoned together with
him united to the same Head. When
such is not the case, where brotherly
love is wanting, we must necessarily
doubt a man's sincerity towards God.
But let us inquire more especially
into the meaning & nature of faith.
While hope, as already intimated
refers more immediately to the future,

It is the nature
of true faith
to inspire
us with hope,
both as sub-
stantially
the same, both
rest on invisible
objects, and
on the Divine
word.

faith refers chiefly to the present and
the past to that which exists and is
true. The Apostle is writing to the Hebrews thus joins
~~both~~ both faith & hope in one. Now faith
is the substance of things hoped for the evidence
of things not seen. A religious man ~~one~~ ^{his type eternal} ~~forever~~ ^{forever}
trusts in unseen objects ~~as if they were~~ on
proofs & evidences to assure our minds
of their reality may be said to be faith.
Thus we believe in the being & existence
of God, in his various attributes of great-
ness power & wisdom although we have
never seen him. We do so because
we have the strongest proofs of an all-
mighty wise & beneficent ~~being~~ ^{author in his works} ~~being~~ ^{around us}
the works of nature testify of him
so strongly and convincingly that but
fools or wicked obstinate sinners
can doubt & deny the great truth.
But this important or fundamental truth
for our belief & acceptance is further at-
tested by the revelation of God and
his will to man as clearly ~~set forth~~ ^{set forth}
in the Scriptures and ~~more~~ it is more
fully confirmed by the sending of his
Son into the world. This manifestation

of God in the flesh, in human nature,
at once leads us to the whole compass
of the objects of our faith, both as creatures
of God's hands, and sinners who have
transgressed against him but for
whom a remedy has been provided even
by God himself, who has assured ^{even in}
his word that his government & mercy will
^{be extended to all his works}
~~be extended~~ ^{reach} to all who seek
him & trust in him, that he will not
only supply our bodily wants but also our
spiritual necessities. Whilst he promises
^{declarations of his word} these in his daily kind Providence come
in the redemption wrought by his Son Jesus
Christ, he further has promised the
aid & teaching of his grace & Spirit
to direct us aright on the road way
to eternal life. Now ~~in order~~ ^{fully} to

And the effort of ^{the Holy} realize the truth of these manifestations
and declarations of the Spirit, we require
to exercise faith, even a true and
living faith. Such faith is not simply
an admission of the facts as revealed
in the word and are announced in God's word without
any ^{in the person} earnest effort to be inwardly assured
of them. We must all believe these ^{promises} ^{of the same} promises of Scripture which concern us so

closely as we might believe an account
of any plan or person or event ~~without any~~ ^{without any}
~~which we feel not farther or not further~~ ^{without any}
~~in any interest~~, but as a narrator ^{further}
which directly concerns & interests upon ^{or their}
the result of which a the indifferent but ^{interest}
our best interests, are at stake. We must
seek God's mercy & pardon & ^{as} retaining
and repeating errors. And having
repeated feeling our need of mercy and
being desirous anxiously desirous of
God's acceptance we may confidently
trust in his word & promises of pardon
salvation through Christ Jesus. God
is reconciled to many. Could not my
brethren, the mind the will the manner
of him who made ^{you} & sent his Son
into the world for ^{your} sake. Rest un-
flinchingly steadfastly on the faithfulness
the veracity as well as on the love & ^{compassion}
of God. Whatsoever God has revealed
concerning himself his own wonderful
mercies nature, the plan of salvation
the way to happiness, the various doctrines
of Scripture, believe them with all ^{your}
the heart lay hold of them as of
precious treasures embrace them
with grateful ~~hearts~~ ^{mines} delight in

them, as surely meant for ^{yourself} self. Believe
even that which is mysterious on the word
the character of glorious attributes, the
faithfulness of ^{your} God and rely on
under all trials, temptations & dangers
both in body & soul on a kind a merciful
Father & ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ ~~gracious~~ ^{gracious} and strong
Preserver. This my brethren is faith,
saving faith such as God by his
Spirit has wrought in you.

117 Now when you have this faith it
is usually followed also by hope
By faith we become heirs of grace, by hope
heirs of glory, by faith we appropriate to
ourselves the promises and assurance of
God as regards our pardon and re-
conciliation and either as our present state
of salvation, by hope we look beyond this
present scene to our final and com-
plete salvation to the full victory
to the great deliverance at the day of
judgment when by God's mercy
we shall have the final sentence
or rather the pleasing welcome of
the blessed & redeemed. Hope is

directed towards that great & glorious
inheritance of the saints in light & to
future bliss & felicity. While faith
then leads to do more with the present world
with what now comes to pass in view
of our acceptance with God & salvation
hope altogether rests on the things
to be brought about in the world to
come. If we are truly God's children
by regeneration & renewal of heart,
if this be our firm belief, we naturally
and necessarily look forward as God's
children to be heirs hereafter. For
our acceptance establishes our claim
to the heavenly inheritance.
Now this hope is exercised more especially
as an encouragement amidst the various
trials & temptations of this present life

III) We have already explained what charity means viz: that Christian Brotherly and spiritual love which the Holy Spirit implants and which enables God's true men with his brethren. It flows from faith and hope as the necessary effect, like the great grateful regard evincing towards a benefactor or the affectionate attachment towards a dear friend or the force of attachment & fervent affection towards a dear parent. It is the nature of love revealed. It partakes of the nature of God who loves all his creatures, not even a sinful fallen being. It is the bond of union and perfectness which is the true character of Christian fellowship - the communion of saints.