

May 24

Love...is not easily provoked. 1 Corinthians 13:5

HOWEVER natural depravity, and heredity, and nervous disorders may tend toward the spirit of fretfulness, taciturnity,

(James 1:19-20) "Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath: {20} For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God."

R5440 "A Christian might have a natural tendency to anger, and it might be impossible for him fully to control this tendency... The New Creature in such case should do everything possible to overcome this, through prayer and persistent effort, and if necessary, by imposing upon himself a penalty for every failure in this direction--some self-denial, perhaps. But if the New Creature should say, Well, that is my flesh; I cannot help it, he might receive stripes, and an earthborn cloud might arise between him and the Lord; and that one would be spiritually sick until he should return to the Father and make proper amends and be re-instated. If this attitude continued, it would seem to make against his ever becoming a member of the Little Flock."

(Eph 4:26) "Be ye angry, and sin not..."

R3151 "Have I the love which is not easily provoked? Indeed, the original omits the word "easily," and gives rather the thought that love does not become irritated, roused to anger. Love enables its possessor to see both sides of a question; it makes of him a veritable philosopher; it gives him the spirit of a sound mind... There may be times when love will need to be firm, almost to sternness and inflexibility, where principles are involved, where valuable lessons are to be inculcated; and this might come under the head of anger, using that word in a proper sense in regard to a righteous indignation, exercised *for a loving purpose*, for doing good--but then only for a time. If justly angry we should see to it that we sin

and touchiness, every heart filled with the Lord's Spirit must oppose this disposition to evil in his flesh, and must wage a good warfare against it. It will not do to say, "It is my way;" for all the ways of the fallen nature are bad: it is the business of the new nature

not, even with our lips or in our hearts, in which at no time may we entertain any but loving and generous sentiments toward those who are our enemies, or toward those of our friends whom we would assist or instruct or correct."

R4978 "Forgiveness "in your hearts" is the condition which is always to obtain there. We should never harbor any other feeling than that of forgiveness and good-will toward all, no matter how seriously they may have trespassed against us. If this be the case, we shall be longing and anxious to exercise the forgiveness outwardly and to express it to the repentant ones. Hence we shall not seek to compel the most elaborate statement on the part of the penitent."

(Psa 141:5) "Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head: for yet my prayer also shall be in their calamities."

R4977 "In this use of the word righteous, the text seems to imply that all who are the Lord's people should be able to give reproof and correction in righteousness in a manner that would be helpful to those corrected, and for their good; in a way that would bring a measure of comfort and blessing and refreshment; in a manner that would be like excellent or fragrant oil, whose perfume would linger for hours..."

CRUSHING REPROOF IS UNRIGHTEOUS

The expression, it "shall not break my head," would mean that a reproof should not be disastrous, not be crushing..."

F291 "Unquestionably, the majority of the Church troubles (and society and family troubles as well) spring not from a desire to

to overcome the old nature in this as well as other works of the flesh and the devil: and few show to our friends and households more than this of the power of the grace of Love. This grace as it grows should make every child of God sweet-tempered.

wrong, nor even from a wrong unintentionally committed, but from misunderstandings and, at least, partial misinterpretations of intentions or motives."

(Eph 4:29-32) "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers... {31} Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice..."

R4759 on Eph 4:31 "The thought seems to be to take heed to our hearts--not to have an ungenerous sentiment. And if such intrude, it must be immediately repulsed, just as we would resist anything contagious. And so we must resist everything of bitterness of spirit, not only anger toward a person, but even a disposition to criticize, or find fault with anything he would do. This is the place to watch our hearts. As soon as the bitter spirit has found place, all the faults of that person will be exaggerated and all his good qualities minimized. Then would come an angry feeling, a bitter spirit of opposition. The angry feeling persisted in would immediately lead to hatred..."

(Heb 12:15) "Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;"

(Eph 4:26) "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath:"

R5974 "No matter what provocation one may have had, he should see to it that the matter is settled as quickly as possible... Anger or wrath must not be harbored... It is sure to lead to permanent bitterness and hatred."

R2202 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0 2006)

THE SUM OF ALL GRACES IS LOVE

--AUG. 22.--1 COR. 15:1-13.--

"And now abideth Faith, Hope, Love, these three; but the greatest of these is Love."--1 Cor. 13:13.

NEXT TO the Great Teacher's sermon on the mount, stands this discourse upon Love by the great Apostle Paul. Both discourses teach the same lesson; but they approach it from different standpoints. As pupils in the school of Christ, all the instructions of the divine Word and providences are intended to develop our hearts and influence our conduct in harmony with the lines of Love. This was the testimony of the Master when he said, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another." Similarly he declared that the entire law of God to men is fulfilled in Love--toward God and toward men: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, with all thy mind, with all thy being, and with all thy strength; and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Since, then, "Love is the fulfilling of the law," and "the bond of perfectness," without which no other grace of character would be truly beautiful, we do not wonder to find the statement in Scripture that "God is Love;" and again, that "He that loveth not, knoweth not God."

Our Lord declares, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God"--the God who is Love. To know God in the sense here indicated means more than merely to know that there is a God; it means more than merely to know something of God's loving plan and character; it means to know God in the sense of personal acquaintance, and an appreciation of his character; and no one can have this knowledge except as he receives, partakes of, the spirit of

God, the spirit of holiness, the spirit of Love. And this spirit of holiness and Love cannot be acquired instantly; it is a growth, and its development is the chief business and should be the chief concern of all who hope to know God in the complete sense which will be rewarded with life eternal.

Hence, after Love's great provision of the Lamb of God, and the ransom of all mankind accomplished by him, all of its various steps for our deliverance from sin and death have been along the line of developing in us this character of Love, the character of God, which, according to the divine standard, alone will make us acceptable before the Father and bring to us his grace of everlasting life. Oh how important then, that we should be "taught of God" and develop this his character. "Learn of me," said our dear Redeemer; and well we may, for he is the express image of the Father's glorious character of Love. And "if any man have not the spirit of Christ [the Father's holy spirit, Love] he is none of his."

To begin with, we are very poor material out of which to form likenesses of God's dear Son. (Rom. 8:29.) We were "children of wrath even as others"--the original likeness of God possessed by father Adam before he transgressed has been sadly lost in the six thousand years intervening; hence, instead of finding ourselves in the divine likeness of Love, we find that we were "born in sin, and shapen in iniquity" to such a degree that, instead of Love being the

natural ruling principle in our characters, it is in many instances almost entirely obliterated; and what remains is largely contaminated with evil, self-love and sin-love and carnal-love; --perversions which are in direct antagonism with the wholly unselfish Love which is the essence of the divine character.

The work of grace for the world, during the Millennial age, will be to make known to all mankind the gracious character of God, and his provision for the salvation of all; and to transform all who are willing from the depravity of sin to the perfection of character -- Love: making mankind once more images of God. It will not only transform their wills, but it will also be accompanied by a physical transformation which will remove from them all the blemishes of sin, and all hereditary inclinations thereto, and leave them in the likeness of God, with a recollection of the undesirableness of sin and its evil consequences.

The work of grace for the Church during this Gospel age is to transform our perverted characters and reestablish them in the divine character, Love. Whoever fails of attaining this fails of attaining the will of God concerning him; and must necessarily fail of winning the prize set before us in the gospel.

But since our transformation of mind or will is not accompanied by a physical transformation or restitution, it follows that so long as we are in the flesh, we shall be obliged to contend against its inherited weaknesses and dispositions to selfishness and sin. But this sharp and continual conflict not only selects a special overcoming class, but serves to develop the desired character more quickly than will the more easy processes of the Millennial age. In consequence, while it will require nearly a thousand years for the world's perfecting, the perfecting of the saints in character may be accomplished in a few years, under the special, sharp discipline and the special course of instruction designed for the "little flock." But whether in few years or many years, and whether with little or much friction of adversity, the transformation and polishing of character must be accomplished. This love-likeness of our wills to the will of God is the end to be sought, if we would finish our course with joy, and with good hopes for the eternal glory.

GIFTS IN THE EARLY CHURCH

In the early Church God indicated in a miraculous manner his acceptance of those who consecrated themselves as followers of Christ, by the bestowal of what were termed "gifts of the spirit." A particular account of these is given in the chapter preceding our lesson. (1 Cor. 12.) The Apostle indicates that some enjoyed several of these gifts, remarking concerning himself that he had more than any of them. Not unnaturally the recipients of these gifts, while feeling thankful for such a recognition from heaven, realized that some gifts were more valuable than others: and the Apostle confirms this view and urges that they seek to use the highest and noblest gifts where several were possessed. And perceiving that the Church was likely to consider that the possession of these gifts indicated such a measure of divine favor as would imply that they were overcomers and would ultimately gain the prize of their high calling, the Apostle took this opportunity, while discussing the gifts, to point out that their possession implied far less of divine favor than the recipients had supposed. To this end he points out in our lesson that these outward gifts of tongues, miracles, healings, etc., were necessarily and properly divided between the various members of the Church for their mutual welfare, and to draw them and hold them together, making them mutually dependent upon one another. This being the case, all could not have the same gifts; but as he points out, God has divided these and set or established the various members and gifts in the body as it hath pleased him. Yet, it is proper that all should recognize the difference in the gifts, and each covet or desire earnestly to have and to use in the divine service the best gifts that God has been pleased to entrust to his stewardship. And then, the Apostle adds, "Yet show I unto you a more excellent way."

FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT MORE DESIRABLE

This more excellent way is that, instead of seeking and striving for the "gifts," which were solely at God's disposal, they should seek for another kind of "gifts," otherwise called "fruits" of the same spirit; namely, Faith, Hope and Love. These gifts are termed "fruits of the spirit," because, unlike the others, they grow gradually, and are not given miraculously. However humble a miraculous gift any member of the Church might have, there would be nothing to hinder him from growing the largest "fruits of the spirit" by careful attention to the cultivation of his heart. If the chief "gifts" were not open to all, the greater and more precious "fruits" were open to all; and to desire and cultivate these is much more excellent than to strive after miraculous gifts or talents which God has not been pleased of his own volition to bestow.

Proceeding along this line, the Apostle calls attention to the fact

that any one, or even all, of the miraculous "gifts" might be possessed, and yet the recipient be far from the condition of heart which would be fit for the Kingdom. The quality which is necessary, as a basis of character, which would make any service acceptable to God or cause it to be appreciated or esteemed by him, is Love. If Love be not the motive power, the greatest zeal and richest rhetoric and eloquence on behalf of God or on behalf of righteousness, would pass for nothing in God's estimation, and bring us no reward from him. If Love be lacking, great ability as an expounder of mysteries, and much study and knowledge would pass for nothing in God's esteem. Even a faith that could cure all manner of diseases, or, to use our Lord's illustration of the largest degree of faith of this kind, a mountain-moving faith (Matt. 21:21) would count for nothing, if, deep in our hearts as the basis therefor, God could not see Love, --for himself and for our fellow-creatures. Even the giving of all of one's possessions to feed the poor, as charity, would count for naught except the moving cause were Love. And even to be a martyr, and to be burned at the stake in the name of Christ, would pass for naught except in the recesses of the heart God could see that the moving consideration to the suffering was Love. Because, all of these things, the acquisition of knowledge, the dispensing of it with eloquence, the exercise of mountain moving faith, and the giving of all of one's goods to the poor, and his own martyrdom, might be done from selfish motives -- to be seen of men, to be highly esteemed by men, for ostentation, for pride, or because of a combative disposition. For this cause the Apostle exhorted the Church to seek for this inestimable fruitage of the spirit, --Love; so that whatever gifts they might possess, either natural or miraculous, might be exercised in a manner that would be a blessing to their fellows and acceptable to God, and bring the users the great reward, --eternal life.

What then is Love, this wonderful quality without which nothing is acceptable in the sight of God? The Apostle does not attempt to define Love, but contents himself in giving us a description of some of its manifestations. The fact is that Love, like life and light, is difficult to define; and our best endeavors to comprehend it are along the lines of its effects. Where Love is lacking results are more or less evil; where Love is present the results differ according to the degree of Love, and are proportionately good. A college professor, commenting upon the word Love, said, --

"As you have seen a man of science take a beam of light and pass it through a crystal prism, as you have seen it come out on the other side of the prism broken up into its component colors -- red, and blue, and yellow, and violet, and orange, and all the colors of the rainbow -- so Paul passes this thing, Love, through the magnificent prism of his inspired intellect, and it comes out on the other side broken up into its elements. And in these few words we have what one might call the spectrum of Love, the analysis of Love. Will you observe what its elements are? Will you notice that they have common names; that they are features which we hear about every day, that they are things which can be practiced by every man in every place in life; and how by a multitude of small things and ordinary virtues, the supreme thing, the *summum bonum*, is made up?

"The spectrum of Love has nine ingredients: --

Patience -- 'Love suffereth long.'

Kindness -- 'and is kind.'

Generosity -- 'Love envieth not.'

Humility -- 'Love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up.'

Courtesy -- 'does not behave itself unseemly.'

Unselfishness -- 'seeketh not her own.'

Good temper -- 'is not easily provoked.'

Guilelessness -- 'thinketh no evil.'

Sincerity -- 'Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth.'"

We cannot agree with the professor that these graces can be practiced by every man, in every place, every day. We must contend that these graces as a whole cannot belong to "the natural man." He may indeed put on some of the gentleness, some of the humility, some of the courtesy, some of the patience, some of the kindness; as men may attach grapes to thorn-bushes and figs to thistles; but with the natural man these graces are wholly put on, and not the outgrowth of the inward grace, the holy spirit, Love; -- not an evidence of relationship to God. Where the imitator has not been begotten again, by the word and spirit of truth, his imitation of certain outward features of Love will not constitute him a son of God nor bring to him the rewards and blessings of sonship to which there is but one door, -- Christ Jesus.

In the Christian, an outward manifestation of patience, meekness, etc., is not sufficient either in God's sight or in his own sight. These graces of the spirit must be produced by the spirit of Love, filling and expanding within his own heart. But in civilized countries many of the graces of the spirit are recognized by the unregenerate,

and are imitated as marks of good breeding: and in many cases they are successfully worn as a cloak or mask, covering hearts and sentiments quite antagonistic to the holy spirit of Love.

The putting on of the outward forms of Love does however mitigate the evils and distress and friction incident to the fall, even in "the natural man," even when these graces are merely simulated with more or less of hypocrisy and deception as to the real selfishness of the uncircumcised heart. But trying times occasionally show how thin is the polished veneer of politeness and gentleness which covers selfish and stony hearts: for instance, the last reports from the recent holocaust at the Charity Bazaar in Paris, shows that the most polished and aristocratic young "gentle-men" of the most polite city and nation of earth displayed the ferocity of brute beasts when face to face with death, and that in their mad rush to escape the flames they knocked down and injured each other and even the first ladies of rank in France, to whom erstwhile they were overly polite. We cannot expect more of a love-veneered selfish heart--even the strong glue of chivalry will not hold the veneer under some such cases. And the time is not far distant when a still greater, more general and more terrible crisis will make manifest to the whole world that much of the politeness and gentleness of our day is only skin deep, and is not from the heart, the fruitage of the holy spirit of Love. In that great crisis, as the Scriptures show, every man's hand will be against his neighbor. In that Day of Vengeance the masks of formal politeness will be discarded, and the world for a short time will get such a glimpse of its own hideous selfishness as will help prepare it for Millennial lessons in Love and its graces, to be given them by the great Immanuel.

The Scriptures inform us that in our fallen state Love is foreign to our natures, and must be introduced into them by the power of God; saying,--"Not that we first loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins." And, learning of this, God's Love, and truly believing and appreciating it, "the Love of Christ constraineth us [to Love]." We are "begotten by the Word of truth,"--the message of God's Love toward us in the forgiveness of our sins, and his call to us to return to his favor and likeness, and his provision of the helps by the way that we might become copies of his dear Son.

The measure of our appreciation of divine Love will be the measure of our zeal in conforming our characters to the divine pattern. A naturally rough, uncouth, depraved disposition may require a long time, after the grace of divine Love enters the heart, before that grace is manifest in all the words and thoughts and acts of the outward man. Others, on the contrary, of more gentle birth and cultured training, may without the grace of God within have many of the outward refinements. None but he that readeth the heart is competent therefore to judge as to who have and who have not received this grace, and of the degree of its development in their hearts: but each one may judge for himself, and each one begotten by this holy spirit, Love, should seek to let its light so shine out, through all the avenues of communication with his fellow-creatures, as to glorify our Father in heaven and "show forth the glories of him who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light."

Perfect Love is patient with the weaknesses and imperfections of those who give any evidence of good intentions. More than this, it is patient even with those who are out of the way, and that oppose themselves to righteousness, realizing that the whole world is more or less under the influence of the great adversary who, as the Apostle declares, blinds the minds of the masses. This manifestation of Love was very prominent in our Lord Jesus: how patient was he with his opponents. Let us heed the Apostle's words:-- "Consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied [in well-doing and patience] and faint in your minds."--Heb. 12:3.

Perfect Love is kind in its methods. It not only seeks to do good to others, but seeks to do it in the kindest possible manner. And who has not discovered that the manner and tone have much to do with every affair of life. In proportion as perfect Love is attained the effort of the heart will be to have every word and act, like the thought which prompts them, full of kindness. It is well to remember the motto of the old Quaker,--"I shall pass through this world but once. Any good thing, therefore, that I can do, or any kindness that I can show to any human being, let me do it now. Let me not defer it, nor neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again."

Perfect Love is generous and has no place for envy, which, on the contrary, springs from a perverted nature --from selfishness. Love on the contrary rejoices with them that rejoice, in the prosperity of every good work and word, and in the advancement in Christian grace and in the divine service of all who are actuated by the divine spirit.

Perfect Love is humble--"vaunteth not itself." It does not sound a trumpet before it. Its good deeds are not done to be seen of men, but would be done just the same if no one saw or knew but God only. It is neither boastful of its knowledge, nor of its graces, but in humility acknowledges that every good and perfect gift cometh from the Father; and it makes return for every mercy to him. Some one has truly said that-- "Love saves a man from making a fool of himself by consequential conduct, and by thrusting himself into positions which betray his incompetence."

Perfect Love is courteous--"doth not behave itself unseemly." Pride is the root out of which grows most of the unseemly conduct and boorishness so common to those who think themselves somebody, either intellectually or financially. Perfect Love on the contrary develops courteousness along with humility. A thoughtful man has said,--"Politeness has been defined as love in trifles. Courtesy is said to be love in little things. The one secret of politeness is to love. A gentleman is one who does things gently, with love."

Perfect Love is unselfish--"seeketh not her own" interests, exclusively. Nothing in this signifies that one should neglect the duty of caring for and providing for those dependent upon him by ties of nature, that he may do good to others. In every sense, "Love begins at home." The proper thought, as we gather it, is that the men and women possessed of the spirit of perfect love, would not think *exclusively* of their own interests in any of the affairs of life. In bargaining they would have an interest also in the welfare of the one from whom they bought or to whom they sold. They would not wish to take advantage of a neighbor, but sympathetically and generously would wish to "live and let live." Put into exercise, this element of Love would have a great influence upon all the affairs of life, inside as well as outside the home and family.

Perfect Love is good tempered--"not easily provoked" to anger. Among the evils abounding and very common to-day, is this one of ill-temper, fretfulness, bad humor, touchiness, quickness to take offence. Yet, to whatever extent this disposition is fostered, or willingly harbored, or not fought against, it becomes an evidence of a deficiency and imperfection of our development in the holy spirit of our Father, and of the deficiency of our likeness to our Lord Jesus, our Pattern. Very few of the evidences of a wrong spirit receive as much kindness and as many excuses for their continuance as does this one. But ⁽¹⁾however natural depravity, and heredity, and nervous disorders, may tend toward this spirit of fretfulness, taciturnity, and touchiness, every heart filled with the Lord's spirit must oppose this disposition to evil in his flesh, and must wage a good warfare against it. It will not do to say, "It is my way," for all the ways of the fallen nature are bad: it is the business of the new nature to overcome the old nature in this as well as other works of the flesh and the devil: and few show to our friends and households more than this the power of the grace of Love. This grace as it grows should make every child of God sweet tempered.

Perfect Love is guileless--"thinketh no evil." It seeks to interpret the conduct of others charitably. If pure and good intentioned itself, it prefers, and so far as possible endeavors, to view the words and conduct of others from the same standpoint. It does not treasure up animosities and suspicions, nor manufacture a chain of circumstantial proofs of evil intentions out of trivial affairs. Some one has wisely remarked that "faults are thick where love is thin." Love makes all possible allowance for errors of judgment, rather than to impugn the motives of the heart.

Perfect Love is sincere--"rejoiceth not in iniquity." It is grieved by evils wherever encountered, sympathizes with all who fall into evil, or who are beset by temptations. In this respect Love prompts to an opposite course of action from that of Balaam, who "loved the reward of iniquity." Balaam, it will be remembered, feared the Lord, and as his prophet could not think of doing otherwise than according to the strict letter of the Lord's injunction; but he did not have the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of Love; and hence, when a reward was offered him if he would curse Israel, he was willing (in order to secure the reward) to conform to the evil proposition in spirit, in intention, while outwardly refraining from saying aught except as the Lord indicated. So, there are some amongst Christians who have a respect for the letter of the divine word through fear, but who lack the holy spirit of Love, and who by reason of a perverted love for wealth, etc., are willing to engage in various practices which come as near to the injury of the Lord's cause as is possible, without openly opposing him. Some of these Balaams are in the ministry and for the sake of salary, and the maintenance of their positions, and the friendship of wealthy Balaks, are willing to preach doctrines which

⁽¹⁾ May 24 Manna, 1Cor. 13:5

they do not believe (respecting eternal torment, etc.), and in various ways to cast stumbling blocks before spiritual Israel. (Num. 22:7; 31:16; Rev. 2:14.) The Apostle mentions these Balaams as being specially represented by false teachers in the nominal Church.--See 2 Pet. 2:15; Jude 11; Rev. 2:14.

Every one who is seeking to develop in his heart the holy spirit, perfect love, should guard carefully this point of sincerity of motive as well as uprightness of conduct. The least suggestion of rejoicing at the fall of any person or thing that in any degree represents righteousness and goodness, is to be deplored and overcome. Perfect Love rejoiceth not in iniquity under any circumstances or conditions, and would have no sympathy but only sorrow in the fall of another, even if it should mean his own advancement.

Perfect Love "rejoiceth in the truth." However profitable error might be, Love could take no part in it, and could not desire the reward of evil. But it does take pleasure in the truth--truth upon every subject, and especially in the truth of divine revelation; however unpopular the truth may be; however much persecution its advocacy may involve; however much it may cause the loss of the friendship of this world and of those who are blinded by the god of this world. The spirit of Love has such an affinity for the truth that it rejoices to share loss, persecution, distress or whatever may come against the truth and its servants. In the Lord's estimate it is all the same whether we are ashamed of him or ashamed of his Word, and of all such he declares that he will be ashamed when he comes to be glorified in his saints.

Perfect Love "beareth all things." It is both willing and able to endure for the cause of God--reproaches, reproofs, insults, losses, misrepresentations and even death. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your faith"--the very center and life of which faith is the holy spirit of Love to the Lord and to them that are his, and sympathetically for the world. Perfect Love can bear up under all circumstances and by God's grace bring us off "conquerors and more than conquerors" through him who loved us.

Perfect Love "believeth all things." It is not suspicious, but on the contrary disposed to be trustful. It acts on the principle that it is better if necessary to be deceived a hundred times, than to go through life soured by a distrustful suspicious mind--far better than to wrongly accuse or suspicion even one person unjustly. This is the merciful disposition as applied to thoughts, and of it the Master said, "Blessed are the merciful, they shall obtain mercy." The unmerciful, evil-thinking mind is father to unmerciful conduct toward others.

Perfect Love "hopeth all things." It is not easily discouraged. This is the secret of Love's perseverance; having learned of God, and having become a partaker of his spirit of holiness, it trusts in him and hopes undismayed for the fulfilment of his gracious Covenant, however dark the immediate surroundings. This hopeful element of Love is one of the striking features in the perseverance of the saints, enabling them to endure hardness as good soldiers. Its hopeful quality hinders it from being easily offended, or easily stopped in the work of the Lord. Where others would be discouraged and put to flight, the spirit of Love gives endurance, that we may war a good warfare, and please the Captain of our salvation. Love's hopefulness knows no despair, for its anchorage enters into that which is beyond the veil, and is firmly fastened to the Rock of Ages.

FAITH, HOPE AND LOVE ABIDE FOREVER

Not only is Love the greatest of all the graces, and really, as we have seen, the sum of them all in combination and unification, but it is the most lasting grace: Love never faileth--will never cease; and he who has this character of Love will never fail, will never cease: It is for such that eternal life has been provided in the divine plan.

Now bear in mind the Apostle's argument to the Corinthian friends: (1) that the gifts of miracles, tongues, etc., bestowed upon them by the spirit, were divided amongst them according to talent or divine wisdom, and were not the results of their own efforts; (2) that he is pointing out to them a grace much more excellent than those "gifts," something that God will be pleased to give to each one of them; a grace of more value than any of the "gifts"--of much more value than all of them together; a grace that might properly be termed a fruitage of the spirit,--Love. And the fact is that some possessed of few talents have proportionately less to contend against while seeking to cultivate the all-important Love.

Having described this wonderful and necessary element of character in its perfection, the Apostle comes back and contrasts it with those "gifts" which they so highly appreciated and coveted, and shows that the chiefest of those "gifts" are inferior to Love. The gift of prophecy he declares will fail, will cease; because the necessity for prophecy would cease: the miraculous power of speaking with

unknown tongues would cease for the same reason: the knowledge of mysteries and the ability to expound the deep things of God will gradually vanish away, as the perfect light gradually comes to all men; for when the full, clear light shall have come there will be nothing hidden, all shall be revealed, and all will be able to see; hence the gifts of ability to understand mysteries of the divine plan and to expound them to others, altho two of the greatest of the gifts, will ultimately vanish in the perfect light: but Love will never fail. It is the greatest thing in this world, and it will continue the greatest thing in the world to come; for God is Love; and all who would enjoy his favor and its reward, eternal life, must possess this, his holy character.

Pausing, the Apostle remarks how little we all know in the present time; even those who have the largest amount of knowledge and who can expound the divine Word and its hidden mysteries, know only in part; they see only obscurely: and while the obscurity will gradually vanish into the perfect light as the Sun of Righteousness arises, yet we will only know in part until that time, when we shall be "changed;" when imperfection shall give place to perfection.

Looking back to childhood we can see that as we have developed physically and grown in knowledge in earthly matters, and have changed our processes of thought and conduct and language correspondingly; so in spiritual matters we should realize that in the beginning of our Christian way we were but "babes;" and we should not be satisfied to remain such, but desire individually to grow up into Christ in all things. And what is true of each individually is true of the Church collectively. The period of the gifts of tongues and miracles was the period of infancy, childhood; as progress was made, under the leading of the holy spirit, certain of those features very necessary and well adapted to the childhood stage passed away, and instead came other experiences, methods and leadings in the truth. Hence, to-day the "tongues" are gone, the "prophesying" in the sense of foretelling future events is gone, the "miracles" are gone, etc., after having served their purposes well. But the Lord still continues to provide in the Church "knowledge," even tho it be but imperfect knowledge; he still continues to provide methods for evangelizing or spreading the news of the truth to the unbelieving; he still provides teachers and helps in the Church. But these are not usually provided miraculously, as at first, but naturally and by the addition of the Lord's blessing to natural qualifications. But all these will cease so far as the Church is concerned when her course is finished;--"when that which is perfect is come," she will have no further need of these imperfect helps.

Three gifts of the spirit, of the kind developed as fruits, will survive; and these three are to be earnestly sought and diligently cultivated; they are Faith, Hope and Love: but the greatest, the chiefest, of these is Love. Faith and Hope, altho they are two of the most necessary qualities for the present time, in aiding us in making our calling and election sure, and two which will never cease to all eternity, will measurably lose their active operations, "when that which is perfect is come;" because in a large degree and in reference to many subjects, sight and knowledge will take the place of Faith and Hope. But Love will never fail, never fade, never grow dim. It will be as active and glorious and useful in the life to come as it is now. Indeed, the sum of the future perfect life will be Love.

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Let us, dear readers, with all our getting, get Love --not merely in word, but in deed and in truth; the Love whose roots are in the "new heart," begotten in us by our Heavenly Father's Love, exemplified in the words and deeds of our dear Redeemer. All else sought and gained will be but loss and dross unless with all we secure Love.

The Editor has a proposal to make to every reader, which he believes will be helpful to all who cooperate. It is this:--

(1) That during the remainder of this year each of us pray every morning, that the Lord will bless us in the cultivation of Love in thoughts and words and deeds throughout the day; and that every evening, when reviewing the events of the day at the throne of the heavenly grace, we remember to report to the Lord respecting our measure of success or failure.

(2) That during the remainder of this year we read carefully and thoughtfully every Sunday morning, alternately, 1 Corinthians 13 and Matthew 5:1-16. That those who would like to read in unison may do so, we mention that the Editor will read Matt. 5:1-16 on August 22, 1 Cor. 13 on Aug. 29, and thus onward alternately. Note the results of your watching and praying; keep on the lookout for all encouraging evidences of growth in this fruitage of the holy spirit: and, when you write to us, if you please, mention your progress in *willing* to Love and in *practicing* it; we are specially glad to know of your growth *both* in grace and in knowledge.