

Faith and Love
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St. John Henry Newman
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"Though I have all Faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have no Charity, I am nothing." 1 Cor. xiii. 2.

I SUPPOSE that all thoughtful readers of the chapter from which these words are taken, have before now been struck with surprise at the varied characteristics which are there ascribed to the excellent grace called love, or charity. What *is* charity? St. Paul answers, by giving a great number of properties of it, all distinct and special. It is patient, it is kind, it has no envy, no self-importance, no ostentation, no indecorum, no selfishness, no irritability, no malevolence. Which of all these is it? for if it is all at once, surely it is a name for all virtues at once.

And what makes this conclusion still more plausible, is, that St. Paul elsewhere actually calls charity "the fulfilling of the Law:" and our Saviour, in like manner, makes our whole duty consist in loving God and loving our neighbour. And St. James calls it "the royal law;" and St. John says, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." [Rom. xiii. 10. Matt. xxii. 40. James ii. 8. 1 John iii. 14.] Thus the chapter from which the text is taken seems but an exemplification in detail of what is declared in general terms by these Apostles.

It is well too, by way of contrast, to consider the description of faith given elsewhere by the same Apostle, who, in the chapter before us, describes charity. In his Epistle to the Hebrews he devotes a much longer chapter to it: but his method in treating it is altogether different. He starts with a definition of it, and then he illustrates his clear and precise account of it in a series of instances. The chapter is made up of a repetition again and again, in Noah, in Abraham, in Moses, in David, and in the Prophets, of one and the same precisely marked excellence, called faith, which is such as no one can mistake. Again mention is made of it in the text; and then, though in a different Epistle, and in the midst of a train of thought altogether different, its description, as far as it goes, accurately agrees with what is said in the Hebrews; "... faith, so that I could remove mountains;" which moreover is the very account of it given by our Lord, and expresses surely the same habit of mind as that by which Noah, Abraham, Moses, and David, preached righteousness, obtained promises, renounced the world, waxed valiant in fight. How then is it that faith is of so definite a character, and love so large and comprehensive?

Now the reason seems to be pretty much what at first sight is the difficulty. The difficulty is whether, if love be such as St. Paul describes, it is not all virtues at once; and I answer, that in one sense it *is* all virtues at once, and therefore St. Paul cannot describe it more definitely, more restrictedly than he does. In other words, it is the root of all holy dispositions, and grows and blossoms into them: they are its parts; and when it is described, they of necessity are mentioned. Love is the material (so to speak) out of

42 which all graces are made, the quality of mind which is the fruit of regeneration, and in
43 which the Spirit dwells; according to St. John's words, "Every one that loveth, is born of
44 God;" ... "he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him." [1 John iv. 7, 16.]
45 Such is love, and, as being such, it will last for ever. "Charity," or love, "never faileth."
46 Faith and hope are graces of an imperfect state, and they cease with that state; but love
47 is greater, because it is perfection. Faith and hope are graces, as far as we belong to
48 this world,—which is for a time; but love is a grace, because we are creatures of God
49 whether here or elsewhere, and partakers in a redemption which is to last for ever. Faith
50 will not be when there is sight, nor hope when there is enjoyment; but love will (as we
51 believe) increase more and more to all eternity. Faith and hope are means by which we
52 express our love: we believe God's word, because we love it; we hope after heaven,
53 because we love it. We should not have any hope or concern about it, unless we loved
54 it; we should not trust or confide in the God of heaven, unless we loved Him. Faith, then,
55 and hope are but instruments or expressions of love; but as to love itself, we do not love
56 because we believe, for the devils believe, yet do not love; nor do we love because we
57 hope, for hypocrites hope, who do not love. But we love for no cause beyond itself: we
58 love, because it is our nature to love; and it is our nature, because God the Holy Ghost
59 has made it our nature. Love is the immediate fruit and the evidence of regeneration.

60 It is expressing the same thing in other words, to say, as we may, that faith and hope
61 are not in themselves necessarily graces, but only as grafted on and found in love.
62 Balaam had faith and hope, but not love. "May I die the death of the righteous!" is an act
63 of hope. "The word that the Lord putteth into my mouth, that will I speak," is an act of
64 faith; but his conduct showed that neither his faith nor his hope was loving. The servant
65 in the parable, who fell down at his lord's feet, and begged to be excused his debt, had
66 both faith and hope. He believed his lord able, and he hoped him willing, to forgive him.
67 He went out, and saw a fellow-servant who owed him a small sum, and he behaved at
68 once unmercifully to him, and unthankfully by his lord. He had neither love of God,
69 because he was high-minded, nor love of his brother, because he was hard-hearted.
70 There are then two kinds of faith in God, a good faith and a worthless faith; and two
71 kinds of hope in God, good and worthless: but there are not two kinds of love of God.
72 Love must always be heavenly; it is always the sign of the regenerate. Faith and hope
73 are not in themselves signs, but only that faith "which worketh by love," and that hope
74 which "loves the thing which God commandeth, and desires that which God doth
75 promise." In the text it is said, "Though I had all faith, yet without love I am nothing:" it is
76 nowhere said, "Though I have all love, without faith I am nothing."

77 Love, then, is the seed of holiness, and grows into all excellences, not indeed
78 destroying their peculiarities, but making them what they are. A weed has stalk, leaves,
79 and flowers; so has a sweet-smelling plant; because the latter is sweet-smelling, it does
80 not cease to have stalk, leaves, and flowers; but they are all pleasant, because they
81 come of it. In like manner, the soul which is quickened with the spirit of love has faith
82 and hope, and a number of faculties and habits, some of which it might have without
83 love, and some not; but any how, in that soul one and all exist *in* love, though distinct
84 from it; as stalk, leaves, and flowers are as distinct and entire in one plant as in another,
85 yet vary in their quality, according to the plant's nature.

86 But here it may be asked, whether Scripture does not make faith, not love, the root, and
87 all graces its fruits. I think not; on the contrary, it pointedly intimates that something
88 besides faith is the root, not only in the text, but in our Lord's parable of the Sower; in
89 which we read of persons who, "when they hear, receive the word with joy," yet having
90 no "root," [Luke viii. 13.] fall away. Now, receiving the word with joy, surely implies faith;
91 faith, then, is certainly distinct from the *root*, for these persons receive with joy, yet have
92 "*no* root." However, it is allowable to call faith the root, because, in a certain sense at
93 least, works *do* proceed from it. And hence Scripture speaks of "faith *working* by love,"
94 which would imply in the form of expression that faith was prior to love. And again: in
95 the chapter in which the text occurs, we read of "faith, hope, and charity," an order of
96 words which seems to imply that faith precedes love, or charity. And again, St. Paul
97 says elsewhere, "The *end* of the commandment is *charity*, out of a pure heart, and of a
98 good conscience, and of *faith unfeigned*;" [1 Tim. i. 5.] where faith is spoken of as if it
99 were the origin of love.

100 This must be granted then; and accordingly a question arises, how to adjust these
101 opposite modes of speaking; in *what* sense faith is the beginning of love, and in what
102 sense love is the origin of faith; whether love springs from faith, or faith from love, which
103 comes first, and which last. I observe, then, as follows:—

104 Faith is the first element of *religion*, and love, of *holiness*; and as holiness and religion
105 are distinct, yet united, so are love and faith. Holiness can exist without religion; religion
106 cannot exist without holiness. Baptized infants, before they come to years of
107 understanding, are holy; they are not religious. Holiness is love of the Divine Law. When
108 God regenerates an infant, He imparts to it the gift of His Holy Spirit; and what is the
109 Spirit thus imparted but the Law written on its heart? Such was the promise, "I will put
110 My laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts." And hence it is said, "This is the
111 love of God, that we keep His *commandments*." [Heb. viii. 10. 1 John v. 3.] God comes
112 to us as a Law, before He comes as a Lawgiver; that is, He sets up His throne within us,
113 and enables us to obey Him, before we have learned to reflect on our own sensations,
114 and to know the voice of God. Such, as if in a type, was Samuel's case; he knew not
115 who it was who called him, till Eli the priest told him. Eli stands for religion, Samuel for
116 holiness; Eli for faith, Samuel for love.

117 Love then is the motion within us of the new spirit, the holy and renewed heart which
118 God the Holy Ghost gives us; and, as being such, we see how it may exist in infants,
119 who obey the inward law without knowing it, by a sort of natural service, as plants and
120 trees fulfil the functions of their own nature; a service which is most acceptable to God,
121 as being moral and spiritual, though not intellectual. And this, for what we know, may be
122 the state of those little ones who are baptized and taken away before they have learned
123 either to reason or to sin. They may be as the stones of the Everlasting Pavement,
124 crying out continually in praise to God; dimly visible, as if absorbed in the glory which
125 encompasses God's throne; or as the wonderful wheels described by the Prophet,
126 which were living, yet in a way instrumental; for in heaven, where there is no gross
127 matter, the very framework of the Temple is composed of spirits.

128 Love, then, is the life of those who know not an external world, but who worship God as
129 manifested within them. Such a life however can last but a little while on earth. The eyes
130 see and the reason embraces a lower world, sun, moon, stars, and earth, and men, and
131 all that man does or makes; and this external world does not speak of God upon the
132 face of it. It shows as if it were itself God, and an object of worship, or at least it
133 becomes the creature of a usurper, who has made himself "the god of this world." We
134 are at once forced to reflect, reason, decide, and act; for we are between two, the
135 inward voice speaking one thing within us, and the world speaking another without us;
136 the world tempting, and the Spirit whispering warnings. Hence faith becomes
137 necessary; in other words, God has most mercifully succoured us in this contest, by
138 speaking not only in our hearts, but through the sensible world; and this Voice we call
139 revelation. God has overruled this world of sense, and put a word in its mouth, and bid it
140 prophesy of Him. And thus there are two voices even in the external world; the voice of
141 the tempter calling us to fall down and worship him, and he will give us all; and the voice
142 of God, speaking in aid of the voice in our hearts: and as love is that which hears the
143 voice within us, so faith is that which hears the voice without us; and as love worships
144 God within the shrine, faith discerns Him in the world; and as love is the life of God in
145 the solitary soul, faith is the guardian of love in our intercourse with men; and, while faith
146 ministers to love, love is that which imparts to faith its praise and excellence.

147 And thus it is that faith is to love as religion to holiness; for religion is the Divine Law as
148 coming to us from without, as love is the acquiescence in the same Law as written
149 within. Love then is meditative, tranquil, pure, gentle, abounding in all offices of
150 goodness and truth; and faith is strenuous and energetic, formed for this world,
151 combating it, training the mind towards love, fortifying it in obedience, and overcoming
152 sense and reason by representations more urgent than their own.

153 Moreover it is plain, that, while love is the root out of which faith grows, faith by
154 receiving the wonderful tidings of the Gospel, and presenting before the soul its sacred
155 Objects, the mysteries of the faith, the Holy Trinity, and the Incarnate Saviour, expands
156 our love, and raises it to a perfection which otherwise it could never reach.

157 And thus our duty lies in faith working by love; love is the sacrifice we offer to God, and
158 faith is the sacrificer. Yet they are not distinct from each other except in our way of
159 viewing them. Priest and sacrifice are one; the loving faith and the believing love.

160 And thus I answer the question concerning the connection of love and faith. Love is the
161 condition of faith; and faith in turn is the cherisher and maturer of love; it brings love out
162 into works, and therefore is called the root of *works* of love; the substance of the works
163 is love, the outline and direction of them is faith.

164 This being so, surely we need not be surprised at St. Paul's language, as in the text and
165 verses following. Love is the true ruling principle of the regenerate soul, and faith
166 ministers to it. Love is the end, faith the means; and if the means be difficult, much more
167 is the end. St. Paul says that faith which could remove mountains will not avail without
168 love; and in truth, faith is only half way (as it were) to heaven. By faith we give up this

169 world, but by love we reach into the next world; and it often happens from one cause or
170 another, men are able to get as far as the one, without going on to the other. Too true is
171 it, that the mass of men live neither with faith nor love; they live to themselves, they love
172 themselves selfishly, and do not desire any thing beyond the visible framework of
173 things. This world is their all in all. But I speak of religious persons; and these, I think,
174 will confess that distaste for the world is quite a distinct thing from the spirit of love. As
175 years go on, the disappointments, troubles, and cares of life, wean a religious mind from
176 attachment to this world. A man sees it is but vanity. He neither receives, nor looks for
177 enjoyment from it. He does not look to the future with hope; he has no prospects; he
178 cares not for the world's smile or frown; what it can do, what it can withhold. Nay, even
179 his friends are nothing to him; he knows they cannot help him really in his greatest
180 needs, and he has no dependence that they will be continued to him. And thus in the
181 course of time, with a very scanty measure of true divine love, he is enabled, whatever
182 his sphere is, to act above the world, in his degree; to do his plain straightforward duty,
183 because reason tells him he should do it, and because he has no great temptations
184 seducing him from it. Observe, *why* he keeps God's commandments; from *reason*,
185 because he knows he ought, and because he has no strong motives keeping him from
186 doing so. Alas! not from *love* towards those commandments. He has only just so much
187 of the spirit of love as suffices to hinder his resignation from being despondency, and
188 his faith from being dead. Or again, he has had experience of the misery of a laden
189 conscience, the misery of the pollution involved in the numberless little sins of every
190 day, the odiousness of his pride, vanity, fretfulness, wilfulness, arrogance, irritability,
191 profaneness, hardness of heart, and all the other evils which beset him; and he desires
192 earnestly to be cleansed,—yet rather from dislike of sin than direct love of God and
193 Christ.

194 This then is that middle state in which some of us may be standing in our progress from
195 earth to heaven, and which the text warns us against. It tells us that faith at most only
196 makes a hero, but that love makes a saint; that faith can but put us above the world, but
197 that love brings us under God's throne; that faith can but make us sober, but love makes
198 us happy. It warns us that it is possible for a man to have the clearest, calmest, exactest
199 view of the realities of heaven; that he may most firmly realize and act upon the truths of
200 the Gospel; that he may understand that all about him is but a veil, not a substance; that
201 he may have that full confidence in God's word as to be able to do miracles; that he may
202 have such simple absolute faith as to give up his property, give up all his goods to feed
203 the poor; that he may so scorn the world, that he may with so royal a heart trample on it,
204 as even to give his body to be burned by a glorious martyrdom; and yet—I do not say,
205 be without love; God forbid! I do not suppose the Apostle means there ever *was* actually
206 such a case, but that it is abstractedly possible; that no one of the proper acts of faith, in
207 itself, and necessarily, implies love; that it is distinct from love. He says this,—that
208 though a person *be* all that has been said, yet unless he be also something besides,
209 unless he have love, it profiteth him nothing. O fearful lesson, to all those who are
210 tempted to pride themselves in their labours, or sufferings, or sacrifices, or works! We
211 are Christ's, not by faith merely, nor by works merely, but by love; not by hating the
212 world, nor by hating sin, nor by venturing for the world to come, nor by calmness, nor by
213 magnanimity,—though we must do and be all this; and if we *have* love in perfection

214 we *shall*,—but it is love makes faith, not faith love. We are saved, not by any of these
215 things, but by that heavenly flame within us, which, while it consumes what is seen,
216 aspires to what is unseen. Love is the gentle, tranquil, satisfied acquiescence and
217 adherence of the soul in the contemplation of God; not only a preference of God before
218 all things, but a delight in Him because He is God, and because His commandments are
219 good; not any violent emotion or transport, but as St. Paul describes it, long-suffering,
220 kind, modest, unassuming, innocent, simple, orderly, disinterested, meek, pure-hearted,
221 sweet-tempered, patient, enduring. Faith without Charity is dry, harsh, and sapless; it
222 has nothing sweet, engaging, winning, soothing; but it was Charity which brought Christ
223 down. Charity is but another name for the Comforter. It is eternal Charity which is the
224 bond of all things in heaven and earth; it is Charity wherein the Father and the Son are
225 one in the unity of the Spirit; by which the Angels in heaven are one, by which all Saints
226 are one with God, by which the Church is one upon earth.