

August 23

And now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love. 1 Corinthians 13:13

AS love is the most excellent thing, so is it the most enduring,...for will not faith

R2155 In 2 Peter 1 "The seventh addition is charity, love,—the bond of perfectness which unites all the other graces, and as a name stands for them all."

R2202 "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...

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...

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 — 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."

(Col 3:8-14 KJV) "Put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth... (12) Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; (13) Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another... (14) And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness."

(Col 3:12 WNT) "Clothe yourselves therefore, as God's own people holy and dearly loved, with tender-heartedness, kindness, lowliness of mind, meekness..."

practically come to an end when we shall see and know thoroughly? And will not hope practically be at an end when we shall reach the fruition of all our hopes and be possessors of the fullness of our heavenly Father's promises? Love, however, will

R2481 "(1) Bowels of mercies, or, in more modern language, *compassionate sentiments*; a disposition toward largeness and generosity of heart toward everybody and everything—toward the saints, toward our neighbors and friends and relatives, toward our enemies... It would imply (2) kindness toward all; (3) humbleness of mind, the reverse of boastfulness, headiness, arrogance; (4) meekness, or gentleness of disposition; (5) long-suffering, or patient endurance with the faults and weaknesses of others. It implies that we...bear with each other's peculiarities of temperament and disposition, freely forgiving one another, if there because of offence found in each other—learning the meanwhile to correct ourselves, as we see our own blemishes more or less mirrored in others."

WE ARE NOT PERFECTED AS NEW CREATURES UNTIL THE CORDS OF LOVE MOTIVATE THE OTHER GRACES OF OUR WILLS

R2202 cont. "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.

R2481 On Col 3 "The Apostle would have us see that forbearance, meekness, patience, etc., must not be matters of courtesy merely, or matters of policy merely, but however much they might partake of these qualities at the beginning, the wearers will not be perfected in heart, not be fit of the kingdom, until they have reached the place where these various graces of their wills, or intentions, are bound to them by the cords of love -- love for the Lord, love for righteousness, love for the "brethren," and sympathetic love for the whole groaning creation. Love is indeed the bond of perfectness, the very spirit of the Lord."

R2202 cont. "The measure of our appreciation of divine Love will be the measure of our zeal in conforming our characters to the divine pattern..."

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..."

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...

never fail, even as it had no beginning. God is love, and since He was without beginning, so love was without beginning; because it is His character, His disposition; and as He endureth forever, so love will endure forever. Z.03-58 R3151:5

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... "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 "rejoiceth in the truth." However profitable error might be, Love could take no part in it 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...

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."

BEWARE, SATAN USES COUNTERFEIT LOVE TO HIDE FALSE DOCTRINE

R1864 "Beware of all who make a great palaver about love! For Satan often uses it as the garment of light to cover bad conduct or bad doctrines — whose real lovelessness he would thus screen from criticism."

TRUE LOVE

(Rom 12:9 KJV) "Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good."

R2213 "We are not merely to avoid doing that which is evil, not merely to have no love or affinity for evil; but more than these we are to hate, to abhor evil. And as the love for God and for all things true and pure and making for righteousness is to be cultivated, so the abhorrence of sin and impurity of every kind is to be cultivated, so that the stronger we become in Christian character the more intense will be our love for the good and pure and true, and the more intense will be our opposition to the untrue, the impure, the sinful. The more we learn of the beautiful harmonies of this heavenly grace of love, and the more they become the melodies of our own hearts, the more distressing and repugnant and abhorrent will sin and selfishness, "the spirit of the world," be to us: just as discords in music grate upon our ears in proportion as our knowledge and appreciation of musical harmonies grows. As holiness and sin are opposites, so our feelings toward these must be represented by the sentiments of love and hatred. To grow cool in love for righteousness, is to lose some of the abhorrence for sin. Let us therefore cultivate in ourselves hatred for sin, selfishness impurity and every evil way, that we may find it the easier to cultivate in our hearts the beautiful graces of the holy spirit."

(Mat 5:44 KJV) "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;"

R1330 "The child of God who is studiously endeavoring thus to manifest and cultivate the spirit of love will indeed become more and more like his blessed Master. What contradiction of sinners against himself did he bear! How patiently he bore with the weaknesses and the short-comings of his disciples! And how faithfully he taught them and led them to follow in his steps! There was the perfect pattern of that self-sacrificing love which was set for our imitation.

Well, says one, as he looks into this beautiful law of love, I would like to be fully actuated by such a noble principle, but some people are so despicably mean that I cannot love them. But are you sure you cannot love such people? Is it not rather the sins that you dislike and which ought to be despised by every heart that is truly loyal to God and righteousness? You say it is hard to distinguish between the two; and so it is sometimes, when inherited deformities of character have been fostered and cultivated and even gloried in, as they often are. But here is a way to examine the real disposition of your own heart toward such. Would you cheerfully do them kindness and help them to the extent of your ability to see the error of their way and to overcome it; can you tenderly pray for them and patiently bear with their weaknesses, their ignorance and their lack of development, and try by a noble example to show them a more excellent way? If such be the case, then it is the sin that you despise, and not the sinner. The sin you should hate, but the sinner, never. Not until God's unerring judgment declares that the sin and the sinner are inseparably linked may love let go its hold upon a brother man.

Love, however, properly differs, both in kind and in degree, according to the worthiness of the object upon which it centers. There is a love of admiration, a love of sympathy and a love of pity. The former is the highest type of love, and is properly bestowed only upon that which is truly lovely and worthy of admiration. On this line our Heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus claim our supreme and most ardent affection; and all the good and noble and true of our fellow men, in proportion as they approximate the glorious likeness of God, may also share this love of admiration. Of this same kind is the love of childish innocence; and of this same kind should be the love of conjugal felicity. The chosen life partner should be one beloved in this highest sense; and parental and filial affection should also be established on the same basis, and then the dearest earthly relationship would be akin to the heavenly.

The love of sympathy we can extend to the weakest one that is painfully toiling up the hill of difficulty toward a better life; and affectionately we may reach the sympathizing, helpful hand to such. If we are a step or two in advance of some such on the way, and if we realize a little less difficulty in making the ascent, let us thank God and use our superior vantage ground for the assistance of the weaker ones.

Then there is the love of pity for those so steeped in ignorance and sin as to be unable even to raise their eyes heavenward

to catch the first inspiration toward a better life. Would we indeed scorn the degraded, or add another pang to those already so bruised by the fall? Ah, no; love pities the vilest, sympathizes with the weakest and glories in the truest and purest and loveliest of earth and of heaven."

R3090 On 2 Pet 1 "And to brotherly kindness, charity" -- love. "Kindness may be manifested where but little love exists toward the subject of such kindness; but we cannot long persevere in such acts of kindness before a sympathetic interest is awakened; and by and by that interest, continually exercised, deepens into love. And even though the subject may be unlovely in character, the love of sympathy for the fallen and degraded grows, until it becomes tender and solicitous and akin to that of a parent for an erring son."

(1 Th 5:15 KJV) "See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men."

R3136 "Two evils can never make a good--two wrongs will never make a right. Our sympathy for our blinded enemies is to cultivate our patience and forbearance toward them in thought, word and deed.--1 Pet. 2:21-23".

The Lord's people, so far from ever turning aside to render railing for railing or evil for evil, are uniformly to "pursue that which is good"--that which is right.... Some of the world can learn more of the gospel through witnessing our avoidance of evil and our constant pursuit of righteousness, than by anything we can say to them;--and possibly as they discern the new life in us they may gradually come to have "an ear to hear" the message of good tidings which has wrought this change in us.

The worldly spirit does not approve this part of the Apostle's counsel, but urges, rather, that we should treat others as they treat us--that we should "give as good as we get,"--meaning that we should give as bad as we get. By way of saying as good a word as they can in their own favor along these lines they sometimes accuse the Lord's followers of cowardice. Courage is one of the noble qualities of humanity, and it is quite a trial to some to be considered timid or lacking in courage; and to such this enjoined restraint of word and act is a particular trial. It is not true, however, that the Lord's counsel tends to effeminacy or lack of courage. This matter is well stated in the language of another, as follows:--

"One feature which stands out clear in the society founded by Christ and his apostles is the extraordinary heroism which was shown in the face of death and tortures, not only by men, but by feeble women and tender children. It amazed the heathen magistrates who were striving after *fortitude* by the aid of philosophy. It amazed the wild savages, who mistook gentleness for cowardice, when they found it was harder to terrify the missionary who came with the Gospel than the invader who came in battle array. Quiet endurance may be *more heroic* than violent resistance, and the Christian law of bearing personal insults and injuries meekly tends to the development of the highest courage and truest manliness. There is nothing more courageous, more heroic, in all history than living up to this precept."

(Rom 12:18-19 KJV) "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. {19} Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."

(1Pet 2:19-23 KJV) "For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully... {21} For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: {22} Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: {23} Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:"

(Rom 12:21 KJV) "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good."

R2412 "When the persecutions come, be prepared for them--forearmed by God's Word; for they will be temptations to your flesh: through them the Adversary will seek to embitter your soul and to stir up in you the elements of the old nature reckoned dead--anger, malice, hatred, envy, strife. If this be the effect of persecutions in you, the Adversary is gaining the victory -- you are not overcoming evil, but being overcome by it. The old nature will even call upon its best qualities to fight against persecution--it will call upon your natural sense of Justice to come, help and resist; it will call upon Conscientiousness to agree that the persecution is unmerited; it will call upon Benevolence and Spirituality, your love of family and friends, and every other good quality of your being--all will be appealed to either to fight the persecution or to abandon the course of godliness which led to it...

That is the time to "fight the good fight"--and, triumphing over self--will completely, to accept the buffetings and slanders and misrepresentations of good intentions and good deeds with meekness and patience. That is the time when the Lord's spirit of love, dwelling in us richly, will manifest itself in the control not only of our words and actions, but of our inmost thoughts. If even so much as a bitter feeling against our traducers and maligners arises, it is to be fought, and so complete a victory gained over it that every fiber of our beings will be in sweet accord with our Great Teacher's instructions, "Love your enemies. Pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you. Bless and injure not."...

While you must hate all sin, you cannot hate any sinner and yet have the love of God perfected in your heart. You see that this means that you not only must not retaliate and revile your foes, but must not even *wish* to do so. The evil wish must be conquered and the selfish conditions which gave it birth must be utterly destroyed and replaced with love--the spirit of Christ.--Compare 1 Cor. 4:12 with 1 Cor. 6:10...

"All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." (Rom. 8:28.) It is one of the evidences of reaching the graduating condition of heart, when we are able to take the oppositions of the great Adversary and of the world and of our own flesh *patiently*, uncomplainingly, unmurmuringly, "joyfully" -- as a part of the disciplinary experience meted out to us by our

all-wise and all-loving Lord.

Such is the "good fight." The first battle is the severest, and each subsequent victory is easier; for with each victory the new will (the Lord's will in us) grows stronger, and Hope's sight of the things God has in reservation for the faithful grows keener, and Faith's strength and endurance greater. And with the very first victory come blessings, which are added to after every victory: blessings of rest, peace, joy in the holy spirit and full assurance of faith, as our Teacher promised,--*"Blessed are ye when men shall*

revile you and persecute you and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. *Rejoice and be exceeding glad!"*

From this standpoint, and from no other, is it possible to accept with fortitude and resignation whatever tests of patience, perseverance, faith, hope and love the Lord may see fit to permit to come upon you. In this condition all our experiences will result in blessings, however unpropitious they may appear on the surface.

It is from this standpoint (of victory over self-will -- unto sanctification of spirit

through obedience to the truth) that all the blessings and promises of the divine Word are ours in the fullest sense...

Let our prayers every morning ascend to God,-- "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my Strength, and my Redeemer." (Psa. 19:14.) And every evening let us review the day, judging our hearts (wills) by the Lord's law of perfect love--praying his forgiveness of shortcomings, and thanking our Lord for the strength and grace which brought its victories."

R3150 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0 2006)
"LOVE IS THE PRINCIPAL THING"
--1 CORINTHIANS 13:1-13.--FEBRUARY 22.--

"Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

IN THE preceding chapter the Apostle has recounted the various "gifts" of the holy spirit conferred upon the early Church for its establishment and development. He closes the chapter with the exhortation that while esteeming all of these gifts, each member of the Church should covet earnestly the superior ones; and then he adds, "Yet show I unto you a more excellent way"--something still better than any of those gifts of the holy spirit. Our lesson pertains to this more excellent ambition which should actuate every child of God; viz., the acquisition and development of the spirit of love, the spirit of the Lord. In proportion as we have the mind of Christ, in proportion as the holy spirit dwells in us and abounds, in that same proportion our love abounds.

There are different kinds of love, however, and the Apostle is here not speaking of general love, but of one particular kind, which belongs to God, and to the New Creation begotten of him. There is an animal love, such as the brute creation exercises toward its young, a love which frequently leads to the sacrifice of life in its devotion. This same kind of love inheres in the natural man, even in his fallen condition. It is all more or less selfish love,--ready, perhaps, at times to rob others that it might lavish good things upon those it favors. This is not the love which the Apostle describes, nor is he addressing his language to the natural man. He addresses the New Creation, informing them that the natural man will not be able to receive, to appreciate, to comply with, that which he presents. In order to a clear comprehension of this love, and a hearty acceptance of it as the rule of life, it is apparently necessary that we be "begotten" from above.

It seems impossible to describe love itself; the best we can do is to describe its conduct. Those who possess a love with such characteristics are able to appreciate it, but not able otherwise to explain it--it is of God, god-likeness in the heart, in the tongue, in the hands, in the thoughts--supervising all the human attributes and seeking fully to control them.

Before describing the operation of love the Apostle impresses upon us its importance, assuring us that if we possess the very choicest of the "gifts" already explained, and do not have therewith love, we will still lack the evidence of our being New Creatures in Christ Jesus. We should be merely "sounding brass or cymbal" --making a noise, but having no acceptable feeling or virtue in ourselves in connection with our words. He assures us thus that ability to speak fluently on gospel themes, even, might not be a proof of our relationship to the Lord as New Creatures. The Apostle's declaration is introduced with an "if," which might be challenged, to a certain extent, by the assertion that no one could speak forth with power, with force, the gospel of God's dear Son unless he possessed the spirit of love. Although we have all met public speakers who could deliver very beautiful essays, we have generally perceived a hollowness in their teaching unless they spoke from the heart, prompted by love of the truth,--not by love of applause, nor for love of money.

Amongst the gifts, prophecy or oratory was one which the Apostle commended. Knowledge of mysteries of God is also commended, and large faith is reckoned amongst the chief of the Christian requirements; yet the Apostle declares that if he possessed all of these in their fullest measure, and love were absent, he would be nothing,--a mere cipher--not a member of the New Creation at all, since love is the very spirit of the begetting to the new nature. What a wonderful test this is! let us each apply it to himself. ^[1] Whether I am something or nothing in God's estimation is to be measured by

my love for him, for his brethren, for his cause, for the world in general, and even for my enemies, --rather than by my knowledge or fame or oratory. Yet we are not to understand that one could have a knowledge of the deep mysteries of God without having been begotten by the holy spirit of love; for the deep things of God knoweth no man, but by the spirit of God; but one might lose the spirit before losing the knowledge it brought him. ^[2] In the measurement of character, therefore, we are to put love first, and to consider it the chief test of our nearness and acceptance to the Lord.

The Apostle next takes another line of argument: his hearers already understood benevolence, alms-giving to the needy, to be commendable; and to impress upon them the importance of having love as the controlling principle of their hearts, the Apostle declares that if he should give all of his goods to feed the poor--keeping nothing back--and yet do this without proper love as the mainspring to the conduct, it would profit him nothing. He goes still further and declares, that even if he should become a martyr, and be burned at the stake, it would not bring him the blessed reward sought, unless that martyrdom were prompted, impelled, by love.

But it may be inquired, How could anyone practise such self-denial, such sacrifice, such faith, etc., and yet be without love? It is not our thought that they could practise these and be devoid of love; that there must be some measure of love. We understand the Apostle to make this strong statement of the case in order to show us that our almsgiving, our sacrifices, our knowledge, our teaching, are acceptable to the Lord and appreciated by him, only to the extent that they have love behind them. If love enters slightly into them, then they are slightly appreciated; if love enters largely into them, then God appreciates them largely. If they are prompted wholly by love, then God accepts them fully. If love be only a part of the motive power behind our conduct as New Creatures, it implies that other motives are active in us, tending to neutralize in the Lord's esteem even services and sacrifices performed in his name and upon worthy objects. Let us be on guard against these neutralizing influences, and earnestly seek to be whole-hearted, full of love;-- that our every service of the Lord and of the brethren and of the truth be from a pure heart, free from personal ambition, pride, etc.

Having given us such a conception of the importance of love, the Apostle proceeds to describe what it is and what it is not--how it operates, and how it does not operate or conduct itself. Let us each make a practical application of this matter to himself, and inquire within: Have I such a love, especially for the household of faith, as leads me to suffer considerable and for a long time, and yet to be kind? How quickly do I get offended? If very quickly it surely indicates that I have very little of the spirit of the Lord,--love. If I am disposed to resent the trifling wrongs of life,-- if I have the spirit of resentment, am disposed to render evil for evil, and railing for railing,--it marks my deficiency in this greatest of all the graces, so essential to my ultimate passing, as an overcomer, the divine inspection.

Of our heavenly Father it is said that "he is kind to the unthankful." Have I this spirit of kindness-- his spirit? Am I kind to my friends? gentle? courteous? Have I this mark of love pervading my actions and words and thoughts--that I think of and am considerate of others? that I feel and manifest kindness toward them in word, in look, in act? A Christian, above all others, should be kind, courteous, gentle, in his home, in his place of business, in the Church--everywhere. With the child of God this patience and kindness are

[1] 1/3 Mar. 7 Manna, 1 John 4:12

[2] 1/3 Mar. Manna

not merely put on, as grapes might be tied to a thorn-bush, but, on the contrary, they are the *fruits* of the spirit--growths from or results of having come into fellowship with God, learned of him, received of his spirit of holiness, spirit of love.

Have I the love that envieth not, so that I can see others prosper and rejoice in their prosperity, even if for the time my own affairs be not so prosperous? This is generosity, the very opposite of jealousy and envy. The root of envy is selfishness: envy will not grow upon the root of love. Love envies not, but rejoices in the prosperity of all that is good.

Have I the love that vaunteth not itself?--the love that tends to humility, that is not boastful, not puffed up? 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.*" Boasting--over self-esteem --has led many a man not only into folly, but sometimes into gross sins, in his endeavor to make good his boasts. The spirit of the Lord is a spirit of a sound mind, which not only seeks generously to esteem others, but also soberly to estimate oneself, and not to be puffed up.

Have I the love which does not behave itself unseemly -- discourteously, impolitely? Politeness has been defined as love in trifles. Courtesy is said to be love in little things. The secret of politeness is either a surface polishing or love in the heart. As Christians we are to have the heart-love, which will prompt us to acts of kindness and courtesy, not only in the household of faith, but in our homes and in our dealings with the world.

Have I the love that seeketh not her own merely? --that might even be willing to let some of her own rights be sacrificed in the interests of others?--or have I the selfishness which not only demands my own rights on every occasion, but which demands those rights regardless of the convenience, comfort and rights of others? To have love in this particular means that we will be on guard against taking any unjust advantage of others, and to prefer rather to suffer a wrong than to do a wrong,--to suffer an injustice than to do injustice.

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. He perceives that exasperation and violent anger are unbecoming and worse than that, injurious, not only toward those against whom they may be directed, but injurious in their effect also upon his own heart and body. 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 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.

To be easily provoked is to have a bad temper, to get worked up into a passion, where evil looks and evil words and angry sentiments are involved. This is wholly contrary to the spirit of love, and whoever is on the Lord's side and seeking to be pleasing to him and to attain to an overcomer's position should jealously guard himself against this general besetment of our day. ⁽³⁾Those begotten of the holy spirit should all be good tempered. In no way can we better show forth the praises of him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light than by the exhibition of the spirit of love in the daily affairs of life.

Have I the spirit of love which thinketh no evil? --which is guileless, not suspicious of evil or looking for faults in others, or attributing to them evil motives? It is an old adage that "faults are thick where love is thin."

The Revised Version presents a slightly different thought here-- "Taket not account of evil"--does not charge up the wrong against the evil-doer, as if waiting for an apology or a restitution or an opportunity to "get even." But while love passes over offenses and takes no account of them, holding no grudges, this would not mean that love would necessarily treat evil-doers in precisely the same manner that it would treat its friends. It might be proper or necessary, even, to take some notice of the offenses to the extent of not manifesting the same cordiality as before, but no hatred, malice or strife should be manifested--nothing but kindness and gentleness,

leaving the door of opportunity open for a full reconciliation as soon as possible; doing all that could be done to promote a reconciliation and evincing a willingness to forgive and forget the wrong.

Have I the love which rejoices not in iniquity (inequity) but rejoices in the truth? ⁽⁴⁾Are the principles of right and wrong so firmly fixed in my mind, and am I so thoroughly in accord with the right and so opposed to the wrong that I would not encourage the wrong, but must condemn it, even if it brought advantage to me? Am I so in accord with right, with truth, that I could not avoid rejoicing in the truth and in its prosperity, even to the upsetting of some of my preconceived opinions, or to the disadvantage of some of my earthly interests? The love of God which the Apostle is here describing as the spirit of the Lord's people, is a love which is far above all selfishness, and is based upon fixed principles which should, day by day, be more and more distinctly discerned, and always firmly adhered to at any cost.

Have I the love that beareth all things?--that is impregnable against the assaults of evil? that resists evil, impurity, sin and everything contrary to love? Have I the love that believeth all things? that is unwilling to impute evil to another unless forced so to do, by indisputable evidences?--that would rather believe good than evil about everybody?--that would take no pleasure in hearing evil, but would be disposed to resent it? Have I the love that hopeth all things, that perseveres under unfavorable conditions, and continues to hope for and to labor for those who need my assistance? Have I the love that endureth all things?-- that is, that continues to hope for the best in regard to all and to strive for the best, and that with perseverance --not easily discouraged?

As disciples or pupils of Christ, we are in his school, and the great lesson which he is teaching us day by day, and the lesson which we must learn thoroughly if we would attain the mark of the prize of our high calling in all its various features and ramifications, is the lesson of Love. It takes hold upon and relates to all the words and thoughts and doings of our daily lives. As the poet has said,

"As every lovely hue is light,--so every grace is love."

Next the Apostle points out that ⁽⁵⁾as love is the most excellent thing, so is it the most enduring. The gift of prophecy would pass away; the value and necessity for speaking with other tongues would cease; and all knowledge of the present time, imperfect as it is, must surely cease to be valuable when the perfections of the new dispensation are fully ushered in. The very best informed now know only in part; but when perfection shall be attained in the Kingdom, and under its ministration, all the partial and imperfect conditions of the present time will have been superseded, and only the one thing may surely be said to endure and be everlasting,--and that one thing is Love.

An illustration of the growth which we must expect as between the present knowledge and attainments and those of the future, is of the child and the growth to manhood. Another illustration is seeing obscurely in one of the old-time mirrors, which gave but imperfect reflections. With the perfections of the new condition we will see perfectly, know perfectly, understand perfectly. Just so the gifts which were in the early Church were very suitable to it, as fitted to its infantile condition; but as it would develop to maturity the value of those "gifts" would diminish, and they would be no more; but higher developments of divine favor were to be expected, faith, hope and love. All three of these the Church of God is to cultivate, and to esteem as *fruits* of the spirit, far above the *gifts* of the spirit,-- and the greatest of these three is Love.

Love also is the most enduring; ⁽⁶⁾for will not faith practically come to an end when we shall see and know thoroughly? And will not hope practically be at an end when we shall reach the fruition of all our hopes and be possessors of the fulness of our heavenly Father's promises? Love, however, will never fail, even as it had no beginning. God is love, and since he was without beginning, so love was without beginning; because it is his character, his disposition; and as he endureth forever, so love will endure forever. Whoever, therefore, learns thoroughly the lessons of this present time in the school of Christ, and thus becomes well stocked with this wonderful grace of love, lays up treasures which may be his to all eternity--a great blessing to himself and to all with whom he comes in contact now; and a blessing to the world to which he will be permitted to minister during the Millennium;--a blessing everlasting, because it is a seal of divine approval.

⁽⁴⁾ Nov. 10 Manna, 1Cor. 13:6

⁽⁵⁾ ½ Aug. 23 Manna, 1Cor. 13:13

⁽⁶⁾ ½ Aug. 23 Manna

⁽³⁾ 1/3 March 7 Manna