

July 15

*Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, ...and have not love, it profiteth me nothing. 1 Corinthians 13:3*

IN our ministrations to others we are not to forget that money is not the only thing of which people are sorely in need--some need love and sympathy who do not

R5786 "There is another way to feed the poor which is still more important. We may feed the spiritually hungry, and may assist in clothing the spiritually naked... But even this spiritual feeding and clothing would not be acceptable to the Lord unless we do it from genuine love for Him and His and all men... If it is done from love it will be rewarded in Heaven; and it "profiteth" also in his character development for the Kingdom"

R3150 "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..."

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

need money. Our Lord was one of these: His own heart, full of love, found comparatively little companionship in the more or less sordid minds of even the noblest of the fallen race represented among His apostles. In Mary He seemed to find the depth of love and devotion which was to Him an odor of sweet incense, of refreshment, of reinvig-

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... 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"

R2202 "It is the sympathetic ones who are most successful in helping the various members of the body of Christ out of the difficulties, besetments and defilements incident to the following of the Lord in this present time."

R3434 "The Lord's people are beset on every hand with adverse conditions--the world, the flesh, the adversary--seeking to intimidate or discourage or entrap the new creature, so as to hinder its development in grace, knowledge and love, and ultimately to hinder it from the attainment of the perfection and glory to follow, which God has promised to the faithful only. What we need, in order to make us sons and daughters of consolation in

oration, a tonic: and Mary apparently appreciated, more than did others, the lengths and breadths of the Master's character. She not only delighted to sit at His feet to learn of Him, but also delighted, at great cost, to give Him some manifestation of her devotion, her love.

the Church, is a larger measure of love and sympathy in our hearts. In proportion as sympathy and love come in, they will crowd out the spirit of strife and contention and judging and fault-finding; even as they crowded out at first the spirit of the flesh, -- anger, malice, hatred, strife, vain-glory.

As a rule (there probably are exceptions to all rules) those who have the spirit of helpfulness, of comfort, of consolation, and who are able to pour this balm into the wounded hearts of others most liberally, are those who themselves have passed through severe trials, difficulties, disciplines, and who have thus been touched with a feeling of the infirmities of our race, and, more than this, have been touched with a feeling of sympathy for the weaknesses and oppositions which assail the "brethren" in their endeavor to walk after the Spirit--not after the flesh. Those who have not "bowels of compassion," who have little of sympathy, little of desire to lend a helping hand to the weak or the stumbling or those who are out of the way, have much yet to learn respecting the real meaning of the word love, in its higher senses--perfect love, love for the brethren, yea, love that extends to all mankind, even to enemies, as it has opportunity, but "especially to the household of faith."

R2447 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0 2006)

## "A BOTTLE OF SPIKENARD, VERY COSTLY"

--APRIL 9.--JOHN 12:1-11--

*"She hath done what she could."--Mark 14:8*

THE last week of our Lord's earthly ministry was a busy one. The sixth day previous to the Passover was the Jewish Sabbath, which ended at six o'clock in the evening, and it is possible that it was at that time that our Lord and his disciples were entertained by Martha and Mary at "the house of Simon the leper" --probably their father: Lazarus, their brother, whose recovery from death was noted in the previous lesson, was also one of the table-guests.

Our Lord knew that the time of his death was near at hand, and he had given intimations of this to his beloved disciples, but they were so accustomed to having him say wonderful things beyond the power of their comprehension that they probably failed to realize their closeness to the great tragedy of Calvary. This need not surprise us when we remember the Scriptural declaration that our Lord spake in parables and dark sayings --"and without a parable spake he not unto the people:" for instance, his declaration, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." And again, "I am the living bread which came down from heaven; if any man shall eat of this bread he shall live forever." And again, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." (John 2:19; 6:51,53.) Having in mind such unusual language, the apostles would be entirely excusable in doubting the proper meaning to be attached to our Lord's declaration, "The Son of man must be lifted up," and other similar expressions foretelling his death.

Before coming to the consideration of the Bethany supper and the anointing on that Sabbath evening, let us have before our minds the incidents of the days following it, that we may be able to appreciate our Lord's declaration that the anointing with the spikenard was preparatory to his burial. The next morning (the first day of the week, now usually called Sunday), having sent after the ass, our Lord rode upon it to Jerusalem. The people, recognizing the wonderful miracle wrought upon Lazarus, congregated and hailed him as Messiah, the Son of David, fulfilling the prophecy of Zechariah

(9:9), and strewed clothing and palm branches in the way; (hence this is generally known as Palm Sunday). It was on this occasion that our Lord wept over Jerusalem, and declared, "Your house is left unto you desolate." --Matt. 23:38.

It is supposed that it was on the second day (Monday) that our Lord scourged the money-changers out of the Temple, and taught the people there; and we gather from the narrative that it was in his journey on this day that he pronounced the curse upon "the barren fig tree," supposed to represent the Jewish nation--barren of fruit, and therefore rejected. It would appear that the third day (Tuesday) was again spent teaching in the Temple, answering questions, etc., and that evening, as they returned again to Bethany, he discoursed with his disciples respecting the great events near at hand. The fourth day (Wednesday) apparently was spent quietly at Bethany, and on the fifth day (Thursday) the disciples made ready the Passover supper which was eaten after six o'clock that evening--the beginning of the sixth day (Friday) according to Jewish reckoning--the 14th of Nisan. The Gethsemane experiences followed that night and the trial before Pilate the next morning, and the crucifixion later.

Now we come back to witness the hospitalities extended to our Lord six days before the crucifixion, at the house of Simon the leper, the home of Martha and Mary and Lazarus. We are to remember that our Lord was a visitor in those parts, his home, to the extent that he ever had one, being in Galilee, and the most of his time spent there. "He would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him." (John 7:1.) But now the time for his sacrifice had come, and in harmony therewith he came amongst his enemies,--altho it was known that prominent Jews sought to kill him and also sought the death of Lazarus, who was a living witness to his Messianic power.

We may suppose that this was no ordinary supper, but in the nature of a feast or banquet in our Lord's honor. Nevertheless, one incident connected with it so outshone all its other features that the

narrator mentions it alone--the anointing of our Lord with the "spikenard ointment, very costly." Our Lord himself declared, "Whosoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also which this woman hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her." (Mark 14:9.) It is entirely proper, therefore, that we should examine with some particularity the details of this service so highly esteemed by the Master.

Prof. Shaff says, "By the 'ointment' we are to understand rather a liquid perfume than what we commonly know as ointment." The alabaster box was rather in the shape of a flask or vase, and the breaking of the box (Mark 14:3) signifies the opening of its tyings and seals by which the precious odors were confined. Judas' words of dissatisfaction furnish us a clue respecting the costliness of this perfume, for he says that it "might have been sold for three hundred *denarii*." A *denarius*, translated "penny" in vs. 5, is represented as being the average daily wages at that time--"a penny [*denarius*] a day." (Matt. 20:2.) If we compare these values with present money values, counting farm labor at fifty cents a day (which is certainly a moderate valuation), the three hundred *denarii* would be the equivalent in wages of one hundred and fifty dollars of our money. Thus we see that the perfume was indeed "very costly." There was nearly a pint of the perfume, a Roman pound being twelve ounces. Nor need we question the possibility of perfumes being so expensive, for even to-day we have a counterpart in value in the attar of roses made in the far East. It is claimed that four hundred thousand full-grown roses are used to produce one ounce of this perfume, which, in its purity, sells as high as one hundred dollars an ounce, or twelve hundred dollars for the quantity used by Mary in anointing our Lord. It is said that Nero was the first of the Emperors to indulge in the use of costly perfumes for his anointing; but one much more worthy of tribute, homage and anointing with a sweet perfume was the "Prince of the kings of the earth," whom Mary had the honor to anoint.

Judas was first to object to this as a waste--the difficulty with him being that he loved the Lord too little and money too much. The amount that love is willing to expend for others is, to some extent at least, a measure of the love. Another Evangelist informs us that several of the disciples, under the influence of Judas' words, took the same view of the matter, and spoke disapprovingly of Mary's action. The Apostle John, however, takes this opportunity to throw a little sidelight upon the character of Judas--more than is apparent in the common translation of vs. 6. His declaration is, "Now he said this, not because he cared for the poor, but because he was a thief, and had the box, and stole what things were deposited in it."--*Diaglott*.

Our Lord's words, "Let her alone!" are in the nature of a severe reproof to those whose sentiments of love had no other measure than that of money. It was indeed true that there were plenty of poor, and there would still be plenty of poor, and plenty of opportunities to minister to them; but the opportunity to specially honor the Lord, and to pour upon him the fragrant odors so beautifully expressive of Mary's love and devotion, would not be for long, and our Lord declares that the circumstances fully justified the costly expenditure. He shows himself out of sympathy with the sentiments which balance themselves too accurately with money values. Moreover, we may esteem that in many instances like the one here recorded the persons who are so careful lest money should be spent except for the poor are often like Judas, so avaricious that whatever money gets into their possession very little of it gets to the poor.

On the contrary, it is the deep, loving, benevolent hearts, like that of Mary, which delight in costly sacrifices at times, which also are likely to be deeply sympathetic and helpful to the physically poor. And <sup>(2)</sup>in our ministrations to others we are not to forget that money is not the only thing of which people are sorely in need--some need love and sympathy, who do not need money. Our Lord was one of these: his own heart, full of love, found comparatively little companionship in the more or less sordid minds of even the noblest of the fallen race represented amongst his apostles. In Mary he seemed to find the depth of love and devotion which was to him an odor of sweet incense, of refreshment, of reinvigoration, a tonic; and Mary apparently appreciated, more than did others, the lengths and breadths and heights and depths of the Master's character; she not only delighted to sit at his feet to learn of him, but now delighted, at a great cost, to give him some manifestation of her devotion, her love.

She poured the perfume first upon our Lord's head (Mark 14:3), the usual custom, and then the remainder she poured upon his feet. But the Apostle John, in recording the matter, seems to have forgot-

ten entirely the anointing of our Lord's head, so deeply was he impressed with the still more expressive devotion manifested in the anointing of the feet and the wiping of them with the hairs of her head. It is indeed a picture of love--a devotion well worthy of being told as a memorial. Some one has said,--

"She took 'woman's chief ornament' and devoted it to wiping the travel-stained feet of her Teacher; she devoted the best she had to even the least honorable service for him. It was the strongest possible expression of her love and devotion. She gave her choicest treasures in the most self-devoted manner. She was bashful and retiring, and could not speak her feelings, and therefore she expressed them in this manner."

We are not surprised to learn that the whole house was filled with the odor; and we doubt not that the odor remained for a long time; but far more precious than that was the sweet odor of Mary's heart-affections which the Lord accepted and will never forget, and the sweet odor of her devotion which has come down through the centuries to us, bringing blessing to all true hearts who have honored her service and desired to emulate her conduct.

<sup>(3)</sup>It is not our privilege to come into personal contact with our dear Redeemer, but we have, nevertheless, many opportunities for doing that which to some extent will correspond to Mary's act--it is our privilege to anoint the Lord's "brethren" with the sweet perfume of love, sympathy, joy and peace, and the more costly this may be as respects our self-denials, the more precious it will be in the estimation of our Elder Brother, who declared that in proportion as we do or do not unto his brethren, we do or do not unto him. (Matt. 25:40,45.) Moreover, he represents these "brethren" in a figure as "members of his body;" and from this standpoint we see that, while it is not our privilege to pour the perfume upon the Head of the body, now highly exalted far above angels, principalities and powers, and every name that is named--next to the Father,--it is our privilege to pour the perfume upon the feet of Christ--the last living members of his Church of this Gospel age.

We know not to what extent the closing years of this Gospel age may correspond to the closing days of our Lord's ministry--we know not how similar may be the experiences of the "feet" of the body of Christ to the experiences of the Head of the body; we do know, however, that in any event it is our blessed privilege to comfort one another, to encourage one another, to sustain one another, in the trials incident to our "filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ." (Col. 1:24.) And to whatever extent we would improve these opportunities, as did Mary, we must first appreciate them as she did.

Nothing in this suggestion is intended to imply any neglect of the members of our natural families "according to the flesh:" attentions to these are proper always, and are generally so understood, and should more and more be appreciated and used in proportion as the Lord's people receive freely and fully of his spirit of love,--kindness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering. But we emphasize that which the Scriptures emphasize, namely, that our interest and efforts are not to be confined to those of fleshly tie, but, on the contrary, are to be "especially to the household of faith." (Gal. 6:10.) There will be other and future opportunities of doing good to mankind in general, but the opportunity for serving "the body of Christ" is limited to the present age.

*Apropos* of this propriety of doing good to others --expressing our love by our conduct as well as by our words, to the members of our families as well as to the members of the body of Christ, we quote the words of another,--

"The sweetest perfume that the home circle ever knows arises from deeds of loving service which its members do for each other. The sweetest perfumes of our homes do not arise from elegant furniture, soft carpets, elegant pictures, or luxurious viands. Many a home, having all these, is pervaded by an atmosphere as tasteless and odorless as bouquets of waxen flowers."

Another has said,--

"If my friends have alabaster boxes full of fragrant perfume of sympathy and affection laid away, which they intend to break over my body, I would rather they would bring them out in my weary and troubled hours, and open them, that I might be refreshed and cheered with them while I need them....I would rather have a plain coffin without a flower, a funeral without a eulogy, than a life without the sweetness of love and sympathy.... Flowers on the coffin cast no fragrance backward on the weary road."

<sup>(2)</sup> July 15 Manna, 1 Cor. 13:3

<sup>(3)</sup> ½ Nov. 16 Manna – Other ½ is on R2744

**"A MORE EXCELLENT WAY"**

(1 Cor. 12:31 KJV) *"But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way."*

SM570-172 "The Apostle distinctly foretells the discontinuance of these "gifts," saying, "Whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away." (1 Cor. 13:8.) He clearly intimates the reason for the discontinuance to be that the Church would gradually come into a more developed condition, in which these gifts would no longer be necessary, but give place to a higher, nobler and more certain manifestation of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit...

He wished them to realize that they might have these gifts and yet come very far short of being acceptable to the Lord. He would have them understand that the "fruits" of the Spirit were a higher manifestation and better testimony than the "gifts." The "gifts" were miracles, tongues, interpretations, etc.; the "fruits" were faith, hope, joy, love. When exhorting them to desire the best "gifts" he added the suggestion respecting the "fruits" of the Spirit as still better, saying, "Yet show I unto you a more excellent way"—an evidence of Divine favor far beyond that of the "gifts."...

Taking the still higher gifts of prophecy and understanding of mysteries and knowledge, and even rising in the scale of attainment to the position of mountain-moving faith, all these, as the Apostle declares, would amount to nothing unless the fruit of the Spirit were developed, namely, Love. These various gifts might serve a purpose, but without Love the purpose would only be for others, and not a blessing to the individual himself.

Progressing still further in his comparison, the Apostle shows that even generosity is not sufficient; for though he were generous and self-sacrificing to the extent of giving all his goods to feed the poor and yielding up his body to be burned in his faithfulness to the Lord, yet should he not develop Love, the great fruit of the Spirit, he could have neither part nor lot with the Lord in His Kingdom... He concludes that "Love is the principal thing"—far beyond all gifts... He shows that while the gifts would depart, this grace, this fruit of the Spirit, would continue... Referring to the "fruits" of the Spirit, which he desired them to cultivate and to esteem as preferable to the "gifts," he says—Now these abide, faith, hope, love, but the greatest of these [the most important of all] is love, for love never faileth. It will not only be the essential quality without which we cannot gain an entrance to the life eternal and the Heavenly state, but it will continue throughout all eternity to be the quality or characteristic of all that shall enjoy Divine favor forever."

(Mat 6:1-2 KJV) "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. (2) Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward."

R2203-2204 "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-veneer'd 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 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 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...

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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."

## LOVE'S ALCHEMY

"Love is the filling from one's own another's cup,  
Love is a daily laying down and taking up;

A choosing of the stony path through each new day,  
That other feet may tread with ease a smoother way...

Love hides its grief, that other hearts and lips may sing,  
And burdened walks, that other lives may buoyant wing.