

LOVE

Taylor G. Bunch

LOVE

A COMPREHENSIVE EXPOSITION
OF 1 CORINTHIANS 13

By
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REVIEW AND HERALD
WASHINGTON, D.C.

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PRINTED IN U.S.A.

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THE PSALM OF LOVE

If I can speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but am destitute of Love, I have but become a loud-sounding trumpet or a clanging cymbal. If I possess the gift of prophecy and am versed in all mysteries and all knowledge, and have such absolute faith that I can remove mountains, but am destitute of Love, I am nothing. And if I distribute all my possessions to the poor, and give up my body to be burned, but am destitute of Love, it profits me nothing.

“Love is patient and kind. Love knows neither envy nor jealousy. Love is not forward and self-assertive, nor boastful and conceited. She does not behave unbecomingly, nor seek to aggrandize herself, nor blaze out in passionate anger, nor brood over wrongs. She finds no pleasure in injustice done to others, but joyfully sides with the truth. She knows how to be silent. She is full of trust, full of hope, full of patient endurance.

“Love never fails. But if there are prophecies, they will be done away with; if there are languages, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be brought to an end. For our knowledge is imperfect, and so is our prophesying; but when the perfect state of things is come, all that is imperfect will be brought to an end. When I was a child, I talked like a child, felt like a child, reasoned like a child: when I became a man, I put from me childish ways. For the present we see things as if in a mirror, and are puzzled; but then we shall see them face to face. For the present the knowledge I gain is imperfect; but then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. And so there remain Faith, Hope, Love – these three; and of these the greatest is Love.” 1 Corinthians 13, Weymouth translation, 3d ed.

Forward

This little book deals with the very heart and substance of the everlasting gospel. Just as the Decalogue constitutes a summary of the Scriptures, Love is the Law of God abridged to a single word. Love to God when written out in positive and negative commands, produces the first table of the moral law, and love to man, the second table which regulates man's duties and responsibilities to his fellow men. And on these two exhibitions of love "hang all the law and the prophets," or the entire Bible.

What could therefore be more basic than a consideration of the binding claims of love? It is the foundation principle upon which securely rests the government of heaven, which all the cunning efforts of the great deceiver have been unable to shake. In it rests inviolate the free moral agency which guarantees in all intelligent creatures the power of choice so that when the present contest between good and evil is ended, "affliction shall not rise up the second time."

Since love is the only motivating power acceptable to God in worship, obedience, and service, and only those who obtain or regain their early love experience will receive the latter rain and proclaim the final message “in the fulness of divine power,” this little book is dedicated to the leaders and members of the remnant of the church of Christ who have come to the time when they have every reason to expect that the fruition of their hopes shall soon be fully realized.

The Author

EDITOR'S NOTE

The Moffatt quotations throughout this book are:

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Chapter 1 – The Way of Love

“**B**ut covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.” 1 Corinthians 12:31.

This is the only place in the Scriptures where covetousness is spoken of as something desirable and even laudable. Here it is not only commended but actually commanded. Christians are urged not only to covet but to covet earnestly, or fervently, which means with intense desire and determined purpose, to obtain.

There are two kinds of coveting. One is proper and praiseworthy, and the other evil and severely condemned in the Scriptures as a species of idolatry. The tenth commandment of the Decalogue enumerates in brief the things that should not be coveted—the visible, material, and tangible things of life that constitute earthly possessions, including “anything that is thy neighbour’s.” It has to do with inordinate desire to possess what belongs to another by any means possible, even though it be unjust and unlawful. It is the selfish incentive that gives birth to robbery; in fact, it is the source and root of all sin.

On the other hand, the desire for things moral, intellectual, and spiritual, even though possessed by others, is not wrong, because the attainment of the desire does not dispossess anyone. In fact, this class of possessions is best retained and increased by sharing. Even in this life invisible and intangible things are of the most supreme and lasting value. To Christians the apostle Paul wrote, “We look not at things seen, but things unseen; for things seen are temporary, but things unseen are eternal.” 2 Corinthians 4:18, Weymouth.

Who can possibly evaluate the enduring virtues of love, faith, hope, joy, wisdom, knowledge, and character? Yet they are all invisible. They should be earnestly coveted by all Christians. They are incomparably more important and excellent than the material and temporary things of life. The student who thirsts for, and obtains, knowledge does not rob his teacher of that which he imparts; but the teacher is rather enriched by the sharing. Coveting the characteristics of Christ does not deprive Him of what is obtained. Coveting of this kind is of the highest value.

Paul's admonition in 1 Corinthians 12:31 to "covet earnestly the best gifts" refers to the gifts of the Spirit as set forth in the previous verses of the same chapter. These excellent gifts are essential to the welfare and prosperity of the church. Without them Christians would be greatly handicapped in their divinely appointed mission. Some of these spiritual gifts are again enumerated in Ephesians 4:8, 11-15.

Under the ministration of the Holy Spirit these gifts —of leadership, prophecy, evangelism, teaching, and pastoral ministry—result in "the perfecting of the saints" and "the edifying of the body of Christ." "Edify" is of Latin origin and means "to build up." Thus an edifice is a building. The church is declared to be a "building fitly framed together" which "groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord" and is thus "an habitation of God through the Spirit." Ephesians 2:21, 22.

The mission of these spiritual gifts is not complete "till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Ephesians 4:13. This spiritual growth into the image of Christ is necessary in order to protect Christians from being tossed about like inexperienced children and driven to and fro by "every wind of doctrine" taught through deceitful trickery and cunning craftiness by men who "lie in wait to deceive." Verse 14.

The importance of these gifts therefore cannot be overemphasized. They are so vital to the life and growth and very existence of the church that the apostle urges Christians to covet them earnestly, especially those of greatest importance. Later he names the gift of prophecy as being especially desirable for the building up of the church: “Follow after charity, and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy.” 1 Corinthians 14:1 “Set your heart on the spiritual gifts—especially upon prophecy,” is the James Moffatt translation. This statement is better understood when the chapter division is ignored.

The argument that follows indicates that prophecy is used in this text in its broader application, which includes the interpreting of the divine will through the Scriptures, rather than being confined to the foretelling of future events. In this sense the prophet is not only a foreteller but a “forthteller,” one who receives moral and spiritual truths from God and proclaims them to men. Every Christian should earnestly covet the privilege and ability to be a medium of communication between God and man. The apostle argues that this brings a greater blessing to the church than does the gift of tongues.

After telling Christians earnestly to covet these excellent and essential gifts, the apostle adds, “And yet shew I unto you a more excellent way.” 1 Corinthians 12:31. “But if you are searching for the greater gifts, I will show you a more excellent way,” is another translation. “And yet I will go on to show you a still higher path,” is the rendering by James Moffatt. “And now I will point out to you a way of life which transcends all others,” is the Weymouth translation. The chapter division here also breaks into the line of thought.

The supremely excellent way, the way that is incomparable and transcendent, the par-excellent way of life, is the way of love, without which the gifts of the Spirit are useless. While the gifts of the Spirit are excellent and desirable, the fruits of the Spirit are more so, and the first

fruit of this beautiful character harvest is love. (See Galatians 5:22, 23.) Love is placed first because it is basic and fundamental in character building. The other fruits naturally follow, and without love they cannot exist. Love is the center and soul of Christianity, the heart-throbbing impulse of genuine religion.

The question of gifts and fruits of the Spirit is one of relative values. A gift comes from another, although its benefits may be passed along. But love comes from within and is an integral part of a genuine Christian's nature. One is a talent and the other a character trait. The benefits of a gift are of value only when motivated by love. Doubtless Paul possessed more of the gifts of the Spirit than any other except Christ, but he considered them of no value apart from love. In his treatise on love he declares that the gifts of the Spirit are temporary, and when they accomplish their purpose they will cease; but he declares that the graces of Christian character will abide forever.

The value of the gifts depends on the will and ability of the person upon whom they are bestowed, though few persons use such gifts to the full measure of their possibilities. Some may refuse to use their talents, and even bury them, as did the man in the parable. Character acquirements operate continuously and even unconsciously for the good of others, so that their possessors are living epistles, "known and read of all men." Goodness is true greatness, and the supreme ambition of every person should be to imitate the One who "is altogether lovely" "the chiefest among ten thousand."

The crux of the apostle's message is that religious duties, even though they be performed through the operation of bestowed spiritual gifts, are worthless unless the motivating principle is a deep sense of the love of Christ. Unless love is the keystone of belief and the spring of action, the profession of Christianity is mere talk, dry formality, and heavy drudgery,

and from such a religion may we be delivered. The genuine variety centers in Christ, and Christ is the personification of love.

“Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.” 1 John 4:7, 8.

Chapter 2 – The Power of Love

In the statement, “For the love of Christ constraineth us,” the apostle Paul set forth the basic principle that was the secret of the unparalleled success of the early Christians as they pushed forward toward their goal of the spiritual conquest of the world. Love was the motivating power impelling them gladly to suffer persecution and even martyrdom in order to carry out the great commission of their Master. Under the constraining influence of love the church “went forth conquering, and to conquer,” and the gospel was quickly proclaimed “to every creature which is under heaven.”

Speaking of this period, the historian Charles Merivale wrote: “The preachers of Christianity went forth from Judea for the moral conquest of the empire and the world. Much as we may admire the enthusiasm of the Jewish patriots,... still more freely may we sympathize with the inspiration of these soldiers of Christendom, who left father and mother, home and country, and all the associations on which they had fed from infancy, for the glory of God and the love of the spiritual Redeemer.” —*A History of the Romans*} vol. 6, p. 460.

Another writer said: “Animated by an unparalleled missionary spirit, His [Christ’s] followers traversed the length and breadth of the Empire, preaching everywhere the ‘glad tidings.’ ... In less than three centuries the pagan Empire had become Christian not only in name but also very largely in fact.”—PHILIP MYERS, *General History* (rev. ed.), p. 282. The achievements of these love-controlled soldiers of the cross as they

marched forward under the bloodstained banner of Prince Emmanuel against the seemingly insurmountable obstacles of fossilized Judaism and entrenched heathenism are unparalleled in the history of mankind.

The word *constrain* has both a positive and a negative aspect. It has the meaning of compulsion and repression, of compelling to, or restraining from, certain actions. It impels us to do what is right and restrains us from doing evil. In the latter sense it holds us within the bounds of Christian rectitude and signifies to confine, coop up, or keep within narrow limits, as in the “narrow way” of holiness and self-discipline. On the other hand, the word indicates the power that holds a person to his task, pressing him into service. Love compressed with irresistible power all the energy and zeal of the apostle into one channel and limited him to the one great goal of life, to the exclusion of all other interests.

Love as used in our text includes both Christ’s love for us and our love for Him, for the two are inseparable. We love Him because He first loved us, for love begets love. Of all the attributes that qualified Christ for His redeeming mission, love was the greatest. It was the power that brought Him from the courts of glory to this dark world, that restrained Him from evil under the fiercest onslaughts of the enemy, that sent Him forth in loving and unselfish ministry for lost humanity, and that led Him on the bloodstained path through Gethsemane to Calvary. The record is, “Having loved his own ... ,he loved them unto the end.”

This divine exhibition of unchanging love is beautifully set forth in this paraphrase of Romans 8:35-39: Who shall separate us from the love of Christ: shall the tribulations of the world, or distress over the problems of life, or the persecution of enemies, or the expectation of famine, or the prospect of nakedness, or the peril of temptations, or the sword of the destroyer? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death with its haunting fears, nor life with its many cares, nor evil angels seeking to

deceive us, nor wicked principalities arrayed against us, nor powers of darkness under satanic leadership, nor things present with their pressing claims, nor things to come with their dark shadows and unknown trials, nor height of joy, nor depth of sorrow, nor any other creature, influence, or circumstance, shall be able, for a single moment, to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

All rational human beings are under the control of their motives, which the Scriptures call the reins of the heart. Character and conduct are determined by whether the motives are good or bad, high or low. The love of Christ is a spiritual force of limitless power. It is the supreme, activating principle of Christianity. Without this constant constraint the profession of discipleship is spurious. It gives those who possess it the heavenly mold, keeping them from worldly influences and sinful indulgences. It is the wellspring from which have issued the heroic deeds of valor, making up the honor roll of the faithful.

Jesus declared that the widow's gift of two mites was greater in the estimation of Heaven than the combined sum given by the rich out of their ample treasures. This was because her sacrifice was motivated by a greater love. The value of a work accomplished or the extent of a sacrifice made is not determined by its magnitude, but by the motive underlying the action. Intense activity without love is of little value, for it is the service of love that God esteems, and when this is lacking even religious rites and ceremonies are an offense to Him.

When the early Christians lost their first love they lost all that was of worth in their religion. It was the beginning of an apostasy that ended in the Dark Ages. After commending them for their unwearying missionary activity and their ability to judge false apostles and find them wanting, the great Lover of men said, "Yet I have this against you—that you no longer love Me as you did at first. Be mindful, therefore, of the height from which you have fallen. Repent at once, and act as you did at first, or else I

will surely come and remove your lampstand out of its place—unless you repent.” Revelation 2:4, 5, Weymouth.

The Christians of this period were busy, but theirs was not (‘the work of faith” or (‘the labor of love” that God values. Diminished love gave evidence of other attractions and interests that were supplanting affection for Christ. The church was deserting her Lord in the pathway of love, and in spite of the purity and correctness of her doctrines the warmth of affection had given place to a lifeless orthodoxy. The perfect functioning of ecclesiastical machinery can never be a substitute for love and its works. When the church permits service to displace Christ, or programs to take the place of spirituality, or activity to become a substitute for the fellowship of saints, tragedy is at the door.

Christ counsels the church to remember with joy the high first-love state from which they have fallen, and then never to be satisfied until they have returned to the highlands of love and spiritual power. The relation between Christ and His church is illustrated in the Scriptures as that between the bridegroom and his bride. If the loss of love in the home is not remedied, the results will eventually be tragic. To encourage repentance and reformation, Christ threatens to remove the candlestick that makes the church the light of the world. Her high privilege in the sanctuary will be canceled. When love fails, the illuminating power of the church dims and goes out in darkness. It is because God is love that He is the source of light, and His people are lights in the world only when they reveal the love of God in their lives.

In the seventh of His letters to the churches of Asia, which describe the spiritual state of the church universal in the seven periods of its existence, Christ brings against the present-day church the heavy charge of lukewarmness in affection and devotion. He declares that the spiritual condition of His people is so nauseating to Him that unless they repent He will reject them with loathing. Lukewarmness is a compromise

between the fervor of the apostles and the cold indifference of the heathen, but even the latter is preferable to the deceptive state of Pharisaism. (See Revelation 3:14-21.)

Modern Christians, like those of old, are failing in love. They are spiritually “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked”; being ignorant of their condition, they are boasting of being “rich, and increased with goods,” and having “need of nothing.” As a part of the remedy for the present lukewarm state of professed Christians, Christ counsels them to obtain from Him “gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich.” Chief among the virtues that constitute spiritual riches is the gold of love. To obtain this treasure from Him who is the very essence and source of love is the paramount need of the church today.

Acceptance of the love message of Christ will quickly change the present lukewarm situation and bring the remnant of His people back to the fervent devotion needed to lighten the earth with the glory of divine truth. If Christians could only realize from what heights of love they have fallen, and how willing Christ is to forgive and restore them to divine favor, they would love Him fervently, for it is still true that “to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little,” and the pardon of many sins produces much love. (See Luke 7:36-50.)

Christ follows His severe reproof and offered remedy with the most wonderful love appeal contained in Holy Writ: “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent. Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me. To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.” Revelation 3:19-21.

The foregoing is beautifully summed up in the following statement: “The smallest duty done in sincerity and self-forgetfulness, is more pleasing to God than the greatest work when marred with self-seeking. He looks to see how much of the spirit of Christ we cherish, and how much of the likeness of Christ our work reveals. He regards more the love and faithfulness with which we work than the amount we do. Only when selfishness is dead, when strife for supremacy is banished, when gratitude fills the heart, and love makes fragrant the life,—it is only then that Christ is abiding in the soul, and we are recognized as laborers together with God.”—Mrs. E. G. White, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 402.

Let us pray this beautiful prayer: “Lord, take my heart; for I can not give it. It is Thy property. Keep it pure, for I can not keep it for Thee. Save me in spite of myself, my weak, unchristlike self. Mold me, fashion me, raise me into a pure and holy atmosphere, where the rich current of Thy love can flow through my soul.”—*Ibid.*, p. 159.

Chapter 3 – The Law of Love

The Decalogue is the royal law of heaven, the constitution of the divine government, the standard of God's righteousness, the rule of the coming judgment; and genuine obedience to its precepts has its motive power in love. Jesus made this clear when He said, 'If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments.' John 14:15, R.V.

The obedience of love is possible only through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, who is given only "to them that obey him." Acts 5:32. It is indeed the fruit of the Spirit. Said Jesus, "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." John 14:20, 21.

A question from one of the disciples brought forth a still further comment in which Jesus emphasized the inseparable connection between love and obedience: "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings." Verses 23, 24.

The Father loves those who love His Son, and the evidence of love for Christ is also the evidence of love for the Father. Through the Holy Spirit the Trinity abides in the hearts of those who obey through love. The unseen Christ manifests the reality of His presence to those who serve and obey Him because they love Him. Love is the key that unlocks the

holy of holies and admits the believer into the presence and fellowship of the members of the Godhead.

Profession of affection for Christ is valueless without obedience. Jesus declared, "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." Matthew 7:21. Some may boast of close fellowship and loyal service, but because of their lack of obedience He will say to them in the time of recompense, "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Verse 23.

Where there is deep love for Christ the necessity of obedience to His law need not be greatly emphasized, for love naturally recognizes His administrative authority. The love tie that binds Christ to His church is symbolized in the Scriptures by the marriage relationship, and the law of marriage is automatically obeyed by the husband and wife who dearly love each other. To them obedience and service are a pleasure.

The Decalogue is an expression of the nature of the Law-giver, a revelation of His character. In Him love and law are blended, for He is not only the most outstanding example of love but also the highest form of morality. His heart and His will can never be antagonistic to each other. In Him "mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Psalms 85:10. The obedience that does not spring from love is always formal, legal, and mechanical; and such religion is loveless, lifeless, and Christless. In fact, it is an offense to God.

The Jews, and especially the scribes and Pharisees, placed great emphasis on obedience to law; but losing sight of the Law-giver, they ceased to love Him, and their obedience was unacceptable. The apostle Paul declared that when he belonged to the strictest sect of the Pharisees he was so meticulous in his obedience that "touching the righteousness which is in the law" he was "blameless." (See Philippians 3:4-7.) To His

disciples Jesus said, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 5:20.

Obedience on the basis of legality, or obligation to duty, becomes burdensome and even insipid. But when love is the ruling principle, submission to authority is a pleasure. "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart," declared the psalmist; and the apostle of love wrote, "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous." Psalms 40:8; 1 John 5:2, 3. Love knows no burden or sacrifice. It beautifies even the hardships and difficulties of life.

Under the new covenant the principles of the Decalogue are transferred by the Holy Spirit from the Scriptures and the tables of stone to the mind and the fleshy tables of the heart. "All things are become new" to those who become "partakers of the divine nature," so that they "do by nature the things contained in the law." To the converted heart obedience is natural and disobedience unnatural, so that love becomes the supreme law of Christ's kingdom.

No government can exist without law, and the reign of Christ in the kingdoms of both grace and glory is the reign of law. Jesus emphatically declared that His coming in no wise affected the perpetuity and authenticity of the law, and that not even a jot or tittle would be changed or become obsolete. He further stated that obedience to even the "least commandments" was the evidence of true greatness, and that disobedience to any part of the Decalogue was the sign of littleness in the estimation of Heaven. (See Matthew 5:17-19.)

We are instructed to pray, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." But how is God's will done in heaven? We are told, "The Lord hath

prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all,” and that His angels “do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word.” Psalms 103:19, 20. Speaking of the motive power of their obedience, Ellen G. White said: “But in heaven, service is not rendered in the spirit of legality. When Satan rebelled against the law of Jehovah, the thought that there was a law came to the angels almost as an awakening to something unthought of. In their ministry the angels are not as servants, but as sons. There is perfect unity between them and their Creator. Obedience is to them no drudgery. Love for God makes their service a *joy*.”—*Mount of Blessing*, p. 161.

In this world men serve from various motives. The slave may serve for fear of the master’s lash, the soldier because of military compulsion, the child to escape punishment, the laborer to provide daily bread, and others for the hope of reward. But cheerful, voluntary, and loving service is the fruit of genuine Christianity. Love is always careful to obey all the divine requirements, so that the Christian is ever asking, “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?”

Christ’s statement is a severe rebuke to those who boast of their love but who do not obey; to those who boast of their obedience but who do not love; and to that larger class who neither love nor obey. Real love is not sentimentality; it is a principle that is constant, unaffected by outward conditions and circumstances. Love never fails.

A lawyer once came to Jesus with the question, “Master, which is the great commandment in the law?” Jesus answered, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” Matthew 22:36-40.

According to the Talmud, the scribes taught that there were 248 positive precepts, the number of members in the body, and 365 negative precepts, or as many as the days of the year, or a total of 613, the sum of the letters of the Decalogue. The lawyer wanted to lead Jesus into a theological discussion; but, seeing through these hairsplitting distinctions, He went to the very heart of the matter with the statement that because the first table of the Decalogue is fulfilled only in fervent love for the Lawgiver, it is the first and foremost in importance.

To “heart” and “soul” and “mind” Mark and Luke add “strength.” (Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27; see also Deuteronomy 6:5.) The “heart” represents the whole inner man, including his will, purpose, emotions, and affections. The “soul” has to do with the spiritual life and faculties. The “mind” comprehends the thoughts and intellectual powers, indicating that man must put intelligence into his affections, so that his is not a mere blind devotion. “Strength” is a manifestation of the physical energies and powers. Intensity should characterize our devotion and service. In other words, man should render the obedience that springs from perfect – sincerity, enlightened reason, complete devotion, and untiring energy.

The first and supreme object of love is God, and the second is our fellow men. Therefore the second command in importance is summed up in the second table of the Decalogue, which is comprehended in the statement, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” This is “like unto” the first in nature, quality, and principle, but must be kept secondary in importance. These two exhibitions of love to God and man embrace all that is in the Decalogue and the Scriptures, representing “the whole duty of man.” (Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14.) The Decalogue has been appropriately called the incomparable summary of the divine law.

God’s law is therefore a setting forth of eternal and unchangeable principles. In *A Commentary on the Old and New Testaments* by Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown, we read, in a note on Mark 12:31: “It is inconceivable

that God should require from His rational creatures anything *less*, or in substance anything *else*, under any *dispensation*, in any *world*, at any *period* throughout eternal duration.”—Volume 2, p. 35.

In Romans 13:8-10 the apostle Paul identifies the second table of the Decalogue by quoting four of the commands, and of them he says, “Owe nothing to anyone except mutual love; for he who loves his fellow man has satisfied the demands of Law.... Love avoids doing any wrong to one’s fellow man, and is therefore complete obedience to Law.” (Weymouth.) “Be in debt to no man —apart from the debt of love one to another. He who loves his fellow-man has fulfilled the law,” is the James Moffatt translation of verse 8.

Although genuine Christians will pay their obligations to their fellow men, the debt of love is perpetual and can never be fully liquidated. It keeps recurring as a new demand for the same kind of delightful expenditure. Love worketh. That is its very nature. It is never indolent. It attempts by every possible means to pay its obligations, even though they are unpayable in full. The law is love in action. There can be no contradiction between law, the symbol of authority, and love, the spontaneous issues of the heart. Love meets the demands of the law, but never exhausts its requirements. The more of the debt of love we pay, the more the obligation increases. “The house of duty is a dark temple if unlit by the Shechinah of love. Obligation may lead some citizens to pay the taxes claimed; it never suggests willing offers of further help to the body politic to which they belong. Duty draws rigid lines, examines each article of a bond for fear of excess. Love delights in all extra occasions of service.

Duty is cool and calculating; love rises to boiling pitch, and its energy longs for work, like the pressure of steam. Duty moves with measured tread; love runs upon its errands, takes pleasure in obedience, whereas duty is glad when the business is accomplished. The law of obligation is a huge

skeleton; love clothes it with flesh and sinew, endues it with life and beauty.”—*Pulpit Commentary* on Romans 13:8-10.

“We are under this law of love for ever, because we are under grace. It is here that our Divine sonship is realized; it is here that Christ-likeness begins. God is love; and in proportion as we are loving are we like Christ and his Father above.” —*ibid.*

Surely Henry Drummond was right in saying that love is “the greatest thing in the world.”

Chapter 4 – The Rule of Love

Christ's standard of conduct for all Christians was set forth in what is known as the golden rule: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets." Matthew 7:12. "As ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise." Luke 6:31. "Therefore" indicates that this rule of life is the practical outworking of what Jesus had just been saying about judging others, intercessory prayer, and the spirit of charity.

The golden rule is the essence of the Decalogue and the Scriptures. It is the summary of the law and the prophets as they are fulfilled through the motivating power of love. "For this is the law and the prophets" shows that this measure of Christian justice and integrity is not something new, although stated in a new way. "That is the meaning of the Law and the prophets," and "For in this the Law and the Prophets are summed up," are other translations. It is the sum of all Bible instruction, setting forth in one sentence "the whole duty of man" in his relations with his fellow men.

The golden rule is a restatement of the second table of the Decalogue as given in its condensed form, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Those who are guided by love, justice, and mercy will treat others as they would wish to be treated if the circumstances were reversed. In it the whole circle of our obligations to one another is embraced, and any act of injustice we may do to others is a violation of its righteous principles.

Christ practiced His own teachings. He lived to bless others. Love beautified and ennobled all His conduct. He was the golden rule in action, and is therefore the only example worthy of imitation. A well-known writer said: "This is the true rule of honesty. It is another expression of the law, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.' And it is the substance of the teaching of the prophets. It is a principle of heaven, and will be developed in all who are fitted for its holy companionship.

"The golden rule is the principle of true courtesy, and its truest illustration is seen in the life and character of Jesus.... That which we do to others, whether it be good or evil, will surely react upon ourselves, in blessing or in cursing. Whatever we give, we shall receive again. The earthly blessings which we impart to others, may be, and often are, repaid in kind. What we give does, in time of need, often come back to us in fourfold measure in the coin of the realm. But, besides this, all gifts are repaid, even in this life, in the fuller inflowing of His love, which is the sum of all heaven's glory and its treasure. And evil imparted, also returns again. Every one who has been free to condemn or discourage, will in his own experience be brought over the ground where he has caused others to pass; he will feel what they have suffered because of his want of sympathy and tenderness. . . . The standard of the golden rule is the true standard of Christianity; anything short of it is a deception.... When those who profess the name of Christ shall practise the principles of the golden rule, the same power will, attend the gospel as in apostolic *times*."—*Mount of Blessing*, pp. 192-196.

The golden rule is all-inclusive, embracing "all things whatsoever," and applies to our dealings with all men, including strangers, foreigners, and even enemies. Every word and thought and act of life is involved. It is far more than a beautiful sentiment to be piously repeated at a religious service. It is love in action, and strikes at the very root of selfishness, which is the source of all injustice and un-Christlike conduct. This

standard is so high that we cannot practice it unless we have union with Christ. Until He abides in our hearts and lives out His own life in us, this measure of love is hopelessly out of our reach.

It was the power of love that impelled the Son of God to leave heaven and come to this dark world to save a fallen race. It made Him willing to be treated as we deserve, that we might be treated as He deserves; to be condemned for our sins, in which He had no share, that we might be justified by His righteousness, in which we had no share; and to suffer the death that was ours, that we might receive the life that was His. Being Christlike will constrain us to labor as earnestly to bring the knowledge of saving truth to others as we would want them to labor for our salvation if the situation were reversed.

Only the selfless can obey the golden rule. An egocentric person cannot love others as he loves himself. We are all members of a self-centered race. The apostle describes it thus: "But of this be assured: in the last days grievous times will set in. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, haughty, profane. They will be disobedient to parents, thankless, irreligious, destitute of natural affection, unforgiving, slanderers. They will have no self-control, but will be brutal, opposed to goodness, treacherous, headstrong, self-important. They will love pleasure instead of loving God, and will keep up a make-believe of piety and yet live in defiance of its power." 2 Timothy 3:1-5, Weymouth. Here are enumerated nineteen forms of selfishness that are to bring to our generation "grievous" or "perilous times," and who would dare say they have not arrived?

Love of self is the dominant passion of mankind. It is the chief form of twentieth-century idolatry. Idolaters are Scripturally defined as those who love and serve the creature, not only "rather than," but also more than the Creator. (See Romans 1:25, margin.) When that creature god is self it is idolatry of the most dangerous type. When the creature is made the center instead of God he becomes his own god. All those who selfishly seek to

please themselves and have their own way will eventually abhor themselves and be displeased with their way. Selfishness cannot but end in frustration and eventual tragedy.

An egocentric person develops self-pity and self-defense. He blames others. The self-serving multitudes are slaves to their own impulses and passions, and they need the deliverance that comes only through the gospel. The self-centered person cannot possibly get along with others or even with himself. He lives a lonesome life, because, in shutting himself up with his own interests, he at the same time shuts himself away from others. Benjamin Franklin put it this way: “He that falls in love with himself, will have no rivals.”

Self-love of the proper variety not only is commendable but is enjoined in Christ’s summary of the second table of the Decalogue, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” Only when a person has this kind of self-love can he practice the golden rule and not violate its principles. Some self-love is proper and even necessary, as long as love for others is kept on an equality with it. In fact, such love is essential to self-improvement, which is the necessary preparation for effective service to others. This is what should prompt a person to obtain an education— that he might better serve his fellow men. It is impossible to love others as much as we love ourselves without self-love of the selfless variety, for the love that blesses others must always measure up to the love that blesses self, or it becomes a species of idolatry.

We can be cured of selfishness only as we surrender to Christ, through His Spirit, for He is selflessness personified. He told His disciples that unselfish ministry for others, rather than the exercise of authority and dominion is the evidence of true greatness. He had come into the world “not to be served but to serve.” Matthew 20:28, Weymouth. He also said, “I came... not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.” How

strange and paradoxical these statements sound to those whose chief demand in life is service for self!

Jesus again stated the principles of the golden rule when He said, “He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.” Matthew 10:39. “To save your life is to lose it, and to lose your life for My sake is to save it,” is the Weymouth translation.

Ellen G. White thus describes the lives of those who are loveless and selfish:

“No one can live the law of God without ministering to others. But there are many who do not live out Christ’s merciful, unselfish life... They plan and study to please themselves. They act only in reference to self. Time is of value to them only as they can gather for themselves. In all the affairs of life this is their object. Not for others but for themselves do they minister. God created them to live in a world where unselfish service must be performed. He designed them to help their fellow-men in every possible way. But self is so large that they cannot see anything else. They are not in touch with humanity. Those who thus live for self are like the fig-tree, which made every pretension, but was fruitless.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 584.

Only those who are “rooted and grounded in love” will “be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge” and thus “be filled with all the fulness of God.” Ephesians 3:17-19. Those who know the love of Christ acquire a love for Christ and for those for whom He died. We can love others as we love ourselves only when we realize God’s love for us and learn to love Him with all the intelligence, physical strength, and spiritual energies of which we are capable.

Chapter 5 – The Commandment of Love

The disciples of Jesus were with Him in the upper room. They had just celebrated the last Passover supper that would have any significance. Judas had already bargained with the chief priests for the betrayal of his Master and had received the sop that identified him as the traitor. In a few hours Jesus would enter Gethsemane on His road to Calvary. Soon the disciples would be separated by His ascension into heaven. Sensing their great need during His absence, Jesus said, “A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.” John 13:34.

This new commandment has been called the eleventh commandment. However, it does not add anything to the ten, but is rather a summary of the Decalogue. It shows that love is the active and basic principle in obedience to the whole law. Genuine Christianity is to love with the same unselfish and devoted fervor with which Christ loved. A short time before, Jesus had said that upon the exhibition of love to God and love to man, as called for in the two tables of the Decalogue, “hang all the law and the prophets.” He summed up the second table in the statement, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” But this summary was not new. It was given through Moses fifteen hundred years before and is recorded in Leviticus 19:18. Jesus sought to uncover the principle of love that was lost sight of under the legalism of the Pharisees.

In the new commandment the love is to be even greater. The disciples were to love one another “even as I have loved you.” (R.V.) Later in the

same instruction Jesus further emphasized this new command: “This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.” John 15:12-14.

Here is the ultimate in love, even greater than the love of self. This kind of love is so great that humans rarely attain it. Paul wrote, “It is scarcely conceivable that anyone would die for a simply just man, although for a good and lovable man perhaps some one, here and there, will have the courage even to lay down his life. But God gives proof of His love to us in Christ’s dying for us while we were still sinners.” Romans 5:7, 8, Weymouth. In verse 6 we are told that “Christ ... died for the ungodly.”

Love for another cannot be carried further than this. In sacrificing his life for another, a person gives up all that he has. It is the supreme exhibition of love. Christ was soon to demonstrate such love on the cross of Calvary, which alone can measure the height and depth and breadth of the love that passes the grasp of knowledge. Jesus said He would show them the greatest proof of His love, and urged them to love one another after the same manner.

John 3:16 describes the love of God for man in the gift of His own Son. 1 John 3:16 is a companion text: “Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.” Someone has said, “Self-sacrifice is the high-water mark of love.” Paul wrote, “And live and act lovingly, as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up to death on our behalf as an offering and sacrifice to God, yielding a fragrant odour.” Ephesians 5:2, Weymouth. This is the fragrance from the alabaster box of love that has filled the centuries and made life livable and tolerable.

Christ did not mean that the law was new in time but rather in experience. He declared that the Decalogue was eternal and unchangeable

and that not even a jot or tittle would ever become obsolete. But through the gospel obedience to this old law would be based on new motives and incentives. There would be a new and fresh reason for love and thus for obedience. “If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another,” said the apostle of love. 1 John 4:11.

Jesus came to “magnify the law” and to “make it honourable.” His advent illuminated its spiritual import. Also He went the second mile in obedience. He loved His neighbors more than He loved Himself, and such love had never been known before. He declared that He had kept His Father’s commandments, and the apostle Peter said that He “did no sin,” and such obedience had never been demonstrated before. The law was thus given a glorious new meaning and had therefore become a new commandment.

Fortunately we have an inspired comment on Christ’s statement in regard to the new commandment so that it cannot possibly be misunderstood: “Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning. Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.” 1 John 2:7, 8. “For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.” 1 John 3:11. “From the beginning” may have reference to the beginning of their contact with Christ as set forth in 1 John 1:1, but could also reach back to the beginning of the reign of sin and the first announcement of the plan of redemption.

Love is ever old and ever new and fresh with every new spiritual experience. It is like the “new song,” which will never become old, because love for Christ and the redeemed will increase throughout all eternity. Christ’s coming to this world placed love in a new and fresh light, and the law in a new setting. It became a new code of conduct to all who through

the new birth became new creatures under the 'provisions of the new covenant, so that "all things are become new," including the old Decalogue. John says that the commandment is new "because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth." The coming of "the light of the world" is what made the change. "That way in which the just have walked, although it may be old, yet may be said to be new in the love of the righteous," is an ancient Hebrew saying.

The apostle again explains this paradox, in another epistle: "And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another. And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it." 2 John 5, 6.

"Love divorced from duty will run riot, and duty divorced from love will starve. The apostle has no sympathy with a religion of pious emotions; there must be a persevering walk according to God's commandments." (The Cambridge Bible.) Truth without love tends to make people cold, harsh, rigid, and critical; and love without the balance of truth makes them emotional, fanatical, and unreliable. Neither is complete without the other. Love without law would be like steam without the confining exacting laws of physics through which it operates machinery.

Love is also the greatest evidence of discipleship. Jesus, after giving the new commandment, said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." John 13:35. In those days the disciples of the various teachers were distinguished by their dress, habits, customs, rites, or teachings; but love would be the badge and banner of the order of twice-born men and women. The evidence of their likeness to Him would be their possession of the same quality of love. The proof would not be in the theological arguments they could produce, in the

orthodoxy of their doctrines, or in the miracles they could perform', but in a love akin to that of their Master.

As long as this love prevailed in the early church, the onward sweep of Christianity was phenomenal. Love and unity among the early believers convinced both Jews and Gentiles of the genuineness of the Christian religion and of the fact that Jesus was indeed the promised Messiah, the Son of God. In His prayer to His Father, Jesus asked in behalf of His disciples "that they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." John 17:21.

Unity with Christ is the only hope of unity among believers. This love and unity make the grandest of all impressions on the world in favor of Christianity, as strife and division make the most damaging. "Where love is not, there hatred is; for the heart cannot remain a void," declared Bengel. Speaking of the love that prevailed among the early Christians, Tertullian said, "The working of such love puts a brand upon us; for, See, say the heathen, how they love one another, and are ready to lay down their lives for each other." It was indeed the chief mark of their religion as well as the chief evidence of the divinity of Christ.

A disciple is a follower of Christ, and a Christian is one who is like Christ. The world today is waiting for a new demonstration of the love and unity and fellowship of apostolic days. This must precede the repetition of Pentecost in the refreshing spiritual showers of the latter rain with which the gospel work will be finished. Now, as then, a Christlike character is the most powerful argument that can be produced in favor of Christianity. Never was the church more in need of living epistles of Christ who are "known and read of all men." When modern Zion knows from experience the delightful obedience of the new commandment, she will again be "fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners."

Chapter 6 – The Magna Charta of Love

The thirteenth chapter of Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians has been called the Christian psalm of love. "It is a glorious hymn or paean in honour of Christian love, in which St. Paul rises on the wings of inspiration to the most sunlit heights of Christian eloquence," says the *Pulpit Commentary*. Harnack declared this chapter to be "the greatest, strongest, deepest thing Paul ever wrote." Though even Plato wrote an essay on love, and many others have done so since his day, the prose-poem of Paul has never been surpassed. "Intellect was worshiped in Greece, and power in Rome, but where did Paul learn the surpassing beauty of love?"

This treatise on love transcends anything else the pen of man has ever produced. The apostle seems to ascend into the very mountain peak of spiritual vision and inspiration, and gives utterance to truths beyond the ability of man. So sublime are its principles that none can question their divine origin. Here is Christianity at its best. It is the Magna Charta of the religion of Christ.

This song of love is divided into three parts: love contrasted, love analyzed, and love abiding; or, the supremacy of love, the characteristics of love, and the permanence of love. The first section embraces verses 1-3. Here love is contrasted with the gifts of the Spirit and the spirit of charity and sacrifice. "Charity," as used in the Authorized Version, is an unfortunate translation, for charity in the true sense of the word is brought to view only in the third verse.

The word “charity” was borrowed from the Vulgate, where it was used to avoid the sensuous and vulgar meaning with which love was often associated in the time of Jerome in the fourth century, and again in the sixteenth century. Love as used most often in the Scriptures designates the higher and nobler form of affection, in contrast with lusts and animal passions. All modern translations properly use the word “love” rather than “charity.” The Revised Standard Version renders the first portion of this chapter thus: “If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing.”

“Tongues” is the first of the spiritual gifts mentioned, doubtless because of the undue emphasis given it in the Corinthian church. In fact, the members of that church virtually made the possession of the gift a test of acceptance with God, as do some modern religionists. The gift was being abused and misused for self-glorification, and the result was envy and confusion. For this the apostle severely rebukes the Corinthians in the next chapter of his epistle.

Doubtless the apostle Paul possessed the gift of tongues, for, of all the early Christian leaders, he did the greatest work in mission lands, and yet the Scriptural record is silent as far as his use of the gift is concerned. There is no indication whatever, that Jesus ever talked with tongues, but His entire life and teachings were exhibitions of His love. The church of Corinth overemphasized the importance of the gift of tongues while being deficient in the greater gift of love.

“Tongues,” as used in our text, may also have another application, that of the ability to learn and use the various human languages. It is estimated that there are nearly 2,800 languages and 6,000 dialects spoken in the

world, and some men and women can speak several of them fluently. After mentioning the “tongues of men,” the apostle reaches the very climax of achievement as far as speech is concerned by adding “and of angels.” Doubtless Gabriel and his fellow-ministering spirits can speak all earthly languages, but their own heavenly language must be far more pure and lofty than those of earth which have come down to us from the confusion of tongues at the tower of Babel. How strange our speech must sound to celestial beings!

The citizens of Corinth were proud of their eloquence and placed great emphasis on the powers of speech, and the members of the church doubtless partook of the same spirit. But the apostle reminds them that to *talk* is far less important than to *be*. What we *are* means infinitely more than what we *say*. Talking that is not prompted by love is like mere noise compared with beautiful and melodious music. In his instruction to correct the misuse of the gift of tongues Paul wrote: “And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?” 1 Corinthians 14:7, 8.

The apostle declared that the most scholarly and eloquent message that can be given in human or angelic speech without the motivating power of love is as unpleasant as a “noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.” (Moffatt.) A gong produces a pleasant tone but is without musical melody. Cymbals make their contribution to the orchestra by the striking together of two brass plates, producing a tinkling and rather inharmonious sound. These clanging sounds are not unpleasant when properly used in connection with other instruments in a band or orchestra, but when used separately are very unmelodious.

Paul compared a loveless message to “a loud-sounding trumpet or a clanging cymbal.” (Weymouth.) Trumpets of brass were especially used to

sound the alarm of war and to call soldiers into battle. Virgil spoke of “the brazen trump, the signal of the war,” and Dryden of the “rattling clangour” of “the brazen sounds” of the trumpet. Trumpets, when thus used, were chiefly characterized by noise rather than by harmonious music.

Adam Clarke quotes a writer as saying, “People of little religion are always *noisy*; he who has not the love of God and men filling his heart is like an *empty wagon* coming *violently* down a *hill*: it makes a *great noise*, because there is *nothing in it*.” What an appropriate illustration of religions of the noisy variety! In the light of the following statement how displeasing this noise and confusion must be to heavenly beings: “But let it be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable jewel of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God’s sight is very precious.” 1 Peter 3:4, R.S.V.

Loveless speaking or preaching is declared by the apostle Paul to be as valueless as a discordant and unintelligible noise. There is much of this variety in the modern world—in Congress, in Parliament, in the United Nations, and even in the pulpit. Every minister before beginning to preach should pray earnestly for an infilling of divine love so that his message will not seem to his congregation like sounding brass and tinkling cymbals. The greatest talents, the most profound learning, and the highest flights of oratory, without the heavenly attribute of love, can produce only the mechanical sounds of “a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal.” Such messages have no melody or meaning, and leave the hearers cold and unimpressed.

After speaking of the mechanical noise of loveless talking, a recent writer said: “On the other hand, love is like a strain of exquisite music vibrating from the strings, warbling from a flute, or pealing from the pipes of an organ; or, better still, it is like the clear bell-like voice of a boy in some cathedral choir, rendering an immortal passage of sacred poetry to

an air sounding like an echo from the minstrelsy of Paradise.”—The *Pulpit Commentary* on 1 Corinthians 13:1.

Jesus was the living psalm of love. His life and character were harmonious and melodious. He possessed the gifts of the Spirit, but it was love that constrained Him and made fragrant His character and mission. A well known writer said of Him:

“Love, mercy, and compassion were revealed in every act of His life; His heart went out in tender sympathy to the children of men. He took man’s nature, that He might reach man’s wants. The poorest and humblest were not afraid to approach Him. Even little children were attracted to Him. They loved to climb upon His knees, and gaze into the pensive face, benignant with love. Jesus did not suppress one word of truth, but He uttered it always in love. He exercised the greatest tact, and thoughtful, kind attention, in His intercourse with the people. He was never rude, never needlessly spoke a severe word, never gave needless pain to a sensitive soul. He did not censure human weakness. He spoke the truth, but always in love. He denounced hypocrisy, unbelief, and iniquity; but tears were in His voice as He uttered His scathing rebukes.”—ELLEN G. WHITE, *Steps to Christ*) pp. 12, 13.

The audience-swaying eloquence of a Webster or Demosthenes or the majestic and sublime language of the angel Gabriel becomes powerless unless the message spoken is motivated by love for the hearers. A pastor’s most beautifully worded sermon is as rasping and offensive to the ear as the unmusical notes of a poorly played trumpet or as the clashing sounds of a clanging cymbal in the hands of an amateur. Love softens the tones and makes the message melodious and appealing. Every messenger of the gospel should earnestly pray that his message will be warmed by the fire from the divine altar and illumined by the light from the heavenly lampstand. Loveless Christianity is a contradiction of terms. It is love that ennobles and beautifies all language, character, and conduct.

Chapter 7 – The Supremacy of Love

“**I**f I can speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but am destitute of Love,” wrote the apostle Paul, “I have but become a loud-sounding trumpet or a clanging cymbal. If I possess the gift of prophecy and am versed in all mysteries and all knowledge, and have such absolute faith that I can remove mountains, but am destitute of Love, I am nothing. And if I distribute all my possessions to the poor, and give up my body to be burned, but am destitute of Love, it profits me nothing.” 1 Corinthians 13:1-3, Weymouth.

The writer ascends from the gift of tongues, one of the lesser in importance, to that of prophecy, one of the greatest in value, if not the greatest, and the one he especially emphasized as desirable in the mission of the church. (See 1 Corinthians 12:31; 14:1.) A prophet is one who speaks for God, an interpreter of the divine will, and prophecy is a message received and delivered under divine inspiration. In a larger sense it applies to the interpretation of prophecy or of the Scriptures as in preaching. Here, however, it seems to refer to the prophetic gift, through which the Scriptures have been given and the future events revealed. We are reminded that “no prophecy in Scripture will be found to have come from the prophet’s own prompting; for never did any prophecy come by human will, but men sent by God spoke as they were impelled by the Holy Spirit.” 2 Peter 1:20, 21, Weymouth.

Through the gift of prophecy the curtain that veils the future is drawn aside and the church is enabled to see events in the history of men and nations centuries and even millenniums before they occur. Prophecy is history written in advance, and "history is the unrolled scroll of prophecy." The importance of this gift to the church is beyond estimation. Through prophecy the future is illuminated. "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts." 2 Peter 1:19. Prophecy leads to Christ, the Daystar, and thus to the dawn of a new day in conversion, and eventually to the dawn of eternal day at the Second Advent. What the headlights on an automobile are to the driver on a dark night, prophecy is to the Christian church in this night of sin.

Prophecy is also declared to be the secrets of God revealed to man. "Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret unto his servants the prophets." Amos 3:7. The revelation of future events through the gift of prophecy is also God's challenge to skeptics and false gods, and is the greatest of all proofs of the divine inspiration of the Scriptures. (See Isaiah 46:9, 10; 48:3-5.) Stubborn criticism must give way before the fulfillment of the unfailing predictions of God's prophets.

But the prophetic gift sinks into insignificance in comparison with love, and the prophet himself, if destitute of love, is declared to be "nothing," a worthless cipher in the estimation of heaven.

Or, if I "am versed in all mysteries and all knowledge" (Weymouth), or can "fathom all mysteries and secret lore" (Moffatt), "but am destitute of Love, I am nothing" (Weymouth). Knowledge is not only one of the chief essentials but also one of the chief quests of mankind. Solomon declared: "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than

rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her.” “Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.” Proverbs 3:13-15; 4:7.

But wisdom and knowledge alone are not sufficient. Knowledge of the head, if it fails to affect the heart and character, is useless and may even prove to be dangerous. The most dangerous criminals today are highly trained men who use their knowledge for evil purposes. The purely intellectual man is cold, calculating, unsympathetic, and unlovely. The wisdom of Solomon brought kings and queens and the wise men of earth to his palace to seek his counsel, but even his wisdom was limited. If a person possessed “all knowledge” the world would make a pathway to his door. Rulers, statesmen, educators, and church leaders would flock to him seeking wisdom for the solving of life’s mysteries and problems. He would be the most sought-after man in the world. But if he were destitute of love, the apostle declared, he would sink to zero in value as God measures the worth of an individual.

If I “have such absolute faith that I can remove mountains, but am destitute of Love, I am nothing.” (Weymouth.) Paul is known as “the apostle of faith,” as John is “the apostle of love.” Faith occupies a prominent place in all Paul’s writings, especially in his epistles to the Romans and the Galatians. There is set forth the beautiful doctrine of righteousness by faith, which is the core of the gospel. Faith is declared to be the substance or groundwork of all that the Christian seeks, and without faith it is impossible to please God. (*See* Hebrews 11:1, 6.)

Faith must precede love in Christian experience, for love is the result of knowledge and acquaintance. Love is greater than faith, because the end is more important than the means, and love is the product of faith. Faith is one of the triune heavenly graces which will abide through time and eternity. “And so there remain Faith, Hope, Love —these three; and of these the greatest is Love.” 1 Corinthians 13:13, Weymouth.

The apostle's inspiration for the reference to a "faith that... can remove mountains" is doubtless taken from Christ's statement to His unbelieving disciples, "If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you." Matthew 17:20. (See also Matthew 21:21, 22.) Such mountain-moving faith may have been a well-known proverb, signifying the removal of great obstacles or difficulties. It is thus used in Isaiah 40:4.

Paul did not say that it is possible to possess these gifts without love. He said that "though" or "if" he possessed them without love he would "count for nothing." (Moffatt.) Faith without the work of love to prove its genuineness is useless. Regardless of his profession, the person whose heart is not filled with love for God and his fellow men is not a disciple of Christ. Even miracle-working faith without love is worthless.

"And if I distribute all my possessions to the poor, and give up my body to be burned, but am destitute of Love, it profits me nothing." (Weymouth.) Greek students say that the true meaning here is not a quick distribution of one's wealth, but rather to "dole out" or "give away by mouthfuls," that is, gradually, carefully, even sympathetically, until the resources are exhausted. That would be "charity," but not necessarily "love." True charity is the result of love.

Charity is generally looked upon as the chief manifestation of love, and yet Paul here places them in contrast. Doubtless some get great satisfaction by liberality in charitable enterprises because of the glory and publicity that feeds their vanity, and in which love plays no part whatever. Almsgiving often does more harm than good to the recipients who lose both initiative and self-respect as the result. The church is not primarily a welfare institution. Its mission is chiefly to supply spiritual needs.

Yet we must not decry those organizations of the church that seek to relieve human need. Jesus said, “Ye have the poor always with you,” as though such a condition was always to be a responsibility of the church. He Himself fed the multitude and relieved human suffering as a part of His spiritual ministry.

Serving man’s physical needs, however, is only a means to an end, and when that end is not reached the service is largely in vain. Many are poor because of their own lack of diligence and economy, and regardless of the charity expended on them, they are harmed rather than benefited.

The value of charity is determined by *how* we give, rather than by *what* we give, by the motive rather than by the act. Even the most liberal giving from a selfish motive robs charity of its charitableness, and becomes an investment rather than a gift. Some acts of charity constitute a speculation in which the giver expects to receive the equivalent, or even more, in return. The greatest display of liberality without the motive of love does not commend itself to God, and therefore it has no value.

A person may even give up his body to be burned as a martyr for his faith, as did the three Hebrews in the fiery furnace along with Polycarp, Huss, Jerome, and millions of others; yet it would profit him nothing if idle motive was other than love. During the pagan Roman persecutions some courted martyrdom to gain notoriety. There are those who bring persecution on themselves by their erratic behavior. Such persecution and martyrdom bring no benefit to themselves or to anyone else. The absence of love completely destroys the spirit and virtue of martyrdom. “Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for their’s is the kingdom of heaven.” Matthew 5:10.

The motive must be love and the cause righteousness if the persecution is to have any value. The person whose mistaken zeal leads him to suffer a martyr’s death, when not prompted by love, may be regarded by God as a

deluded enthusiast or an ambitious hypocrite. Love never fails or loses its value.

Chapter 8 – The Analysis of Love

Seeking to analyze love in order that the church of Christ might more truly represent the Lord of love, the apostle Paul wrote:

“Love is patient and kind. Love knows neither envy nor jealousy. Love is not forward and self-assertive, nor boastful and conceited. She does not behave unbecomingly, nor seek to aggrandize herself, nor blaze out in passionate anger, nor brood over wrongs. She finds no pleasure in injustice done to others, but joyfully sides with the truth. She knows how to be silent. She is full of trust, full of hope, full of patient endurance.” 1 Corinthians 13:4-7, Weymouth.

The apostle here expands the meaning of love by dividing it into the elements of which it is composed. He takes love, as it were, into the laboratory and analyzes it as a formula composed of seven active and vital spiritual ingredients, and then separates from it the foreign substances that would destroy its potency as a remedy for the diseases that prey upon the soul. As light shining through a prism is broken up into its component parts—the beautiful colors of the rainbow—so love is made beautiful and attractive by this display of its many characteristics. The apostle shows what love *is* and what it *is not*, what it *does* and what it *does not do*.

In this beautiful description of the character and conduct of love, it is treated as if it were a person. Since Jesus is the essence and personification of love, it is a word picture of His character, and we could insert His name

in the place of the word “love” without changing the meaning. Reading this section of the song of love with one’s own name in the place of *love* is both challenging and humbling. It is an effective way to take an inventory of our personal spiritual state. We are told that when Christ “shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” 1 John 3:2. At that time Paul’s description of love will apply to our own characters.

Love “suffereth long, and is kind.” “Love is patient and kind,” and “love is very patient, very kind,” are other translations. Like Christ, love is patient and long-suffering as far as the faults and failings of others are concerned. It is calm, meek, and quiet. It is willing to forgive seventy times seven times if necessary. Human nature is such that occasions for irritation and impatience are bound to occur. Clashes of personality and disposition are inevitable, and love is the only remedy. Human beings are all different, and ever will be. The Creator never made two creatures alike. Personalities are distinct even in families. Hence the imperative need of love to make us “patient and kind” in all our contacts and dealings with one another.

Impatience is one of the chief besetting sins of this generation, when the nerves of so many people are worn and threadbare. Therefore the spirit of patience, tolerance, kindness, and long-suffering is the outstanding evidence of a well-disciplined and well-balanced mind and of a Christian character and disposition. “Longsuffering” is one of the fruits of the Spirit, of which the first is love. (Galatians 5:22.) Love, joy, and peace in the heart produce long-suffering.

Patience and kindness were two of the chief characteristics of Christ, and were especially prominent in His treatment of His enemies. “For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? But if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called:

because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.” 1 Peter 2:19-23.

“Love is very patient, very kind.” It has in it “the milk of human kindness,” which is so much needed in the modern world. Love is kind, mild, gentle, benign, and amiable. It has a beautiful disposition. It is gracious and courteous in its behavior, even toward the unkind. To the stern virtues of justice and fortitude, so greatly admired through the ages, Christianity adds the charm of lovingkindness, with its merciful and mellowing influence. Jesus was so patient and kind that He was never irritated or ruffled. In Him the majesty of calmness reigned supreme. His gentleness and courtesy were marks of His nobility.

George Foxe said, “I know Jesus, and He was very precious to my soul: but I found something in me that would not keep sweet and patient and kind. I did what I could to keep it down, but it was there. I besought Jesus to do something for me, and when I gave Him my will, He came into my heart, and took out all that would not be sweet, all that would not be kind, all that would not be patient, and then He shut the door.” Here is the secret of the rule of love in our hearts and lives, the indwelling of the great Lover of mankind.

One of the greatest compliments Jesus ever received came from His enemies when they said, “Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any man: for thou regardest not the person of men.” Matthew 22:16. “No fear of man misleads you, for you are not biased by men’s wealth or rank,” is the Weymouth translation. Under the control of love Jesus was no respecter of persons. Someone has said, “Aristocracy of mind treats the duke and the

ditch digger alike, both as the duke, though with Jesus, slightly in favor of the ditcher.”

On the other hand, love often demonstrates its kindness in reproofs and discipline. Jesus said, “As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.” Revelation 3:19. “I reprove and discipline those whom I love.” (Moffatt.) See also Hebrews 12:6, where we are told that God “scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.” The greatest of all the evidences of both divine and parental love is wise reproof and just discipline. Paul had this in mind when he said, “Consider both the kindness and the severity of God.” Romans 11:22, Moffatt. Anything that works together for our eternal good is an exhibition of love and kindness, whether it is recognized as such at the time or not.

“Thy gentleness hath made me great,” declared David, and Peter spoke of “the imperishable jewel of a gentle and quiet spirit, which in God’s sight is very precious.” 1 Peter 3:4, R.S.V. He also said that the spiritually newborn “have tasted the kindness of the Lord.” 1 Peter 2:3, R.S.V. James declared that “the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.” James 5:11. Peter again wrote, “Above all continue to love one another fervently, for love throws a veil over a multitude of faults.” 1 Peter 4:8, Weymouth. Love is therefore “very patient, very kind.”

The apostle also declared that love “envieth not,” or, “Love is not jealous.” R.S.V. “Love knows neither envy nor jealousy,” is the Weymouth translation. “Envy” here comes from the Greek word *zelos* meaning “to boil.” It produces anger and bitterness. It is the fruit of malice and ill will. It is the result of competition with others’ who have more talents or are doing something more efficiently. Envy is pain at the sight of superior excellence or accomplishments in another, and is characterized by feelings of inferiority which produce bitterness born of selfishness. It may arise from discontent over one’s station or condition in life as compared to that

of others. Envy is an unchristian spirit, a most despicable mood. It is one of the meanest and most unjust and contemptible of all vices.

The wise man said, “Wrath is cruel, and anger is outrageous; but who is able to stand before envy?” Proverbs 27:4. Many noble men and women have fallen before this cruel tyrant. Again Solomon wrote: “Love is strong as death; jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it: if a man would give all the substance of his house for love, it would utterly be contemned.” Song of Solomon 8:6, 7.

It was envy that brought the mighty Lucifer down from his high estate in the government of heaven and that has worked havoc in all the organizations and institutions of the human family. Envy is the great character assassin and destroyer. It does not hesitate to enter the most lordly palace and the happiest home, or even the sacred precincts of the holiest temple. Love alone can conquer envy and jealousy. They cannot live in the sunlight of its presence. They are incompatible strangers and never associate together. “Love knows neither envy nor jealousy.”

Selfishness is exterminated by the power of love. Love never seeks revenge because of injuries which pride would deem unbearable. It is ever unsuspecting of the motives and acts of others, and places on them the most favorable construction possible. It does not needlessly expose the faults of others, nor listen eagerly to unfavorable reports, but rather attempts to emphasize the good qualities of the one defamed. If Christians would exhibit more pity, kindness, and courtesy to all men, there would be a great ingathering of souls into the kingdom of grace, and the church would again go forth “conquering, and to conquer” in her divinely appointed mission in the world.

Chapter 9 – The Humility of Love

Love, said the apostle Paul, in 1 Corinthians 13:4, “vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up.” Love “is not rash” is the marginal reading. “Love...is not arrogant or rude” is the Revised Standard Version reading. Like Jesus, it is meek and lowly.

Arrogance is an attitude or characteristic of which rudeness, rashness, and boasting are outward, verbal exhibitions. Like envy and jealousy, they indicate a sense of inferiority. Assertions of superior qualities give evidence of an attempt on the part of the vaunter to lift himself out of his inferior state by boasting. Nothing is more natural to human nature or more dangerous than pride.

To vaunt is “to make boastful assertions or ostentatious display of one’s worth, attainments, or achievements; to give vent to loud exultation, glory, or triumph.” It is a foolish display of egotism, conceit, and self-importance. Five of the nineteen characteristics of the last generation described in 2 Timothy 3:1-5, which produce “perilous times,” are forms of self-conceit. The vaunting person is attempting to hide a conscious inferiority by a method that often leaves the impression of a superiority complex. The sense of deficiency and feelings of uncertainty that induce a boastful spirit eventually lead to an attitude of cocksureness and arrogancy.

“Love makes no parade, gives itself no airs.” (Moffatt.) “Love is not forward and self-assertive, nor boastful and conceited.” (Weymouth.) It

“does not swell or swagger,” or, “is not inflated with vanity,” are other translations. Inflation always indicates a decrease in value, as does. Money inflation. The greater the inflation of one’s pride, the greater the shrinkage of genuine worth.

The person who can say with Paul, “I am nothing,” may see others preferred above him and hear them praised while he is neglected or forgotten, and yet he will still be calm and happy and even praise God for the experiences that contribute to his humility and increasing lowliness. Meekness is the only soil in which the fruit of the Spirit can flourish, and the absence of it accounts for all our defects and failures. True humility is possible only through the indwelling of the meek and lowly Jesus. When Christ dwelling in the heart becomes an experience of believers the church will put on the beautiful robe of Christ’s righteousness.

Pride is the distinguishing mark of counterfeit holiness. The Pharisee in the Temple who congratulated himself while praying made his worship the means of self-exaltation. True holiness produces humility. All harsh words, hasty judgments, displays of temper, and feelings of irritation and bitterness have their root in pride. Those who bow the lowest at the foot of the cross reach the highest spiritual attainments.

Paul recognized the value of humility when he said: “And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong.” 2 Corinthians 12:7-10.

The apostle gloried in the experiences that killed pride, because in the end this produced spiritual strength and Christlikeness of character. Since the secret of abiding joy is in humility, we should welcome that which makes us more like the Master, who was humility incarnate.

The spirit of pride is displeasing to God, as indicated by the many warnings against it in the Scriptures. "Talk no more so exceeding proudly; let not arrogancy come out of your mouth: for the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him actions are weighed." 1 Samuel 2:3. "No more of your proud vaunts! No mouthing of your taunts! For the Eternal is a God who knows it all, and what men do he judges." (Moffatt.) How foolish of man to boast of his knowledge and achievements in the hearing of Him who is infinite in wisdom and omnipotent in power.

Solomon makes wisdom say, "The fear of the Lord is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate." Proverbs 8:13. In Proverbs 6:16-19 are enumerated the seven things the Lord especially hates and which are "an abomination unto him," and the first in the list is "a proud look." Through the psalmist the Lord said, "Him that hath an high look and a proud heart will not I suffer." Psalms 101:5. When Lucifer became proud the Lord did not suffer him to remain in his high official position in the government of heaven, and He cannot jeopardize the future harmony of His kingdom by taking proud persons into it.

On the other hand, the Lord has often expressed His high regard for those who are meek and humble, and to them He promises rich rewards. "Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off." Psalms 138:6. "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Isaiah 57:15. The most exalted Being in the universe takes pleasure

in abiding in the hearts of the most lowly and contrite in this world of sin. “Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth,” declared Jesus.

Doubtless the chief reason the Lord especially hates pride is that pride was the first manifestation of evil to enter the universe through Lucifer. “Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness.” Here the cause of his downfall is pictured by Ezekiel. (See Ezekiel 28:12-19.) Another prophet wrote: “How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.” Isaiah 14:12-15.

How different the spirit of Michael, the One whose position Lucifer coveted and attempted to seize: “Let the very spirit which was in Christ Jesus be in you also. From the beginning He had the nature of God. Yet He did not regard equality with God as something at which He should grasp. Nay, He stripped Himself of His glory, and took on Him the nature of a bondservant by becoming a man like other men. And being recognized as truly human, He humbled Himself and even stooped to die; yes, to die on a cross. It is in consequence of this that God has also so highly exalted Him, and has conferred on Him the Name which is supreme above every other.” Philippians 2:5-9, Weymouth.

In the pride of Lucifer and the humbleness of Christ is exemplified the truth of the statement that “every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.” Luke 18:14. How true it is that “pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall.” Proverbs 16:18. Is it any wonder that pride and self-esteem are such abominations in the sight of God? It was for their spiritual pride and

self-righteousness that Christ gave His most scathing rebukes to the scribes and Pharisees.

Commenting on the two worshipers in the Temple, one writer said, “He who feels whole, who thinks that he is reasonably good, and is contented with his condition, does not seek to become a partaker of the grace and righteousness of Christ. Pride feels no need, and so it closes the heart against Christ and the infinite blessings He came to give. There is no room for Jesus in the heart of such a person. Those who are rich and honorable in their own eyes do not ask in faith, and receive the blessing of God. They feel that they are full, therefore they go away empty. Those who know that they can not possibly save themselves, or of themselves do any righteous action, are the ones who appreciate the help that Christ can bestow. They are the poor in spirit, whom He declares to be blessed.”—*Mount of Blessing*, p. 19.

It is for this reason that the spiritual state of the present-day church is so displeasing to Christ that He threatens to spue the lukewarm members out of His mouth. Their lukewarmness leads them to boast that they are “rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing,” whereas in reality they are spiritually “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” (See Revelation 3:17.)

Self-conceit is one of the most difficult sins to conquer because of its deceptive nature. This is the chief reason why Christ’s preaching fell largely on deaf ears. He especially blessed “the poor in spirit,” those who recognized their spiritual poverty and mourned over it.

Conceit is the essence of selfishness, and a boastful spirit is always repulsive. On the other hand, love attracts rather than repels. It is never overbearing or dictatorial. It is gentle, teachable, courteous, and compassionate. It never seeks its own. It produces humility, which is the beauty of holiness. The greatest happiness springs from the deepest

humility, the only road to joy and contentment. “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.” 1 Peter 5:6.

Chapter 10 – The Behavior of Love

Love, says the apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians 13:5, “doth not behave itself unseemly” or “is never rude,” and “doth not behave unbecomingly,” according to other translations. Love is always kind and courteous and considerate, and ever walks in the pathway of truth, uprightness, and rectitude. Love is never rude, ill bred, or uncivil but does all things “decently and in order.”

Love is always moderate, judicious, and reasonable, avoiding extremes. It is never erratic or fanatical. It does not *get* off balance and indulge in that kind of uncontrolled emotionalism that sometimes brings a reproach upon Christianity. Like Jesus, love is sane and rational in word and conduct. Sin unbalances the mind and upsets the equilibrium of the whole being so that men and women act irrationally and say and do strange things.

God created man in His own image, and in that perfect normal state man had a well-balanced mind and a symmetrical character. Disobedience enfeebles the intellectual power so that it is impossible to think calmly and rationally. This is the real cause of the present alarming increase of insanity. Genuine religion is the great remedy. The purpose of the gospel is to restore all that was lost through the fall. This rehabilitation begins with the “renewing” of the mind, for as a man “thinketh in his heart, so is he.”

One writer has said: “When the gospel is received in its purity and power, it is a cure for the maladies that originated in sin.... The love which Christ diffuses through the whole being is a vitalizing power. Every vital part—the brain, the heart, the nerves—it touches with healing. By it the

highest energies of the being are roused to activity. It frees the soul from the guilt and sorrow, the anxiety and care, that crush the life forces. With it come serenity and composure. It implants in the soul joy that nothing earthly can destroy, —joy in the Holy Spirit,—health-giving, life-giving joy. Our Saviour's words, 'Come unto Me, ... and I will give you rest,' are a prescription for the healing of physical, mental, and spiritual ills... . If human beings would open the windows of the soul heavenward, in appreciation of the divine gifts, a flood of healing virtue would pour in.”—ELLEN G. WHITE, *Ministry of Healing*, pp. 115, 116. This statement is especially meaningful in the light of the fact that medical scientists estimate that half, some say 85 percent, of all diseases have their origin in the realm of the mental and spiritual.

Jesus possessed the most perfectly balanced mind and character this world has known. “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus,” is the best prescription ever written for the healing of the mental, physical, and social ills that afflict mankind. With His mind we will be like Him in character and conduct. This is the only hope for sanity and normalcy. It is the secret of serenity, tranquillity, and stability. “Christ came to the earth and stood before the children of men with the hoarded love of eternity, and this is the treasure that, through our connection with Him, we are to receive, to reveal, and to impart.... We are to be distinguished from the world because God has placed His seal upon us, because He manifests in us His own character of love. Our Redeemer covers us with His righteousness.”—*ibid.*, p. 37.

The religion of unseemly emotionalism, which someone has described as “sentimental hallucinations,” is a sort of release, or escape, complex. The flowing of copious tears and the noisy exhibitions of emotional ecstasy based on merely human sensations can bring only temporary results followed by even dangerous reactions. Like the Pharisee of old, there are modern religionists who seek to evade some major duty or divine

requirement by excessive concern over minute matters. It is a characteristic of fanatics to major on minors and omit “the weightier matters of the law,” and thus “strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.” Matthew 23:23, 24.

Wade Robinson thus beautifully distinguished between the enthusiasm of genuine love and the uncontrolled zeal of fanaticism: “Enthusiasm is strong; fanaticism is weak. The enthusiast is a man on fire whose reason is sitting aloft in high control; the fanatic is a man on fire whose reason has taken fire out of the rest, and who has nothing to control him. And on this account the enthusiast is calm, deep, strong, silent, intense; while the fanatic rolls like a wild and boisterous sea. Jesus was an enthusiast, but He was no fanatic.”

David said, “I will behave myself wisely in a perfect way. O when wilt thou come unto me? I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.” Psalms 101:2. This vow must have been made in his early youth, for in 1 Samuel 18:14, 15, 30 we read of his conduct in the court of Saul: “And David behaved himself wisely in all his ways; and the Lord was with him. Wherefore when Saul saw that he behaved himself very wisely, he was afraid of him.” “David behaved himself more wisely than all the servants of Saul; so that his name was much set by.” Is it any wonder that he was a man after God’s heart? Love always behaves itself becomingly.

The mind of Christ brings to its possessor unity, compassion, love, sympathy, and a courteous behavior. “Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous.” 1 Peter 3:8. The apostle Paul said that “a bishop then must be blameless” and “of good behaviour,” and the same can be said of all Christians under the control of love. (1 Timothy 3:2.) Speaking of the conduct of those impelled by love, he wrote, “Therefore be imitators of God, as His dear children. And live and act lovingly, as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up to death on our behalf as an offering and sacrifice to God,

yielding a fragrant odour.... Live and act as sons of Light—for the effect of the Light is seen in every kind of goodness, uprightness and truth—and learn in your own experiences what is fully pleasing to the Lord. . . . Therefore be very careful how you live and act.” Ephesians 5:1-15, Weymouth.

Love produces a gentle and courteous disposition that keeps the good of others in mind. It is never overbearing and dictatorial. It imparts grace, propriety, and comeliness of conduct. It elevates and refines, making a man a true gentleman. As in all things else, Christ is our example. In good manners and courtesy. He was patient and gentle even to His enemies. His kind of religion subdues the harsh voice and softens the flinty temper and adamant disposition. A loving and courteous Christian is the most powerful argument in favor of the Christian religion.

Therefore love “seeketh not her own.” Love is “never selfish,” “does not insist on its own way,” and does not “seek to aggrandize herself,” are other translations. How much the unselfishness of love is needed in this selfish and self-centered generation, when so many center their attention and interests on themselves rather than others! “Seekest thou great things for thyself? Seek them not,” is a Scriptural statement that cuts squarely across the philosophy of modern man. Those who live to get rather than to give, who demand their own way and focus their interests on themselves, are doomed to frustration and disappointment in the end. “It is more blessed to give than to receive,” is a basic principle that applies to every realm of life.

This fundamental principle is often stated in the Scriptures: “Let no man seek his own, but every man another’s wealth.” 1 Corinthians 10:24. “Wealth” is a supplied word; “interest” or “welfare” would be better translations. “Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.”

Philippians 2:3, 4. The verses that follow emphasize unselfishness by urging us to receive the mind of Christ and imitate His unselfish service.

In Isaiah 48:4 the Lord describes man as being as obstinate and stubborn as if his neck were made of “an iron sinew” and his brow of “brass.” It is difficult to turn him from his purpose or make a dent in his thinking. He insists on his own way, whether it is right or wrong. But “love does not insist on its own way.” It is reasonable and is willing to take counsel. It is utterly unselfish. “Love is too intent on its objects to be aware of itself or call attention to its own operations. The act of doing a favor takes all the love out of the act; for love gives so simply and quietly that it seems to ask rather than bestow the favor. In this way both giver and receiver together share Love’s distinctive reward of two lives bound together as one in the common Love of the Father.”—HYDE.

Love “is not easily provoked.” It “is not irritable or resentful,” is “never irritated, never resentful,” and does not “blaze out in passionate anger,” are other translations. “Easily” does not belong in the text and would open the way for an excuse for anger and irritability under some circumstances and could be used as an alibi for a bad temper. “Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them” (Psalms 119:165), is the Scriptural standard, which leaves no room for offense under any circumstances. Love is “not provoked” is the American Revised Version reading.

Love does not have a quick, hair-trigger temper. It is not hasty, touchy, or sensitive. It does not act like the older brother, in the parable of the prodigal son, who was angry, sullen, and stubborn and “would not go in” and take part in the welcoming celebration over the return of his wayward brother. His was the sin against love, which was even worse than that of the one who had gone astray but had come to himself in a “far country” and had returned to his father’s home and love. He displayed the spirit

and disposition of a Pharisee, as do many today in their attitude toward returning prodigals.

As long as “all things work together for good to them that love God” and “are the called according to his purpose,” there is no valid reason for indignation or irritability. The excuse of a bad inheritance cannot apply to one who has experienced the new birth, which brings with it an entirely new spiritual heritage. The one who partakes of the divine nature receives through the new creation a new mind, heart, spirit, character, and disposition, like that of our great Exemplar, of whom it is written, “He never sinned, and no deceitful language was ever heard from His mouth. When He was reviled, He did not answer with reviling; when He suffered He uttered no threats, but left His wrongs in the hands’ of the righteous Judge.” 1 Peter 2:22, 23, Weymouth. Chrysostom uses a striking illustration of the power of love to quench the unpleasant experiences of life: “As a spark which falls into the sea hurts not the sea, but is itself extinguished, so an evil thing befalling a loving soul will be extinguished without disquietude.” E. Stanley Jones says of the power of love in dealing with offense and offenders: “There is no possible way to get rid of an enemy except to turn him into a friend, and there is no possible way to get rid of hate except by love.... Name one enemy who was ever reclaimed by treating him as an enemy. Treat your enemy as a friend and in the end he will be your friend; or, if he is not, you will have become a far finer man in the process. In doing this, said Jesus, ‘you will be sons of your Father,’ for these are His methods. He makes His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust, and He loves His enemies. . . . He rules from the cross. His method of omnipotence is the omnipotence of love. Jesus has done the impossible about God—He has put strict moral qualities and lavish love together in the same being.... The victory of *love!*”—*The Christ of the Mount*, pp. 192, 193.

Chapter 11 – The Meditations of Love

Love, declared the apostle Paul, “thinketh no evil.” (1 Corinthians 13: 15.) The thoughts constitute the source and fountain of character and conduct. Solomon said of man, “For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he.” Proverbs 23: 7. In studying the meditations of love we are therefore dealing with a vital subject, a basic principle.

For this reason the counsel is given in Proverbs 4:23: “keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life.” “Guard ever your thoughts with all care, for from them come the issues of life,” is the Fenton translation. “Issues” are the results and consequences. Man’s thinking determines his character and destiny. Jesus expressed the same thought: “And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come from within, and defile the man.” Mark 7: 20-23. The mind, or heart, is either the fountain of all good or the cesspool of all evil. “We sow our thoughts, and we reap our actions; we sow our actions, and we reap our habits; we sow our habits, and we reap our characters; we sow our characters, and we reap our destiny.”

Evil thinking is the result of a corrupt mind. Of the antediluvians we read, “And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” Genesis 6:5. “Not only the imagination, but also the purposes

and desires,” is the marginal reading; and Moffatt translates it: “Man’s mind was never bent on anything but evil.” The results of this evil thinking are thus described: “The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.” Verses 11, 12. The Deluge therefore became an act of mercy and the only remedy.

Conditions were similar in the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah just before their destruction by divine decree. We are told that God “delivered just Lot,” whose soul was “vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked” as well as with “their unlawful deeds.” 2 Peter 2:7, 8. “For their lawless deeds were torture, day after day, to the pure soul of that righteous man—all that he saw and heard whilst living in their midst.” (Weymouth.) They “acted immorally and indulged in unnatural lusts,” wrote the apostle Jude. (R.S.V.)

Christ warned that the seventh commandment is violated by evil thinking as well as by the outward act. Sin is born and becomes a reality as soon as the mind consents to the evil deed, which would be perpetrated if the opportunity were available. (Matthew 5:27, 28; James 1:13, 14.) Christians were warned against “fornication,” “uncleanness,” and “filthiness” and were told that no “unclean person” could have any inheritance in the kingdom of God. They must therefore “mortify” their fleshly inclinations such as “fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence,” which are forms of idolatry. (Ephesians 5:3-5; Colossians 3:5.) Jesus declared that evil would reach its climax just before His return and that conditions would be comparable to those prevailing in the days of Noah and of Lot. Again destruction will be the only remedy.

Love “thinketh no evil” of others. Love “taketh not account of evil,” and, “Love imputeth not evil,” are other translations. It does not keep a record of evil in others in the memory or imagination,— as in a ledger.

Love is very charitable and is never suspicious, but rather gives credit for pure motives. It seeks to make allowances for weaknesses and failings, and ever remembers the Scriptural counsel, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." Love places the best possible construction on every word and action. This attitude is set forth in the following scriptures: "Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins." Proverbs 10: 12. "Above all hold unfailing your love for one another, since love covers a multitude of sins." 1 Peter 4:8, R.S.V. This is beautifully illustrated by a mother's love, which always seeks to cover and hide faults rather than expose them.

The tendency to suspect others of evil generally reflects the moral and spiritual state of the surmiser. As a man "thinketh in his heart, so is he" applies here also. Christians should attempt to be at least as fair and just as are earthly courts, which assume that the accused is innocent until he is proved guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. Much of the vicious gossip that assassinates reputation and curses society grows out of the surmisings of evil minds and corrupt hearts. Love never listens eagerly to unfavorable rumors, and places the most favorable construction possible upon the motives and acts of others.

Nor does love "brood over wrongs." (Weymouth.) In most lives there are many wrongs, real and imagined, to brood over; but there can be no happiness in those who permit "any root of bitterness" to spring up or exist in the heart and mind. Nursing pet grievances is a vicious habit, which benefits no one. Such complaints are in many cases the product of mere surmisings and misunderstandings. Brooding is dangerous, whether the grievances be real or imagined. Love is the only remedy for this infectious poison. It is "never resentful," is the Moffatt translation; and Johann Bengel said, "Love does not meditate on evil inflicted by another." "Love writes our personal wrongs in ashes or in water," another writer has said. The record therefore immediately disappears.

The warning is against brooding over the past and present wrongs in one's own experience, and also over the anticipated wrongs of the future. Paul had learned this lesson. He said, "I do not say that I have already won the race or have already reached perfection. But I am pressing on, striving to lay hold of the prize for which also Christ has laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not imagine that I have yet laid hold of it. But this one thing I do —forgetting everything which is past and stretching forward to what lies in front of me, with my eyes fixed on the goal I push on to secure the prize of God's heavenward call in Christ Jesus." Philippians 3:12-14, Weymouth.

The ability to forget everything in the past that is unpleasant and unprofitable is of untold value in character development. There are many things in the past that have enriched our lives and should never be forgotten. It is amazing what brilliant memories some persons have for things that should be forgotten, and what poor ones for things that should be remembered. Paul had much in his past life to be forgotten, and remorse could have ruined his Christian experience; but love so dominated his life that he refused to brood over wrongs. Nothing will more quickly bring discouragement to us than our dwelling on the mistakes and disappointments of the past. Gathering together the unpleasant recollections of a past life and then mourning over them is unwise.

The past is gone forever and cannot be changed, recalled, or lived over again. Hugh White said, "The past cannot be changed: the future is still in your power." When confessed and forgiven, mistakes of the past should be forgotten. Through justification or imputed righteousness by faith, such mistakes are taken care of as completely as if they had never been made. This is what happened to the thief on the cross. The moment he turned to Christ, his past sins were washed away and he was fully restored to divine favor. The gospel is indeed "good news" and "glad tidings."

Another secret of a happy Christian experience is one's ability not to worry over the future. Jesus said, "Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Matthew 6:34. "Be not anxious," or "do not worry," is the real meaning. The reason given is that each day has enough difficulties to keep us busy. "To-morrow will bring its own cares." (Weymouth.) "Every day brings trouble enough for itself," is another translation.

Worry is the great joy killer, and anyone who indulges in it gives sure evidence of lack of faith in divine leadership. It is the interest paid on trouble before it comes due. Jesus reproved Martha for neglecting that which is paramount and for being "anxious and worried about a multitude of things." Luke 10:42, Weymouth.

Tomorrow never comes. Through all eternity no one will ever be able to catch up with a tomorrow. How foolish, therefore, for any person to try to live in it or to borrow its anticipated troubles, most of which are never translated into realities. A recent survey showed that fully 40 per cent of expected troubles never happen, and the remainder can be neither prevented nor made more agreeable by worry. Borrowing troubles from the past or future is very unwise, since it necessitates our meeting them two or three times instead of once: the first in anticipation, the second in reality for those that materialize, and the third time in memory. People who do this must be very fond of their troubles.

We must remember that the past is gone forever and cannot be brought back, and that the future is not ours until it arrives and becomes the present. Today is the only day that really belongs to us and for which God holds us responsible. Today is my day and your day, and we have no other. If we would know happiness, we must learn to live in the present. Fortunately man has divided the day into hours, minutes, and seconds, so our task is made easier. By this separation of the day into fractions, it is

not difficult for us to live moment by moment with no concern about the past or future. This was the secret of Paul's happy spiritual life, and it may also be ours. Those who have learned this secret can testify to its workability and the joy and serenity it brings into the life.

"Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind," was Paul's remedy for evil thinking and his antidote for sin. (Romans 12:2.) He said, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." Those who receive the mind of Christ will obey His further counsel: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." Philippians 2:5; 4:8.

The experience of the new covenant makes us new creatures, with new minds and hearts and natures, so that our thinking and conduct will be like Christ's. His love and disposition and character will be imputed and imparted to us. Then we will think no evil, and will never "brood over wrongs." For this spiritual experience every Christian should pray.

Chapter 12 – The Greatness of Love

The apostle Paul continues his analysis of love with the statement that love “rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth.” 1 Corinthians 13: 6. “It does not rejoice at wrong, but rejoices in the right,” is the reading in the Revised Standard Version.

At first thought it seems strange that any person could be so warped in character as to find pleasure in iniquity in himself or in others, but sinners are not normal. Sin has unbalanced their minds and made them irrational, so their thinking is disjointed and their conduct abnormal. Men and women of corrupt minds and hearts not only find their greatest pleasure in evil practices but are often entertained by witnessing the same deeds in others. After describing the immoral conditions in the heathen world, Paul wrote, “Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.” Romans 1:32. “Applaud others who do them,” is the Weymouth translation.

At that time the emperor and citizens of Rome and other cities found their most thrilling forms of amusement in scenes of cruelty and bloodshed such as gladiatorial contests and men fighting with wild beasts. During the Middle Ages of persecution and martyrdom even church leaders found delight in seeing their victims burned at the stake or suffering the horrors of the Inquisition. In all ages of the reign of sin the ungodly have had pleasure in unrighteousness. In the modern world the

great majority are amused and entertained by portrayals of crime and immorality on the screen and stage and in the comics. Criminals have become the heroes and heroines of the youth of this generation.

Wickedness of all types is the result of the lusts or desires of sinful flesh. Beneath the thin crust called civilization men are savages who delight in war, cruelty, and bloodshed. For this reason the Lord symbolizes the great nations in prophecy as beasts of prey. The works, or lusts, of the flesh, as enumerated in Galatians 5:19-21, present an ugly picture in contrast with the fruit of the Spirit, which matures only in those who “have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.” Verse 24.

There is another class who find pleasure in the discovery of iniquity in others because it boosts their own morale by giving them feelings of superiority. It is the joy of the Pharisee, who is thankful that he is better than other men. By “measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves” they find comfort and satisfaction by a contrast that seems to be to their credit. The Pharisee in the Temple found great joy in his superiority to others, and especially when contrasted with the publican whom he despised. Not only did he enumerate with pride and satisfaction his own meritorious acts, but he actually rejoiced in the shortcomings of others, which in his estimation emphasized his greater holiness.

This class even seek for iniquity in others and, of course, find what they look for, even where it does not exist. Jesus condemned this class and called them hypocrites, because they went about searching for motes, or splinters, in the eyes of others when they had beams in their own. He said, “Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.” Matthew 7:1, 2. (See also verses 3-5.) Filled with spiritual pride because of their own self-estimated superiority, these self-centered

judges and petty spies put on their robes of self-righteousness and mount the judgment seat to criticize and condemn. They are destitute of love.

It is proper to recognize wrongs in others and even to point them out to the wrongdoer, provided the person is benefited and we are made more kind and loving in the process. But if such a procedure produces coldness, severe criticism, and an unlovely spirit, it becomes a curse and gives evidence of selfishness and a lack of the virtue of love. Finding pleasure in iniquity and gloating over the faults and failings of others are satanic characteristics. Satan and his angels find their highest pleasure in the discovery of evil in members of the human family, for it gives evidence that their mission in leading men astray is a success. They are never happier than when men and women sin, especially those who claim to be saints. The complete victory of Christ over sin is the chief cause of Satan's bitter enmity against Him, and his failure to defeat God's remnant people will again kindle his wrath and bring on persecution. (See Revelation 12:17; 17:13,14.)

"Love is never glad when others go wrong." (Moffatt.) It always manifests a Christian spirit. "She finds no pleasure in injustice done to others." (Weymouth.) The meting out of revenge to a supposed enemy does not bring joy to a person who is under the control of love. Some feel glad when others get "what is coming to them." Misfortune, calamity, and even death to an enemy are not only approved in their hearts but are even agreeable and satisfying to them. This has been called malignant joy. It is a vicious form of selfishness that puts on a secret celebration over the misdeeds and sufferings of an enemy.

Even among professed Christians there are sometimes those who seem to find satisfaction in the operation of the law of recompense that returns upon the head of the evildoer what he has meted out to others, and even give God the credit for ministering the punishment to avenge them and vindicate their own course of conduct. How often we hear it said, almost

gleefully, “He is getting just what he deserves, and he had it coming to him. At last he is being made to suffer for the wrong he did me. “This is not a Christian spirit, nor is it the language of love.

The God of love does not thus treat His own enemies, and surely He would never deal with ours on a different basis. He is never controlled by petty feelings. Jesus said, “Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, 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; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” Matthew 5:43-48. Jesus declared that the perfection of His Father is indicated by the way He treats His enemies. That same charitable spirit is the evidence of perfection in us who are His children.

Love delights in fairness and is always on the side of mercy. Love is never influenced by policy, but bravely takes its stand on the side of right, regardless of the consequences. In love, “mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other.” Psalms 85: 10. Love “rejoices in the right,” and is “gladdened by goodness,” and “joyfully sides with the truth,” as the text is translated in other versions. Love is happy over the defeat of wrong and the triumph of right, justice, and equity. It is glad when the cloud that darkened the fair name of another is removed, and rejoices when sins are confessed and wrongs corrected.

Love rejoices “with the truth,” is the marginal reading. Love and truth are inseparable, and are a combination that produces happiness. Love can never be perfected apart from truth, which is the basis of love. Love finds

its root and source in that which inspires faith and confidence, and can never flourish in the presence of error and falsehood. It is for this reason that the apostle of love said that he “rejoiced greatly” to find his converts “walking in truth.” (2 John 4.) He said further, “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.” 3 John 4. He knew that no one can walk in love unless he walks in truth.

Genuine religion is cheerful and optimistic, and never gloomy. Love “rejoiceth.” It has a happy disposition. It spreads good cheer and makes its possessors radiant. The happiest people in the world are lovers, especially those who are in love with Christ and His Word of truth. There is no greater joy than that found in fellowship with the great Lover of mankind. When a professed Christian looks sad and forlorn he leaves the impression that he is disappointed in his Lord. What could be a greater denial of Christ?

One writer thus beautifully describes genuine Christianity: “There are many who have an erroneous idea of the life and character of Christ. They think that He was devoid of warmth and sunniness, that He was stern, severe, and joyless. In many cases the whole religious experience is colored by these gloomy views. It is often said that Jesus wept, but that He was never known to smile. Our Saviour was indeed a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, for He opened His heart to all the woes of men. But though His life was self-denying and shadowed with pain and care, His spirit was not crushed. His countenance did not wear an expression of grief and repining, but ever one of peaceful serenity.

“Our Saviour was deeply serious and intensely in earnest, but never gloomy or morose. The life of those who imitate Him will be full of earnest purpose; they will have a deep sense of personal responsibility. Levity will be repressed; there will be no boisterous merriment, no rude jesting; but the religion of Jesus gives peace like a river. It does not quench the light of joy; it does not restrain cheerfulness, nor cloud the sunny,

smiling face....If we keep uppermost in our minds the unkind and unjust acts of others, we shall find it impossible to love them as Christ has loved us; but if our thoughts dwell upon the wondrous love and pity of Christ for us, the same spirit will flow out to others. We should love and respect one another, notwithstanding the faults and imperfections that we can not help seeing. Humility and self-distrust should be cultivated, and a patient tenderness with the faults of others. This will kill out all narrowing selfishness, and make us largehearted and generous.”—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 125, 126.

This is religion of the genuine variety. It is Christianity in action, love incarnate in human experience. A demonstration of this kind of love is the supreme need of the modern world.

Chapter 13 – The Silence of Love

Continuing his discussion of the characteristics of love, the apostle says, “She knows how to be silent.” 1 Corinthians 13:7, Weymouth. It does not say that “love is silent,” for love often speaks fluently and eloquently. But love possesses an abundance of patience, self-control, and self-discipline. She knows how to seal her lips in order to refrain from speaking when “silence is golden.” Anything is said to be golden because of its value, which is usually the result of scarcity. If gold were as plentiful as ordinary stones, it would be as worthless. There are times when silence is as precious as “the golden wedge of Ophir,” and is eloquence of the finest quality.

In the first place, love is silent and reverent in the presence of God. “The Lord is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him.” Habakkuk 2:20. In this irreverent age of noise and confusion the silence of reverence is almost a lost virtue. This is especially true in the temple, or church, of God. (‘Be still, and know that I am God,” is the divine decree to every worshiper. Acquaintance with God is absolutely essential to character building and salvation, and it is the presence of God that makes any person or place holy and is therefore a call to reverence and silence.

The solemn counsel is still needed: “Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is

in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.” Ecclesiastes 5:1, 2. Those who enter noisily into the sanctuary of God and treat it as a common place, laughing and talking instead of listening to His message, are offering “the sacrifice of fools.”

Ours is a very irreverent age, when disrespect for God and holy things is well-nigh universal. The youth no longer rises up before the hoary head because of respect for his superiors in age, wisdom, and experience. Glenn Frank declared that the modern youth goes into the holy of holies with his hat on, but in this respect he is following the example of his elders. Someone has said that “nothing in this generation wears a halo,” and a popular writer has declared that if the bump of reverence were examined on the average man, a dent would be found in its place.

In Jeremiah 8: 12 the prophet speaks of a class in his day who “were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush,” and there are many of the same type living today. The disposition to blush because of shame and embarrassment is almost a lost endowment. The brazen attitude of many moderns is reflected in their conduct in the house of God. In too many lives the holy place has lost its sacredness, and the holy of holies is no more. And yet it is still true that “the first thing in knowledge is reverence for the Eternal” (Proverbs 9:10, Moffatt), and “the knowledge of the holy is understanding.”

But our text has special reference to silence under stress and strain and provocation. The real measure of a man is his ability to hold his peace when the temptation to speak in self-defense is great. The unbridled tongue is not only the chief character assassin but also the principal enemy of peace and tranquillity in the home, the church, the school, the neighborhood, and all other forms of human society. “We should pray more and talk less,” is good counsel for old and young.

But love is not always silent. It also knows how and when to speak. To remain silent on some occasions and under some circumstances would be a gross failure of duty, if not a form of treason. Even though love is “patient and kind,” it must at times be frank and outspoken in counsel and reproof. “I reprove and discipline those whom I love,” and “All whom I hold dear, I reprove and chastise,” are the Moffatt and Weymouth translations of Revelation 3:19. (See also Hebrews 12:6-11.)

Essential reproof and wise discipline are greater evidences of love than are beautiful platitudes or liberal gifts with no regard to character development and the future good of a child. Here is where many parents fail. Much that is called love is not love at all, but mere sentimentalism. “He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.” Proverbs 13:24.

Let us notice a few of the many statements of Scripture giving counsel as to the value of silence in the control of the tongue: “The wicked is snared by the transgression of his lips.” “A fool’s mouth is his destruction, and his lips are the snare of his soul.” “Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles.” Proverbs 12:13; 18:7; 21:23. How much trouble could be avoided in life if this counsel were taken seriously!

One of the apostles said: “Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.” “For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.” James 1:19; 3:2. Solomon said that there is “a time to keep silence, and a time to Speak.” Ecclesiastes 3:7. The apostle declared that knowing when to speak and when to keep silent is both the secret and evidence of perfection. It is the golden rule in operation. If one is tempted to apply this instruction to others rather than to himself, let him remember the statement of Jesus: “He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone.” John 8:7.

When Job was indulging in arguments in self-defense and waxing eloquent in sarcasm against his opponents in debate, the Lord told him to cease darkening “counsel by words without knowledge” and to gird up his loins like a man and answer a few questions. Eighty-four questions in regard to the simple things of nature so deflated his ego that he said, “I am vile,” and “I will lay mine hand upon my mouth.” A vision of God changed noisy self-defense into the eloquence of silence, and the record is that “the Lord turned the captivity of Job, when he prayed for his friends.” (See Job 38: 1, 2; 40:4, 5; 42: 10.)

At the Red Sea, when the camp of Israel had been thrown into the utmost confusion because of the appearance of the army of the Egyptians, the Lord said, “Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord.... The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.” Exodus 14:13, 14. A great calm settled down over the millions of Israel, and obedience to the injunction, “Be still, and know that I am God,” brought a notable victory.

When the prophet Isaiah was given a vision of God upon His throne, he cried out, “Woe is me! For I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts.” Isaiah 6:5. His lips were then cleansed by a live coal “from off the altar.” When the Lord asked, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” Isaiah answered, “Here am I; send me.” Verse 8. God prepared him for service by giving him the ability to control his tongue, and the same is true of all who are chosen to Speak for God.

Impetuous Peter was the man who talked too much, and in the court of the palace of Caiaphas he basely denied his Lord. His physical courage was such that he attacked the whole mob in the Garden of Gethsemane, but now he ignominiously retreated before the pointing finger of a maid and the embarrassing questions of servants. What a wonderful

opportunity he had to witness for his Master, to whom he had solemnly promised to be faithful even unto death! But he miserably failed, because he could not bridle his tongue.

In the control of the tongue Christ is the pre-eminent example. Because He was love incarnate He knew when to speak and when to keep silent. Yet He did much speaking. His enemies had to acknowledge that “never man spake like this man.” Christ’s answers to His critics are classics in tact and wisdom. He preached to great multitudes as well as to individuals. No preacher ever said so much in so short a time. His speaking changed the thinking and the history of the world.

But we are even more impressed by His periods of silence, which were the results neither of ignorance nor of fear. He did not hold His peace because of not knowing what to say, or because of fear. No braver man ever lived. He was as meek and gentle as a lamb, yet when the occasion demanded it He was as bold and courageous as a lion. During His unjust trials before the Hebrew and Roman tribunals, in which every rule of law was ruthlessly trampled underfoot, Jesus demonstrated His ability to hold His peace when the temptation to speak in self-defense was the greatest.

Prophecy said of the Messiah: “He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.” Isaiah 53:7. “He was ill-treated, yet he bore it humbly, he never would complain.” (Moffatt.) Sheep that are being sheared, as well as those being slaughtered, are absolutely silent. When false witnesses testified against Jesus in the trial before Caiaphas, the record is that “Jesus held his peace”; and when “he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing.” Also when the wicked Herod “questioned with him in many words,” and attempted to get him to perform miracles to entertain his court, “He answered him nothing.” (See Matthew 26:59-63; 27:12-14;

Luke 23:8, 9.) Profound silence was the most eloquent rebuke Jesus could administer to those who were determined that He should die.

Jesus knew how to be silent when speaking would have accomplished no purpose and, in fact, would have been used against Him. When falsely accused, Jesus refused to speak, and He spoke when silence would have been to His advantage but would have constituted a denial of His Messianic mission. An Italian advocate wrote: “When a false and unjust charge was brought against Him, He held His peace, and He answered when no proof, not even a false one, constrained Him to speak. Novel and sublime behaviour this, indeed, on the part of a prisoner at the bar.”—GIVONANNI ROSADI, *The Trial of Jesus*, p. 180. The apostle said of Him, “When He was reviled, He did not answer with reviling; when He suffered He uttered no threat, but left His wrongs in the hands of the righteous Judge.” 1 Peter 2:23, Weymouth.

We should all become more like Jesus in this respect. We live in an age of voluminous talking. An editor declared that the American people are “a nation of gabbers.” Jesus warned that for “every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.” Matthew 12:6. What a responsibility that throws on us then, if as it has been estimated every human being speaks on an average 4,800 words each day, or 1,752,000 words a year.

Our great need is to have the love of God shed abroad in our hearts, for love “knows how to be silent.” It waits silently and patiently until misunderstandings are dissolved in truth and false and vicious rumors die for want of evidence or attention. It is still true that “a fool’s voice is known by multitude of words,” and therefore the counsel is given to “study to be quiet” and “let thy words be few.” Only love knows the eloquence of silence.

LOVE

Love is not sentiment, passion, or greed;
Love is eternally serving a need.

Love is a sharing, a caring, a life,
Born for adversity, born for the strife.

Love is the fragrance from ev'ry crushed rose;
Love is the sweetest thing man or God knows.

Love is so patient, so thoughtful, so kind;
Love is the greatest thing you'll ever find.

Search it around the world, you'll search in vain;
You'll never find it by seeking *your* gain.

Love "seeketh not her own"; strongest in loss;
Love shines the brightest when seen on a cross!

Love is a fellowship in God's design—
Love is a sacrament. Love is divine!

—A. A. ESTEB.

Chapter 14 – The Endurance of Love

The apostle Paul brings to a conclusion his analysis of love with the statement that love “beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.” 1 Corinthians 13:7. Two of these characteristics are described as being “always slow to expose,” and “always patient,” in the Moffatt translation; and Weymouth declares that love is “full of patient endurance.”

The apostle John declared that “God is love,” and the Lord proclaimed Himself to be “merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.” 1 John 4:8; Exodus 34:6. Patient endurance is an important part of His name, or character. It is therefore to be expected that love would be patiently persevering in her unshaken confidence in the ultimate triumph of right. “Patience” is a prominent word in the Scriptures, because it has been one of the chief qualities in God’s people in all ages. During the dark and cruel reign of sin “the saints of the most High” have been distinguished by their patient endurance under the relentless attacks of the enemy of the human race.

One who has this kind of patience exercises a quiet endurance and forbearance under strain, stress, pain, injury, insult, or suspense. He has the ability to await events tranquilly and with meekness, fortitude, and submission. *Patience* is also “the exercise of unfaltering endurance and perseverance in any work or activity, or in the pursuit of a desired end.” *Endurance* is “the ability to endure or suffer pain, distress, hardship, or any prolonged stress without succumbing.” *Patience* and *endurance* are virtually synonymous.

Jesus declared, “He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.” Matthew 24:13. The apostle James said, “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.” James 1:12. “Here is the patience of the saints,” is a description of those who are ready for translation when Christ returns. (See Revelation 14: 12.) “Patience” is rendered “stedfastness” in the margin of the American Revised Version. “Here is the endurance of saints,” and, “Here is a call for the endurance of the saints,” are other translations.

Satan, “the prince of this world,” has made life as difficult as possible for those who renounce his sovereignty and become citizens of the kingdom of heaven. These “strangers and pilgrims” in a foreign land have been tempted and persecuted, and have therefore developed patient endurance. Christians are counseled to be “sober” and “vigilant” because their “adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.” 1 Peter 5:8.

For this reason the counsel and warning are given: “Put on the complete armour of God, so as to be able to stand firm against all the stratagems of the Devil. For ours is not a conflict with mere flesh and blood, but with the despotisms, the empires, the forces that control and govern this dark world—the spiritual hosts of evil arrayed against us in the heavenly warfare. Therefore put on the complete armour of God, so that you may be able to stand your ground on the day of battle, and, having fought to the end, to remain victors on the field.” Ephesians 6: 11-13, Weymouth.

Jesus said to His disciples, “In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” John 16:33. In answer to the questions, “What are these which are arrayed in white robes? And whence came they?” the angel of prophecy said, “These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made

them white in the blood of the Lamb.” Revelation 7: 13, 14. The furnace of affliction will help to perfect God’s remnant people when they receive the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and experience a time of trouble like that which martyrs of the past went through.

Patience is not the result of chance. It does not exhibit itself when all is going well. It is developed and manifested only under trial, stress, and strain. “Fiery trials make golden Christians,” is a true maxim, because fiery trials make patient Christians. The close relationship between trials and patience is set forth in James 1:2-4: “My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.” Therefore those who desire and pray for patience can find an answer to their petitions only in experiences that develop patience.

Ours is an irritable and impatient generation, when men and women are sensitive and easily offended; when their nerves seem worn, threadbare, and near the breaking point. In fact, nervous breakdowns are increasing at an alarming rate. In this jittery age great stress is being placed on the value of poise, calmness, and tranquillity. But in this time of distress and perplexity and haunting fear, the most patient and serene characters of all history will be developed. They will become patient saints after the similitude of Jesus, the Saint of all saints.

What a marvelous example of patient endurance Jesus set as He traveled the road from Gethsemane to Calvary! How calm He was during His mock trials before the tribunals of the Hebrews and Romans, the greatest travesty on justice in the history of jurisprudence. Denied by the disciple who had loudly proclaimed his loyalty, betrayed by another who identified Him to the mob by a kiss, He who by a word could have brought to His assistance twelve legions of angels, permitted the mob to

mock and ridicule Him and even to spit in His face. He was reviled, but He “reviled not again.” Through it all He maintained a noble dignity.

Love is “always slow to expose” (Moffatt) the faults and weaknesses of others. It bears and forbears, covers and protects. It conceals rather than reveals. It covers a “multitude of sins.” Love always attempts to hide what malice and envy delight to expose. It seeks for the best even in the disagreeable and unlovely. While true love does not approve of or wink at evil, on the other hand it does not broadcast the evil to the world. It seeks to make the best out of every situation. It “hides to itself and to others,” declared Bengel.

Love “believeth all things.” She is “full of trust,” or “always eager to believe the best,” according to other translations. So many people seem always eager to believe the worst of others. They are suspicious rather than trustful, and seemingly make no special effort to develop confidence. This does not mean that Christians should accept as true that which is manifestly false. Love exhibits trust and confidence without being gullible. One writer said: “While love is an heroic believer, it is also a wise doubter, and gives the unhappy idiosyncrasies of men the benefit of its doubts.”—*Pulpit Commentary* on 1 Corinthians 13:7. This kind of doubting is proper and even commendable.

Love goes to the utmost limit in patience and readiness to believe the best of others and to place the most favorable construction possible on all their actions and words. It makes allowances for human weaknesses, provided that it does not at the same time deny the truth or betray its divine Author. John Calvin safeguards against coming to wrong conclusions in regard to this text by saying: “not that the Christian knowingly and willingly allows himself to be imposed upon—not that he divests himself of prudence and judgment, that he may be the more easily taken advantage of.... A Christian man will reckon it better to be imposed

upon by his own kindness and easy temper, than to wrong his brother by ... suspicion.”

Love believes all that is not manifestly false and untrue, all that it can consistently believe of others to their credit. Like courts of justice, it considers the accused innocent until he is proved guilty “beyond a reasonable doubt,” or even “beyond the question of a doubt,” according to the more ancient standard of justice. Surely Christians can be satisfied with nothing short of this measure of equity. Even if this earthly criterion of right were followed in the Christian church, what a mighty change for the better would be brought about! It would be the beginning of a great revival and reformation in the entire church.

But when there is no room left for belief love still hopes for the best: that somehow things will come out right in the end. When all grounds for faith and belief have disappeared, love continues to hope that the situation will change with the passing of time or by means of repentance and reformation through divine power, knowing that “with God nothing is ever impossible.” Luke 1:37, Moffatt. Thus love “hopeth all things,” or, is “always hopeful,” or “full of hope,” as the text is rendered by Moffatt and Weymouth.

This hope embraces even the worst offenders, those whose cases seem the most hopeless. Love continues to cling to the possibility that good will eventually come out of any experience and that whatever has happened will work for the good of the person or persons concerned. Love still hopes when those without love have abandoned all hope, and men seem as hopeless as if dead and in the grave.

During the Civil War a company of captured Union soldiers were taken by their captors to Libby Prison. As they approached the gate they were shocked by the inscription over the entrance: “He who enters here leaves all hope behind.” Most of them took the message to heart, and

abandoning all hope of ever being released, soon lost courage. Their health broke, and most of them died. But the few Christians among them refused to believe that any situation can be hopeless with those who love the Lord. Thus they hoped against hope that someday the situation would change. They lived to see the happy day when they could walk out of the same gate, free men. One of them became a well-known religious leader.

Love never considers any person or situation hopeless, because “with God all things are possible.” He is able to annul the plans of man and the purposes of the great enemy who ever “walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.” While he takes men captive virtually at his will, Christians are declared to be “prisoners of hope.” They are like their spiritual father, Abraham, “who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations,” according to the promise of God. (Romans 4:18.) Indeed, “we are saved by hope,” which reaches forward into the unknown and unseen future and makes it possible for the children of faith to see things invisible. (Romans 8:24.)

Hope is so important that it is named among the three heavenly graces that will outlast all spiritual gifts and acquired talents and reach into the eternal ages of the future. “Thus (faith and hope and love last on, these three, but the greatest of all is love.” 1 Corinthians 13: 13, Moffatt.

“My religion is that of the Master,
Unshackled by dogma or creeds,
Unhampered by classic theology,
But proving its worth by its deeds.
A religion that lifts up the fallen,
With compassion and help from above,
That never casts stones at the sinful,
And spreads naught but sunshine and love.”

—Author Unknown.

Chapter 15 – The Permanence of Love

We have considered two of the three sections of the New Testament psalm of love—the supremacy of love and the characteristics of love. We now begin the study of the last section, which deals with the permanence of love.

“Love never fails. But if there are prophecies, they will be done away with; if there are languages, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be brought to an end. For our knowledge is imperfect, and so is our prophesying; but when the perfect state of things is come, all that is imperfect will be brought to an end. When I was a child, I talked like a child, felt like a child, reasoned like a child: when I became a man, I put from me childish ways. For the present we see things as if in a mirror, and are puzzled; but then we shall see them face to face. For the present the knowledge I gain is imperfect; but then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. And so there remain Faith, Hope, love—these three; and of these the greatest is Love.” 1 Corinthians 13:8-13, Weymouth.

We shall here discuss the first three of these verses, which begin with the statement, “Love never fails.” “Love never ends,” is another version. Love, as here conceived, survives all things else and is permanent. It abides through time and eternity. It “falleth not away,” said Tyndale. Much in this world that is called love begins ardently and passionately, but like a beautiful flower, it withers and dies. In the divorce courts all sorts of reasons are given for matrimonial failures, but the real cause of the breaking up of hundreds of thousands of homes each year is the fading of love.

True love never fails, because it bears, believes, hopes, and endures all things. Among love's many virtues is its lasting quality. It never fails in its mission as a constraining and restraining influence; it is a remedy for impatience, contention, and strife. It never fails as the basic principle of the divine administration in heaven and in earth, or as the true motivating power in obedience and service. It never fails in its kindness, gentleness, humility, and unselfishness. It never betrays the confidence of those who trust in it and are controlled by it.

We live in a changing world, where failure and defeat are more common than is success. Most of man's plans are thwarted and his ambitions frustrated. Even much that is considered essential and permanent today may be discarded tomorrow. Not many of the works of man have been able to abide the ravages of time. Mighty nations rise and fall, and once-great cities have become heaps of dust and ashes. Popular movements flourish for a time and then disappear, and apparently stable and accepted principles and eternal realities give place to new ideologies, and all things earthly and material seem to ebb and flow like the restless tide. But love is eternal and unchangeable. It will abide the transition period and be taken by its possessor through the portals of the celestial city into the everlasting kingdom of glory.

To fortify his statement regarding the permanent nature of love, the apostle named three of the gifts of the Spirit, as representative of them all, and declared that they would cease to function when they had fulfilled their divinely appointed mission in the church. The three named were those the Corinthians especially boasted of. The rendering in the Authorized Version that prophecies "shall fail" would be a contradiction of many statements of Scripture. They are rather "done away" or "brought to an end," as Weymouth reads, when they serve their purpose and are no longer needed.

It is estimated that there are at least one thousand distinct prophetic utterances in the Bible, and most of them have been completely fulfilled. One by one their mission has been accomplished, except that of inspiring faith in divine revelation. The Lord “declared the former things from the beginning” because man is obstinate, with a neck as hard to turn as if it were “an iron sinew,” and a brow as hard to impress as though it were “brass.” (Isaiah 48:3-5.) Jesus said, “And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe.” John 14:29. Fulfilled prophecy is a challenge that skepticism and infidelity cannot meet. However, when “the perfect state of things” returns it will be no longer needed.

“Tongues ... shall cease.” This doubtless has special reference to the gift of tongues manifested on the Day of Pentecost and in other emergencies when the Lord wanted to do a quick work. We are told that those who are waiting for the return of Christ shall “come behind in no gift.” (1 Corinthians 1:7.) This indicates that this gift will be used on occasions during the final visitation of spiritual power in the latter rain, when the Lord’s work is cut short in righteousness. However, it will be no longer needed after the Second Advent of Christ, and it will thereafter cease forever. The statement also includes the use of the many languages of the human race. When the curse of the confusion of tongues at Babel is removed, there will be a universal language spoken by all the redeemed.

The apostle declared that “knowledge” also “shall vanish away,” or “be brought to an end.” A careful analysis of his statements shows that he is referring to knowledge in its present partial and limited state. Regardless of the amount of knowledge acquired through study, research, and observation, it is always incomplete. After reaching the highest pinnacle of wisdom possible to man, the greatest scholar must say with Paul, “Now we know in part.” Much of the boasted wisdom of the ancients is now obsolete, and by comparison the modern schoolboy possesses far more

knowledge in regard to a multitude of things. Even the latest inventions are soon outmoded, and books become out of date soon after coming off the press. How temporary are the works of man!

Wrote Paul, “For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.” “But when the perfect comes, the imperfect will pass away,” or “will be superseded,” is the rendering in the Revised Standard and Moffatt Versions. The apostle did not intend to convey the idea that even partial truth will cease to be truth, for truth is eternal. It is not the knowledge of the truth that ceases or passes away, but rather the *partial* knowledge. It is the limited vision that will be superseded by full, mature, and perfect knowledge when we reach the Perfect state.

All truth, including that revealed through the visions of the prophets and the gift of tongues, as well as the accumulated learning of the ages, is only partial. We know but little on any subject. This is true of the profoundest scholar, the greatest scientist, or the wisest specialist. Thomas Edison, the electrical wizard of his day, said that no one knows even one-hundredth part of one per cent of anything. This certainly leaves no room for boasting.

Elsewhere in his writings Paul stated the same fact: “Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth. And if any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. But if any man love God, the same is known of him.” 1 Corinthians 8:1-3. “Knowledge’ puffs up, but love builds up,” is the Revised Standard Version reading. Even the greatest of the prophets saw but glimpses of truth, for “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man,” the truths that will be known when we reach the perfect state.

Sir Isaac Newton showed the proper attitude toward advancing light, when he said: “I do not know what I may appear to the world, but to

myself I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the seashore and diverting myself in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me.”

The person who is content with his present enlightenment thereby closes the door to further truth in any realm of knowledge. As far as the Scriptures are concerned, they constitute an inexhaustible mine of truth the resources of which have scarcely been touched. Beneath the surface are rich veins of truth still unexplored. After getting a mere glimpse of the truths of divine revelation, many become satisfied and close their minds as if they had it all. With only a faint glimmer of the illumination they might enjoy, they not only refuse to seek for more, but sometimes resent the efforts of others to enlighten them lest their prejudices be disturbed.

The truth of God is infinite and therefore inexhaustible. “The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.” Proverbs 4:18. The diligent searcher for the jewels of truth travels an illuminated pathway that shines with increasing brilliancy until the “perfect day” of mature knowledge comes with the dawn of eternity.

The limited nature of our present knowledge in regard to the truths of the Bible is strikingly described by the author of the book *Education*, page 171: “It is impossible for any human mind to exhaust even one truth or promise of the Bible. One catches the glory from one point of view, another from another point; yet we can discern only gleamings. The full radiance is beyond our vision. As we contemplate the great things of God’s word, we look into a fountain that broadens and deepens beneath our gaze. Its breadth and depth pass our knowledge. As we gaze, the vision widens; stretched out before us we behold a boundless, shoreless sea. Such study has vivifying power. The mind and heart acquire new strength, new life.”

Although the ocean of truth cannot be fully fathomed, and our knowledge during this life will always be partial, we can know far more than we do if we will engage in more diligent study. We are divinely admonished to dig deep and “search the scriptures,” that we might “know of the doctrine.” Jesus said, “If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.” John 8:31, 32. While seeking for this freedom from the bondage of ignorance, let us anticipate with joy the coming of the “perfect state,” when partial knowledge will be supplanted by that which is full and complete.

LOVE

More richly radiant than the star of hope,
Abiding still when it shall wane and set,
Piercing the pall when eyes of faith forget
Their cunning, and in blindness darkly grope;
Love suffers long, nor ever is offended!
Swifter than light, outstripping even death,
Love is the essence of both hope and faith,
The holy grail where every quest is ended.

Love never fails. All else that is of chance
Or of intention born, shall cease to be.
Yet never faltering, never questioning why,
But holding fast despite all circumstance,
Love, only, measures with eternity.
God's self, immortal, love can never die!

—JESSIE WILMORE MURTON,
The Shining Thread pp. 43, 44.

Chapter 16 – The Growth of Love

“**W**hen I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.” 1 Corinthians 13:11. The apostle Paul now discusses the growth and development of love as illustrated by physical growth from birth to manhood. Love increases with spiritual growth until it reaches perfection in Christ. In the same epistle Paul speaks of certain Christians as being “babes in Christ,” and Peter said that “as newborn babes” young Christians should “desire the sincere milk of the word” that they “may grow thereby.”

The apostle declares that “the perfecting of the saints” becomes a reality when “we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ,” so “that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, ... but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.” Ephesians 4:12-15. The growth in all things includes love, Christ’s crowning virtue. The growth in love is the perfect state, a change as great as the difference between childhood and manhood, which is a faint illustration of the difference between our present love, knowledge, and experience, and that of the redeemed state.

There are some characteristics of childhood that should be retained through life. On one occasion, when the disciples were seeking for and

quarreling over position and prestige, and thus acting like spoiled children, Jesus placed a child in their midst and told them that unless they were converted, and humbled themselves, and exhibited some of the beautiful traits of childhood, they could not enter the kingdom of heaven. Some of the characteristics of childhood that should be retained through life are innocence, meekness, humility, honesty, trust, confidence, sincerity, truthfulness, happiness, freedom from worry, and eagerness to learn. In these respects we must be like children, or we cannot be saved.

On the other hand there are many childish characteristics that should be eliminated as early in life as possible if we would grow to maturity in love, knowledge, and experience. We are willing to overlook them in children, but they are hard to tolerate in grownups. Paul wrote, “Brethren, be not children in understanding: howbeit in malice be ye children, but in understanding be men.” 1 Corinthians 14:20. “As regards evil, indeed, be utter babes, but as regards your minds prove yourselves to be men of ripe years.” (Weymouth.) Intellectual growth should never cease as long as we live. When a tree ceases to grow it dies.

We all love children as long as they keep growing normally. It is easy to overlook their childish ways because they are children. But perpetual infancy—mentally, spiritually, or physically—is a tragedy. Many in the church are still “babes in Christ,” even though they have been professed Christians for many years. Let us enumerate some of the childish ways that are obnoxious in grownups and that should be eliminated as early in life as possible.

1. Talking like a child is unbecoming to those who have grown” up. No person should use baby talk after he ceases to be a baby. Some adults err in using language which, like the speech of infants, is often obscure, incoherent, and unintelligible.

2. The feelings of a child are also unbecoming to mature persons. In children feelings and emotions are pronounced. These constitute the center of a child's world. Children are often emotionally unstable and unbalanced. They cry over trifles. Their feelings are easily hurt. Every hurt assumes the proportions of a grievous misfortune. They are swayed by whims and moods. It is in an emergency, or crisis, that people show maturity or a lack of it. Just as steam is most powerful and useful when it is confined or compressed, so emotion is most valuable when it is held under proper restraint.
3. The reasoning of a child should also change and develop with growth. A child's reasoning is that of selfish immaturity, based on insufficient knowledge and experience, leading to wrong conclusions. Those with partial knowledge are often conceited and dogmatic, and those with experience and mature intelligence are humble and teachable. Children are often unreasonable because of a lack of experience and judgment. Therefore rules and regulations are necessary in every family and institution dealing with youth. Before children are old enough to reason they must be taught to obey. The modern idea that children should grow up without restrictions is vicious and fatal to character development.
4. By nature all children are in varying degrees selfish and self-centered. They cry only over something personal. The sufferings of others rarely impress them. Sometimes even the sickness and death of mother does not stop their laughter and play. Yet a slight pinprick or a delayed meal takes on the seriousness of a calamity, because it is something personal. Infants cry only for themselves, and a similar selfishness in older people is abhorrent.
5. Children love attention. This is the chief reason some infants cry often and loudly. They want to be noticed, to be taken up. They

want father or mother to walk the floor with them. As such children grow older they refuse to play unless they can occupy the center of the stage. Later in life they claim to be born leaders, and no wonder, because they ruled the family from childhood. Such persons never make mistakes—in their own estimation. Other persons are always wrong. Many marriages are wrecked and homes made unhappy because of perpetual infancy on the part of husband or wife. This is also one of the chief causes of perpetual invalidism on the part of many who are not really sick but who want attention and sympathy. Their illness is only in their minds.

6. Children crave appreciation. When they take their first steps the family applauds, and again when the first words are uttered. Their cute sayings are told all over the neighborhood. This will not do any harm if the parents will stop before the child recognizes the fact that he is the family entertainer. Otherwise he may be ruined forever, as many are. The lessons the child fails to learn in the family he will have to learn in the world, and the world is a cruel teacher. Some people always feel that they are not appreciated. They want to be flattered and complimented, otherwise they go into a depression. The world is cursed with an oversupply of this kind of grown babies.
7. Children like to be amused and entertained, and it is as easy to make them laugh as to make them cry. They laugh over trifles. A simple story delights them, and the same story thrills them even after it has been repeated a hundred times. Perhaps no one thing is a better criterion of a person's maturity or infancy than the type of entertainment he enjoys. The pictures and other forms of amusement that entertain the majority of grown people today indicate that they have the mentality of a ten-year-old. This is indicated by the popularity of the comics, not only with children,

but also with their parents. Many in the average church congregation show their immaturity by their desire for the spectacular. They like to be amused and entertained by stories, and they sigh when the sermon deals with the deep and solemn truths of the Scriptures. They would rather be thrilled than edified and instructed.

8. Many children have no sense of gratitude, and accept all benefits and blessings as something deserved. The first thank you from a child is a momentous event, and is a definite sign of growth. We expect such lack of gratitude in a child, but not in grownups, for it is one of the most unfortunate signs of perpetual infancy. This throwback from childhood produces in some people the sentiment that their parents owe them an education and the world owes them a living.
9. Infants possess little or no sense of obligation to others. If they are not taught to repay a kindness, or to show appreciation for favors by doing something in return, when they grow up they become careless in regard to their obligations to God and man. They rob God in tithes and offerings, and ignore or repudiate their debts. This class permit the church, the community, or the state to take care of their parents in old age, and have no concern over the welfare of those in need.
10. Some children by nature are irreverent, having no sense of holy things and places. In some instances they do not hesitate to tear Bibles to pieces while the preacher is proclaiming a message from the Holy Book. Hymnbooks become playthings in which they make pencil marks if their indulgent mothers do not happen to stop them. Unless instructed, children have little sense of distinction between the holy and the secular. Whispering and visiting in church and other forms of disturbance on the part of

youth and their elders are sure signs of infancy, but an increasing reverence indicates growth toward maturity.

These are a few of the evidences of perpetual infancy on the one hand and of growth and maturity on the other. In an examination on these ten points what grade would you get? Are you growing in love, knowledge, and Christian experience?

Shun the tragedy of perpetual infancy. Let love bring you to that "perfect state of things" when "all that is imperfect will be brought to an end." 1 Corinthians 13:10, Weymouth. To reflect the character of Christ fully should be the aim and goal of every Christian. This will come true for those only who allow themselves to be dominated by the power of love.

Chapter 17 – The Enlightenment of Love

“**F**or now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.” 1 Corinthians 13:12. The marginal reading for “darkly” is, “in a riddle.” “In an enigma” is the rendering in the Concordant Version. “For the present we see things as if in a mirror, and are puzzled,” is the Weymouth translation.

Special emphasis should be placed on the two words “now” and “then,” which refer to the present and the future, this life and the next. In the *then*, when “the perfect state” (Weymouth) is ushered in, all the enigmas and mysteries and baffling and puzzling problems of this life will become clear. Over against the puzzling *now*, we must learn to place the glorious *then*. Through the eye of faith the Christian is able to see into the hereafter, when the perplexing things hard for him to understand now will find a satisfactory explanation. Where finite minds can discern only confusion and baffling problems now, we shall then see a perfect design, a beautiful harmony.

Ancient mirrors were not made of glass, but of highly polished brass or other metal. The best were made of the famous Corinthian brass, for which Corinth was noted. But in comparison with our present mirrors they reflected images dimly and even obscurely. The reflection was often so indistinct that the image was scarcely discernible. Looking at the

reflection of a friend in one of these brazen mirrors was far different from a face-to-face vision.

For the purpose of amusement, mirrors are sometimes made to distort, twist, or disfigure the reflected image, making it so grotesque that one scarcely recognizes his own features. Some persons have similar distorted visions of life, seeing almost everything in a wrong light. What they think they see and hear is so warped and twisted that they “speak evil of the things that they understand not,” and say and do things that would be unthinkable to a person with full vision and perfect knowledge.

Our text indicates that what we see in this life can be only dimly comprehended. Realizing that a clear vision and full knowledge of anything is impossible, human beings should keep humble. It is especially true that even the most profound knowledge of the Scriptures is at best only partial. In Numbers 12:8 we are told that God spoke through the prophets in “dark speeches,” or “by means of riddles,” as it is rendered in the Septuagint. On the other hand, He spoke to Moses “mouth to mouth,” or “face to face.”

The expression “dark speeches,” or “riddles,” doubtless refers to the use of symbols, employed so extensively by the prophets. This was especially true of Ezekiel, Daniel, and John in the Revelation. Christ made great use of the symbolic or parabolic method of teaching, using the material and physical things of life to illustrate the spiritual. Through symbols and parables the truth is concealed from one class and revealed to another. This method has played an important part in the preservation of the Scriptures down through the centuries. Regarding these prophecies, the angel Gabriel said to the prophet Daniel, “None of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.” Daniel 12:10. To the former class the symbols and parables are “foolishness.”

The keenest human vision of spiritual truth is dim. In fact, most of the things the Christian hopes for are invisible, except through the eye of faith. Faith is defined as “the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” Hebrews 11:1. It is evidence with no evidence in sight. It is taking God at His word, with no other visible proof. Paul declared that Christians “look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.” 2 Corinthians 4:18.

Even the most diligent student of the Scriptures can have but a twilight perception of divine truth, and the most deeply spiritual Christian has seen but the first rays of the dawn of the glory of Christ’s character. How strange that those who have had but momentary flashes of spiritual illumination should become satisfied and feel that they know it all. Christ rebukes the Christians of this generation who feel that as far as Scriptural knowledge is concerned they are “rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing,” when they are actually “blind” to their own needs and should receive from Christ the “gold” of faith, love, and truth. (Revelation 3:17, 18.) How different it will be when in the perfect state the scroll of truth is completely unrolled and all mysteries are dissolved in light!

We are also puzzled by the baffling problems of life, many of which cannot be understood at the time they are being experienced. The chief reason we are puzzled is that we have but partial knowledge, for now we “know in part” and our knowledge is imperfect. How different it would be if we could see things from the viewpoint of Heaven! We are now like children trying to put together a puzzle with some of the parts missing. However, these missing parts are in the safekeeping of God, and will someday be supplied to make a perfect whole. When we see God “face to face” we shall know, even as we are also known. Then we shall know God as He knows us and see things as He sees them. When we see Christ as

He is, then we shall see life's experiences as they are, with no darkening veil between.

In the world to come there will be no dark shadows and unexplainable mysteries. Then we shall know of a surety that "all things" did "work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." Romans 8:28. In the world of tomorrow all the perplexing experiences of life will be made plain, and the things difficult to understand will find a satisfactory explanation. What have appeared to be thwarted plans, blasted hopes, and bitter disappointments will be seen as part of a divine design and purpose. If we could only discern the leadership and purposes of God, what happens to us would be of our own choosing.

All unjust criticisms are based on partial knowledge. *Prejudice* means "prejudgment," which is the rendering of decisions before all the evidence is in. This seems to be one of the chief weaknesses of the human race. The decisions of committees and boards are often severely criticized by men and women who are not present to hear the discussion; if they had been present, they would have decided as did the others. The prophet Ezekiel visited the captives of Israel and for seven days "sat where they sat" so as to understand conditions. If we could put ourselves in the places of those we are tempted to criticize, how different our decisions would be! If we had perfect love and complete knowledge, we would more likely give just verdicts.

We need wisdom to know how properly to balance the two worlds, the *now*, when we see things darkly, and the *then*, when we see them face to face. The difference is as great as that between the front and the back side of a beautiful tapestry, or needlework. It is said that some tapestries are made from the reverse side, where the workmen cannot see the working out of the beautiful design until it is completed. How true that is in the development of character! Both the pattern and the workmanship seem

dim and obscure during the process. Only when we eventually see the completed work will we know that all things have contributed to the perfecting of the whole after the divine similitude.

Speaking of the redeemed state, one writer said: “There, when the veil that darkens our vision shall be removed, and our eyes shall behold that world of beauty of which we now catch glimpses through the microscope; when we look on the glories of the heavens, now scanned afar through the telescope; when, the blight of sin removed, the whole earth shall appear ‘in the beauty of the Lord our God,’ what a field will be open to our study! There the student of science may read the records of creation, and discern no reminders of the law of evil. He may listen to the music of nature’s voices, and detect no note of wailing or undertone of sorrow. In all created things he may trace one handwriting,—in the vast universe behold ‘God’s name writ large,’ and not in earth or sea or sky one sign of ill remaining. . .

“There will be open to the student history of infinite scope and of wealth inexpressible. Here, from the vantage-ground of God’s word, the student is afforded a view of the vast field of history, and may gain some knowledge of the principles that govern the course of human events. But his vision is still clouded, and his knowledge incomplete. Not until he stands in the light of eternity will he see all things clearly.... The veil that interposes between the visible and the invisible world will be drawn aside, and wonderful things will be revealed.... All the perplexities of life’s experience will then be made plain. Where to us have appeared only confusion and disappointment, broken purposes and thwarted plans, will be seen a grand, overruling, victorious purpose, a divine harmony.”—*Education*, pp. 303-305.

The assurance is that “when the perfect state of things is come, all that is imperfect will be brought to an end.” This includes the deficiencies of character as well as the imperfections of knowledge and experience. The lost Paradise will be restored as completely as if man had never fallen.

Man will be fully restored to the image of his Creator, and perfect love and knowledge and understanding will reign supreme.

Chapter 18 – Life’s Crowning Virtue

The apostle closes his symphony of love with a beautiful epilogue in which he emphasizes the fact that love is the summit of Christian excellence, the crowning virtue in character development. “And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.” 1 Corinthians 13:13. “Thus ‘faith and hope and love last on, these three,’ but the greatest of all is love,” is the James Moffatt translation. Weymouth renders it, “And so there remain Faith, Hope, Love—these three; and of these the greatest is Love.”

“Now” is not used here in contrast with the “then” of the previous verse, but rather in the line of argument. Now the apostle brings his treatise to a conclusion. Although faith, hope, and love are basic and fundamental, and therefore permanent, love is declared to be the first in importance of the three heavenly graces. The three spiritual gifts previously mentioned will cease to function when the gospel finishes its mission, but these three virtues are permanent. This is true because they pertain to what we *are* rather than to what we *do* and *say*, to character rather than to conduct. Righteousness is first of all right being, which produces the fruit of right doing.

Only what we have wrought into our characters during life can we take away with us. The only treasure that can be taken over into the world to come is a character in the likeness of Christ. Christian attainments are the only permanent things this world knows. These human temples of love,

the abiding places of the Holy Spirit, will remain unmoved during the convulsions of the final crisis when all things else are shaken, and will pass unscathed through the everlasting burnings of the day of divine wrath and indignation.

Of all the character attainments of the members of the church triumphant, the supreme quality is love. In fact, in the day of recompense, when Christ makes the final separation of the inhabitants of the earth into two groups, as the shepherd divides the sheep from the goats the deciding factor will not be so much their orthodoxy of belief but rather their conduct on the basis of love. The reward is determined by loving ministry to Christ in the person of His needy saints or by the lack of it. (See Matthew 25:31-46.) Love is therefore the true test of religion.

It would be difficult to overestimate the value and greatness of faith in Christian experience. Though we must exercise faith “to the saving of the soul,” we are told that “the just shall live by faith.” Hebrews 10:39, 38. Faith is declared to be the substance, or well-grounded assurance, of all that the Christian hopes for. “Without faith it is impossible to please” God, for by it the ancient worthies “subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.” Hebrews 11:1,6,33,34.

Through faith we obtain grace, pardon, justification, sanctification, and redemption. The Christian warfare is “the good fight of faith,” and we are told that “this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.” It is “the shield of faith” that is “above all” in importance in “the armour of God” in protecting the Christian soldier against “all the fiery darts of the wicked.” Faith in God and His Word will never cease even after the redeemed have entered the kingdom of glory.

Hope makes the present endurable by illuminating the future with joyful expectancy. It promises deliverance in time of distress and joy in time of sorrow. We could not live without hope. Hope pertains to the invisible and unrealized things ahead. Paul wrote, "For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." Romans 8:24, 25.

Even though Satan takes men captive virtually at his will, Christians are declared to be "prisoners of hope." There is promised "a strong consolation" to those "who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast." Hebrews 6:18-20. Without hope life would be drab and dreary, and filled with fear and dread.

Love is still greater than faith and hope because it is more fundamental. It is the root out of which they grow. We have faith and hope in the things and persons we love. Faith and hope chiefly benefit ourselves, and love flows out in blessings to others and is therefore more unselfish. We are saved by faith and cheered by hope, but it is love that is diffused among others. Love is the salt that makes life palatable and agreeable. It not only flavors daily living but also prevents decay. Without its saving influence, families disintegrate and society goes to pieces. It is the bond and cement that hold things together.

The Scriptures do not say, "God is faith," or, "God is hope," but, rather, "God is love." Love is the essence of His character, the foundation principle of His kingdom. Someone has said, "Love is Heaven, and Heaven is love." The heart or home in which it reigns supreme is a part of heaven on earth. Who can possibly doubt the preeminence of love after reading and meditating upon this "glorious hymn of Christian love"?

Love is so perfect that it can be found in perfection only in Christ; it is so wonderful that it can be known only by experience; so beautiful that human language cannot describe it; so great that it exceeds the utmost stretches of the imagination. It is so far-reaching that it can be measured only by the cross of Calvary, which alone embraces “the breadth, and length, and depth, and height” of the love that passes knowledge.

The breadth of divine love embraces all races and nationalities of the family of man; its length extends to the end of time and on through eternity; its depth reaches down to the lowest degradation and saves to the uttermost; its height stretches upward to the heaven of heavens where dwells the Eternal, to which habitation it will eventually elevate all who are controlled by its power.

Immediately preceding the chapter we have been discussing, Paul wrote, “Covet earnestly the best gifts.” 1 Corinthians 12:31. How essential it is, therefore, that all men everywhere, especially Christians, “covet earnestly” the virtue of love. They should seek diligently until they find the “more excellent way,” which is the way of life which transcends all others. This is the more abundant life, which is found only in Him who is “the way, the truth, the life.” He is love personified and incarnate.

I bring to a close this series of studies with the consciousness of at least partial failure in the attempt adequately to describe the grandest and most beautiful and wonderful thing in the universe. It is akin to trying to describe to another some fascinating scene of nature where even the art of photography falls short. It must be seen to be appreciated; language is too weak to picture it.

Even the apostle of love, writing under divine inspiration, could not find appropriate language to describe that which is so comprehensive and full of glory that everything man esteems as great and grand dwindles into insignificance in comparison. His tongue and pen were so helpless that he

could only cry out, “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.” 1 John 3:1.

The beauty and power of the love of God and its complete sufficiency for every human need are beautifully set forth by Annie Johnson Flint:

“How broad is His love? Oh, as broad as man’s trespass,

As wide as the need of the world can be;

And yet to the need of one soul it can narrow—

He came to the world and He came to me.

“How long is His love? Without end or beginning,

Eternal as Christ and His life it must be,

For, to everlasting as from everlasting

He loveth the world and He loveth me.

“How deep is His love? Oh, as deep as man’s sinning,

As low as that uttermost vileness can be;

In the fathomless gulf of the Father’s forsaking

He died for the world and He died for me.

“How high is His love? It is high as the heavens,

As high as the throne of His glory must be;

And yet from that height He hath stooped to redeem us—

He *so* loved the world and He *so* loved me.

“How great is His love? Oh, it passeth all knowledge,

No man’s comprehension its measure can be;

It filleth the world, yet each heart may contain it—

He *so* loved the world and He *so* loved me.”

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