

Sunday, December 3, 2017—I Corinthians 13:1 Charity or Love? Which Is It? Part 2

Introduction/Review

- Last Sunday we began studying I Corinthians 13. The bulk of the study was taken up by a consideration of the controversy surrounding the use of the word “charity” in I Corinthians 13 in the King James Bible (KJB) as opposed to the word “love” used in modern versions.
- Before continuing with that discussion, I would like to review a few general points about the context and the content of verse 1.
 - I Corinthians 12:31—the Corinthians had become covetous and competitive with respect to the spiritual gifts. Therefore, Paul is going to show unto them a more excellent way than the gifts.
 - I Corinthians 13:1—Paul opens the chapter by stating that even if one can speak with the tongues of men and angels if they do not have “charity” they are all noise and no substance.
 - I Corinthians 13 is often referred to as the “Love Chapter.” It is important to remember, that the main context here is a discussion of spiritual gifts, within this context Paul expounds upon this issues of love and charity.
- Please recall from last Sunday that I wanted to discuss some of the other kinds of love mentioned in scripture but ran out of time. Furthermore, I have learned some new things regarding “charity” and “love” since last week that I would like to share with you to further your understanding of that topic as well.

Further Thoughts on Charity and Love

- The use of the “charity” in I Corinthians 13 highlights an instance where King James advocates have felt the need to defend that exact word against the word “love” used in modern versions. This is stemming from the instance that “verbatim identity” of wording is the standard for preservation.
- We saw that it is commonly stated that “charity” means love in action. Two lines of argumentation were presented to demonstrate that this is not the case: 1) the context of I Corinthians 13 and 2) the definition of the English word “charity.”
- The passage says just as much about what charity “is not” (negative) as it does about what charity “is” (positive).

Charity Is NOT/DOTH NOT	Charity IS/DOES
Vaunting of itself (v.4)	Longsuffering (v.4)
Puffed up (v.4)	Kind (v.4)
Behaving unseemly (v.5)	Rejoices in truth (v.6)
Seeking her own (v.5)	Beareth all things (v.7)
Easily provoked (v.5)	Believeth all things (v.7)
Thinks no evil (v.5)	Hopeth all things (v. 7)
Rejoicing in inequity (v.6)	Endureth all things (v. 7)
	Never faileth (v. 8)

- In verses 1 through 3 someone can perform all of the following actions completely devoid of charity: 1) speak in the tongues of men and angels, 2) have the gift of prophecy, 3) understand all mysteries and all knowledge, 4) have faith to remove mountains, 5) bestow all their good to feed the poor, and 6) give their body to be burned. Therefore, it seems that “charity” is the heart attitude with which someone does something than it is the action performed.
- Noah Webster’s *American Dictionary of the English Language*, a commonly used dictionary among King James advocates supports the notion derived for the context that “charity” is the heart attitude with which an action is performed not the action itself.
 - **In a general sense, love**, benevolence, good will; **that disposition of heart** which inclines men to think favorably of their fellow men to think favorably of their fellow men, and to do them good. In a theological sense, it includes supreme love to God, and universal good will to men.
 - 1 Corinthians 8:1. Colossians 3:14. 1 Timothy 1:5
- Meanwhile, the *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) the definitive record of the English Language states the following regarding the English word “charity:”
 - 1) Christian love: a word representing *caritas* of the Vulgate, as a frequent rendering of *ἀγάπη* (agape) in N.T. Greek. With various applications: as
 - A) God’s love to man. (By early writers often identified with the Holy Spirit.)
Obs.
 - B) Man’s love of God and his neighbour, commanded as the fulfilling of the Law, Matt. xxii. 37, 39. *Obs.*
 - C) The Christian love of one’s fellow human beings; Christian benignity of disposition expressing itself in Christ-like conduct: one of the ‘three Christian graces’, fully described by St. Paul, 1 Cor. xiii.
- Notice that there is nothing said in either dictionary about “Love in action.” In fact, the *OED*’s first definition of “charity” is “Christian love” and specifically refers to 1Cor. 13 as an example

of Christian love. Meanwhile, the *OED*'s second definition of "love" refers to the 1st definition of "charity."

- 2) In religious use: the benevolence and affection of God towards an individual or towards creation; (also) the affectionate devotion due to God from an individual; regard and consideration of one human being towards another prompted by a sense of a common relationship to God. Cf. [charity n. 1](#).
- Therefore, the dictionary is telling its readers that "charity" and "love" mean the same thing. They are not wholly different things as some King James advocates have asserted.
- The Greek word translated "charity" in I Corinthians 13 is the word *agapē*. This word occurs 116 times in 106 verses in the New Testament. Of these 116 occurrences of *agapē* 86 times it is translated as "love" and 29 times it is translated as some form of "charity."
- A study of the relevant cross references reveals that the King James translators used them interchangeably.

Charity	Love
1Pe 4:8 KJV - And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.	Pro 10:12 KJV - Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins.
1Co 13:13 KJV - And now abideth faith, hope, charity , these three; but the greatest of these [is] charity.	1Th 1:3 KJV - Remembering without ceasing your work of faith , and labour of love , and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father;
Tit 2:2 KJV - That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. 2Ti 3:10 KJV - But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience,	1Ti 6:11 KJV - But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.
2Ti 2:22 KJV - Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.	1Ti 6:11 KJV - But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.
2Th 1:3 KJV - We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth;	1Th 3:12 KJV - And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another , and toward all [men], even as we [do] toward you:
1Ti 1:5 KJV - Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart , and [of] a good conscience, and [of] faith unfeigned:	1Pe 1:22 KJV - Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, [see that ye] love one another with a pure heart fervently:

- This practice of rending a single Greek word with various English words of the same meaning is completely consistent with the practice of the King James translators. In "The Translators to the Reader" the translators explain the nature and scope of the translation process they utilized when

conducting their work. According to the Preface, The King James translators did not employ a principle of rigidity when taking words from the donor language (Hebrew/Greek) and rendering them in the receptor language (English) which means that in the minds of the translators there are multiple acceptable ways of saying the same thing.

- “Another thing we think good to admonish thee of, gentle reader that we have not tied ourselves to an uniformity of phrasing, or to an identify of words, as some peradventure would wish that we had done, because they observe, that some learned men somewhere, have been as exact as they could that way. Truly, that we might not vary from the sense of that which we had translated before, if the word signified that same in both places (for there be some words that be not the same sense everywhere) we were especially careful, and made a conscience, according to our duty. But, that we should express the same notion in the same particular word; as for example, if we translate the Hebrew or Greek word once by PURPOSE, never to call it INTENT; if one where JOURNEYING, never TRAVELING; if one where THINK, never SUPPOSE; if one where PAIN, never ACHE; if one where JOY, never GLADNESS, etc. Thus to mince the matter, we thought to savour more of curiosity than wisdom, and that rather it would breed scorn in the Atheist, than bring profit to the godly Reader. For is the kingdom of God to become words or syllables? Why should we be in bondage to them if we may be free, use one precisely when we may use another no less fit, as commodiously?”
- So why did the translators render *agapē* as “charity” in certain texts and “love” in others? Was it because they were trying to make some sort of super spiritual point? No, they were simply following the rules. According to Rule 1 given to the King James translators the Bishops Bible was to serve as their based text.
 - Rule 1: The ordinary Bible read in the Church, commonly called the Bishops’ Bible, to be followed, and as little altered as the truth of the original will permit.
- When the King James translators left the word “charity” in the text they were simply following Rule 1 as set forth by Bishop Bancroft. I checked every occurrence of “charity” against the 1572 revision of the Bishops Bible as well as other earlier translations of the *Textus Receptus* in the English and the Bishops had “charity” in the same places as the King James. In contrast, Tyndale, Coverdale, the Great Bible, the Geneva Bible, and even the original Bishops Bible from 1568 all had “love” in these 29 occurrences.
- The KJB was one revision of the Bishops Bible away from having “love” as its base text in all 116 occurrences of *agapē*. As King James advocates we need to be careful what we say, because in this case the King James has more in common with Catholic Rheims Bible of 1582 which had “charity” in all 29 occurrences than Tyndale who had “love.”

Other Types of Love in Scripture

- *Agapaō*—to regard, esteem, to acquiesce with satisfaction, to cherish with reverence, to love, considered in reference to the tendency of the will. Also translated “beloved.”
 - Matthew 4:43, 44, 46
- *Phileō*—to kiss, to love (Lat. *amare* to be in love with) used of the more direct demonstration of regard; refers to friendship when used between men; but love when between the sexes, to love considered in reference to a natural inclination, or an emotion i.e., the passion of love. Also translated to kiss.
 - John 11:3, Matthew 26:48
- *Agapē*—from which we derive the English words “charity” and “love” is not found in the secular writers of ancient Greece and is unknown to writers outside of the New Testament. *Agapē* is different from other types of love mentioned in the New Testament in that it “denotes love which springs from admiration and veneration, and which chooses its object with decision of will, and devotes a self-denying and compassionate devotion to it. Love in its fullest conceivable form.”
 - I John 3:16—*agapē* equals love in its fullest conceivable form as exhibited in Christ.
 - I John 4:9—expresses God’s relation to humanity.
 - John 15:10—expresses how the members of the Godhead related to each other.
 - Romans 5:8—this is the love the Godhead commended toward us while we were yet sinners.
 - Romans 8:35—this is the love of Christ that we can never be separated from.
 - II Corinthians 5:14—this is the love of Christ that is supposed to constrain (compel, force, oblige, motivate) us for Christian life and service to God.
 - Galatians 5:13—this is the love out of which we serve each other as members of the body of Christ.