

The King's Highway.

And an Highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The Way of Holiness:

The wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. Isaiah 35:8.

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"The Greatest."

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One characteristic of the world is its desire and struggle not only for high places, but for the first place. In this rush and struggle, little concern is felt for the one distanced or trampled upon; for every feeling of pity and consideration is swallowed up in the burning thought and desperate effort to reach the goal of success or throne of power before and above all others.

This spirit is carried into the religious and ecclesiastical world as is plainly indicated by the words of Christ when he spoke of those desiring chief seats in the synagogue, and as appears in the dispute of the disciples as they wrangled in the way as to who should be chief or greatest in the coming kingdom of Christ; who should be on his right hand and who on his left.

All of us have witnessed scenes of an identical moral character in the church, and have beheld men cut to the heart at not being elevated to dignities, honors and offices; that they felt should be theirs no matter who else should be cut out, cut up and disappointed.

The look on the face of the brother who is not allowed to sit in the front row on the platform at a great religious gathering, is wonderfully like that of the ambitious citizen who is placed farther down the table at a public dining than he thinks is due his municipal station and civilian honor. And the expression of countenance and mortification of spirit of the defeated candidate for Governor or President is marvelously similar to the facial appearance and heart humiliation of the individual who has failed to receive the number of ballots required for the election of a bishop or cardinal. Men evidently, both in the world and church, want to be greatest.

When we enter the spiritual life we would expect that Christians there would desire the possession of those graces and virtues which would make them greatest in the sight of God and in the character world, that if the Word of God should plainly indicate which was the chiefest of all the many Christian attributes, excellencies and attainments, that at once every child of God would declare for that blessing or blessedness, and never rest until it was obtained.

Unhappily for the cause of Christ and the good of the world; this is not the case, and men who desire to be first in the ecclesiastical and church world, do not care to be first in the spiritual life. Moreover, the great body of Christians seem to prefer every other grace and virtue to the one which the inspired apostle tells us is the greatest.

The greatest obtainment and resultant soul condition, is placed in the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians. And yet we have only to cast the eye over the church of Christ to see that most of its membership prefer to live in the twelfth chapter.

Let the reader take note of the ecclesiastical offices and spiritual excellences mentioned therein and he will as quickly see where most of God's people are living; in a word, what is their admiration, imitation and possession in the visible kingdom of the Son of God. As the eye falls upon the words "Apostles," "Prophets" "Teacher" and then dwells upon the

expressions, "diversities of gifts," "word of wisdom," "word of knowledge," "gifts of healing," "discerning of spirits," "speaking with tongues," and "workers of miracles," he will see the roof tops of the religious tenements where most of God's people are living or want to live to-day. And yet the greatest, divinest, most desirable blessing is the next chapter!

Even when some enter upon the thirteenth chapter, we find them making repeated halts this side of the heart and life condition that Paul placed above every grace, virtue, excellence, office and honor in the Christian realm. He plainly declares that if we fail to possess and practice a love, that according to his description is perfect love, we are nothing and worse than nothing.

He mentions eloquence. The man has the tongue of an angel. Crowds hang breathless on his words while he holds them spellbound with ease to his oratory for two hours. Who has not craved this gift among the ministers of the lowly Nazarene? Who has not striven for this place, and was perfectly content to abide there? How many thousands have heard such a man, and called him the Greatest. But Paul says that if he has not the perfect love spoken of in the thirteenth chapter he is nothing but a piece of sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.

The apostle advances the blessing, to a point far above and beyond great learning. The man may have much native and acquired wisdom. He may have such an intellectual storehouse as to know all mysteries and possess all knowledge, and yet the child of God with perfect love in his heart is far greater than he.

Perhaps we would have a hard time in trying to convince the church and world of this fact, but it is true, in spite of human unbelief and denial, just the same.

A third greatly admired individual is the charitable man; the one whose big check helps the struggling college, covers the serious deficit in the church expenses, and leads the list of contributions for the famine-stricken across the ocean. There are many who would hardly allow his name to be mentioned in the same breath with that of an obscure follower of Christ who has been swept by the power of God into the blessing of Perfect Love. And yet the Word itself declares the latter is in a higher rank because in the possession of the greatest grace.

A fourth most exalted character in the estimation of men is the martyr, the man who gives his body to be burned, so great is his devotion to a good cause. This is the individual who has statues erected to his memory, churches and colleges named after him, and finally becomes canonized.

And yet, writes the Apostle, if this is done without the great blessing described in the thirteenth chapter of Corinthians, it all profiteth nothing. The man enjoying the experience of Perfect Love, and living it among men, is far ahead of our canonized and eulogized martyr.

So we see that even those advanced individuals who have come out of the twelfth chapter, and enter the thirteenth, stop too soon. They come short of the greatest blessing and spiritual obtainment. They rest satisfied with imitations of approximations to Perfect Love. They camp

on the Jordan, like the two tribes, but do not go over. They are in a good land, but they are not in Canaan.

When we study Paul's analysis of the greatest blessing, see what it is, and how it acts and lives, we are not surprised that he described it with the superlative form of expression.

When he declares that its spirit is one of love, we at once see the power and certain victory of such a life. It is not wisdom and eloquence that this old world needs so much as the kind of love laid down in the thirteenth chapter of Corinthians. It is not the knowledge of Christ, but the love of the Son of God that is breaking men's hearts to-day, and leading them to salvation, duty and Heaven.

So when we recognize a spirit of love incarnated in our midst, moving in the home, church and social circles, bearing all things, believing all things, hoping all things, and enduring all things, we have no doubt left concerning the fact of an angelic order of beings, for we have one in our midst. And when in addition, we behold the same individual or character suffering long and yet remaining kind, envying not, not puffed up, suspecting no evil never behaving itself unseemly and never failing, we feel that not simply a section of Heaven has been let down among us, but a blessed representative of Christ has been sent to comfort and strengthen us for a while, during the physical absence of the Son of God.

And who does not see that such a spirit and life more truly reflects and represents the Savior than any other of the moral semblances we have mentioned. And who would not prefer, a thousandfold, to be cast continually with the man of love than any one of the prominent personages mentioned in the twelfth chapter, or with the four popular characters or church demigods sketched in the first three verses of the thirteenth.

We have been thrown for hours in the company of a highly gifted and eloquent pulpit and platform speaker, who never seemed to be satisfied unless people were looking upward in admiration at him, and burning incense to his past achievements and present greatness.

It was a relief to the neckbone, and a benediction to the soul as well, to get away from this living statue on a pedestal, and talk face to face with a man who possessed the gentle, meek, unselfish and considerate love of full salvation.

With equal thankfulness we have escaped from the person bent on impressing, if not oppressing, us with his wisdom and learning; and basked for hours in the company of one who had the simplicity and sincerity of Jesus Christ, who never behaved himself unseemly or rudely, and who like his Lord did not come to be ministered unto, but to minister, and make others happier and better in this toil-some and sorrow-stricken world.

As far as we have been able to study the Christian life, we have seen no reason to doubt the perfect truthfulness of Paul's statement, that love in its perfected form is the greatest thing in the spiritual realm, as well as in the world itself.

We need not be afraid of it. We can devote ourselves to certain offices mentioned in the twelfth chapter of First Corinthians and become mechanical or arrogant. Can become absorbed in some of the good gifts, and

works described there, and get sidetracked. Can cultivate a silver-tongued oratory and backslide. Give great liberal gifts to the church and humanity and become proud. Be fairly swept off of our feet with our zeal and change into a Jehu. But the more we possess and cultivate the love described in the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians the greater blessing we will be to the world, and the more like Christ and God we will be in nature, character and life.—Christian Witness.

Christian Perfection.

(NOTES FROM WESLEY'S JOURNAL AND WORK.)

"If you press all believers to go on to perfection, and to expect deliverance from sin any moment, they will grow flat and cold."

As to manner, I believe this perfection is always wrought in the soul by a simple act of faith; consequently in an instant. But I believe in a gradual work; both preceding and following that instant.

"It requires a great degree of watchfulness to retain the perfect love of God; and one great means of retaining it is frankly to declare what God has given you, and earnestly to exhort all the believers you meet with to follow after full salvation."

"Christian perfection is surely another term for holiness. They are two names for the same thing. Thus, every one who is holy, is, in the Scripture sense, perfect. Yet we may observe, that neither in this respect is there any absolute perfection on earth. There is no perfection of degrees, as it is termed; none which does not admit of a continual increase."

To retain the grace of God is much more than to gain it; hardly one in three does this. And this should be strongly and explicitly urged on all who have tasted of perfect love. If we can prove that any of our local preachers or leaders, either directly or indirectly, speak against it, let him be a local preacher or leader no longer. I doubt whether he should continue in the society; because he that could speak thus in our congregation can not be an honest man."

Resignation.

Blosius relates that a certain poor man, living in great sanctity of life, was asked by a grave divine how, and by what means, he had arrived to so great perfection? In making a first resolution, answered the poor man, to attach myself to nothing but the will of God; to which I have so conformed my own will, that whatever He wills, I will the same. When I am pinched with hunger, or shivering with cold, I praise God. And whether it be foul or fair, sunshine or stormy, what weather soever it be, I always bless God for it. Whether He sends me of Himself some fortunate or unfortunate accident, or permits it to happen, I receive all from His hand with joy, since nothing can come from Him but good; and I resign myself with profound humility in the arms of His fatherly care and providence.—Sel.

True religion is neither a discovery nor invention of man, but a revelation from God. Therefore, it can not be added to nor taken from. Anything new in religion is not true.—Sel.

It Can Not be Argued Away.

There have been many theories proposed for the destruction or regulation of the "carnal mind." Suppression, physical death, physical torture and evolution and others have been proposed. The latest is to deny the existence of sinfulness entirely. It is said that the devil is most dangerous when and where his personality is denied. It would seem to be equally true as regards the existence of the "old man."

The existence of Satan is denied by the Unitarian and the existence of the carnal mind by some Trinitarians. If we must believe what many say, instead of having three enemies to deal with—the world, the flesh and the devil—we have only one left—the world. And many deny it as an enemy.

The chief attack at present on the doctrine of depravity is in the line of psychology. It is claimed that all sin is in the will and that the great and good men who founded the evangelical denominations were ignorant of modern psychology and hence their blunder in declaring that man is depraved or has a nature sinful in its tendencies. But there are some things that these propagandists have not yet explained that must be explained before we give up the consensus of nineteen centuries on the question of sin. They have not explained yet why it seems natural and easy to will to do wrong and difficult to will to do right to a degree sufficient to defeat

why we find a friction in our nature when we are carrying out our will do right, an inclination the other way when we are determined to do right. Until human psychology clears up this point and tells us what is back of the will and inclines us to will we shall stick to the teachings of the ages that declare that the heart of man is "inclined to evil" and this inclination, bias or temper, whatever be its nature, whether it has an entity or not, is called in the Bible, "the carnal mind," "sin that dwelleth in me," "our old man," etc. In theology it is called "depravity," "inbred sin," etc.

The discussion has been principally over the term, "inbred sin." But after all the objection seems to be raised over this definition principally more than over the fact that man is not as he was originally created.

Now men may argue over terms and definitions, but they can not argue away the fact that from our constitution there is a predisposition of our natures to do the things we ought not, as may be seen in the experience of every one before divine grace has operated in the heart. Every parent knows that children have to be taught to do right. Call a crow a raven and you have not changed his nature one bit. Multiply all the arguments and yet it is a fact that there are tempers of soul independent of the will, as Paul clearly shows in Romans, seventh chapter.—Christian Witness.

Many who have great privileges seem to think they are great favorites with God. They fail to note that the greater the privileges the greater their responsibility.

Little love is little righteousness; great love is great righteousness; perfect love is perfect righteousness.—St. Augustine.

Heaven sends us misfortunes as a moral tonic.—Lady Blessington.