

A Sermon
from 1 Cor: XIII, 13.

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

In considering the subject of true
religion we should be careful to as-
certain what is most essential in it,
its leading characteristic is its fun-
damental nature. To have a right
comprehension of its ^{principal doctrines on which all the rest} chief ^{and of its} ~~graces~~ ^{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 mere 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 ~~extraordinary~~ ^{or profound or superlative eloquence} knowledge or
^{a ready comprehension of} ~~the solving 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 ~~marvellous~~ ^{extraordinary} gifts of
healing of working miracles of
speaking with tongues & prophesying,
in order to afford the world the
strongest & 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 that God would endow
the followers of Christ with more than
ordinary gifts & powers. These signs
and wonders were designed as a
confirmation of the truth & true 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 them graces & virtues which
alone can preserve our ~~tranquillity~~ and
vital spiritual Christianity and
sincerity. The Corinthians were evi-
dently too eager after such mani-
festations of Divine extraordinary
gifts whilst they neglected to culti-
vate such graces as would confirm
their heartfelt conversion & saving
faith. It is possible that some
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. At some might appear
be possessors of some striking talents
and yet be destitute of spiritual
mildness, or saving faith. When
men strive more for a display
of powers & gifts than, heartfelt

religion, when sincerely applied &
priced at an at work, and not ^{Christ's} ~~Christ's~~
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 exhibition 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 ⁱⁿ ~~in~~ ^{grace} ~~grace~~ and yet might be
deceiving, 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~~ ^{and} ~~confidence~~ ^{confidence}
across all true & heartfelt religion
and evidences the genuine & vital
character of faith & hope. Now after
this gift & grace he should be urged to

readers, chiefly to desire a cover.
This best gift, this most 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. And in the emphatic language
with which the Apostle declares 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 highest
and more eloquent voices of angelic
spirits, and yet were void of charity
I should resemble but a rude inferior
instrument of music without
meaning, without learning without
any powerful attractions.

Now 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 deemed his
body to be burned & suffered 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 a present command
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 Spirit 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 obtain our sincere 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 ^{or charity} & why it is the greatest.

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 often 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 latter is even one act of the soul.

In fact many
things which in
doctrinal
language we
often become
in practical
word the same
thing is even one act of the soul.

that is why

and in our ^{studies} head & benevolent performance
to our neighbours their respect we being
will be evinced. 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 ^{devoted} ~~good~~ ^{affectionate} child. The
servant who knows & appreciates the
kindness & faithfulness and kindness
of a master relies on his word & prizing
his present service, and hope for the future
are sustained by the goodness and the
honorable faithful dealing of his master
towards him and his ^{confidence} produces within
him ~~love~~ ^{at the same time} love, attachment grati-
tude. So likewise a good child, son
he feels assurance of his father's good-
will, and thus his expectations as to the
future are raised, nor can he fail to
love him on whom thus he ^{depends} ~~confides~~ ⁱⁿ ~~from~~ ^{for} ~~the~~
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 they

really ~~their professions~~ are sincere. ~~And~~
~~their superior, not such~~ will be their
encouragements such their shirings, though
they might fall short as ~~less~~, though
the infirmities of self's nature.

Now so it is exactly with them who are
truly God's servants & ^{in the nature of} ~~children of~~ ^{the} ~~faith~~
~~faith~~ ^{in its nature & production of} ~~faith~~ ^{is necessarily accompanied by}
~~us with hope~~ ^{hope} present blessings are taken as

pledges for future & greater ones
and this influence in our leaving

Father is undoubtedly production of
love, if not it cannot be genuine. ^{the} ~~man~~ ^{man} thus influenced by

faith & hope & love to God fail to
win a brotherly feeling towards

his fellow men, men especially, if
believed, as united together with

him united to the same Head. When
such is not the case, where brotherly

love be wanting, we must necessarily
doubt a man's sincerity towards God.

But let us inquire more especially
into the meaning & nature of faith,
which 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 joining
~~both~~ both faith & hope in one. Now faith
is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence
of things not seen. I believe then ~~on~~ ⁱⁿ
present or unseen objects ~~on~~ ^{spiritual & eternal} ~~on~~ ^{forever}
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
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 beliefs & acceptance is further at-
tested by the revelation of God and
his will to man as clearly ~~found~~ ^{set forth}
in the Scriptures and ~~more~~ it is more
fully confirmed by the sending of his
Son into the world. This manifestation

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 from~~ ^{further}
~~in any interest~~, but as a narrator ^{or the} ~~interest~~
which directly concerns & interests us at
the present of which a the indifferent bid
our best interests, are at stake. We must
seek God's mercy & pardon & ^{as} retaining
and repeating ~~of~~ 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 accessible to many. Could not my
brethren, the mind the will the manner
of him who made ^{you} ~~me~~ & sent his Son
into the world for ^{your} ~~the~~ sake. Rest con-
fidently steadfastly on the faith, ^{plea}
the veracity as well as on the love & ^{company}
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
heart & soul lay hold of them as of
precious treasures embrace them
with grateful ~~hearts~~ ^{mines} delight in

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

III 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 our re-
conciliation our deliverance or 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 leave 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 seems to pass in a moment
to 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 which forms a bond of union or the affectionate embraces towards a dear friend or the face of attachment & fervent affection towards a dear parent. It is the nature of love renewed. It partakes of the nature of God who loves all his creatures, nay even a sinful fallen man. It is the bond of union and perfectness which is the true character of Christian fellowship - the communion of saints.