

THE GREATEST OF THESE IS LOVE.

The occasion of the writing of Paul's first letter to the church at Corinth was the authentic report to Paul of contentions in the church he had planted there, and which continued to be an object of much loving concern. The root of their difficulty lay in the fact that they were "yet carnal" (1 Cor. 3-3), evidenced by envying, and strife, and divisions. This letter affords a most heartening document for the believer in entire sanctification. It is plain and practical, it deals with sin in a courageous way, and shows how the founder of a church that was not very far removed as yet from the old sin life in paganism can hold on to them, pray for them, urge and plead and exhort them and never give over his effort until they realize the full measure of spiritual stature limned out in the great New Testament Psalm of Love—First Corinthians, Thirteen.

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Here is, first, the excellence of love. Since the word "charity" has now come to mean either almsgiving or tolerance, it is quite universally agreed that the word "love," as used in revised versions, is the better word, though it is too general in meaning, since the original expression limited this quality of love to a God-given and God-like element in the life. The measure is determined by comparison, as one by the gift of tongues, prophecy, faith, benevolence (here charity comes into its own in its exact meaning) and martyrdom—all pass in review and are shown to be good in place, but that place must not be supreme

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The nature of divine love next appears. It bears analysis, and, when considered in the light of daily Christian living, it looks all the more attractive. Behold this string of gems of grace. Love is patient and kind—it "suffereth long and is kind." It is generous—it "envieth not." It is humble—"vaunteth not itself unseemly." It is unselfish—"seeketh not her own." It is marked by good temper—"is not provoked." (R. V.) It is guileless—"thinketh no evil." It is sincere and optimistic—"rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth." Love "beareth all things"—that wicked men and devils may inflict; "believeth all things"—it keeps a vigorous and energetic faith; "hopeth all things"—it is cheerful and optimistic; "endureth all things"—and thus explains the heroism of Christian suffering and martyrdom.

And, finally, we see the permanence of love. "Love never faileth." It is a permanent and perpetual grace, intended to be possessed and used for eternity. Prophecies become history, tongues cease, and spoken languages become dead or change to fit new conditions, and knowledge vanishes, but love never fails.—*Wesleyan Methodist*.

ANSWERS TO PRAYER

Every true prayer is certain to be answered. As surely as the harvest follows the sowing, even though the season be adverse and beset with discouragement, so surely will all true prayer receive its reward. "The answer may be long in coming—years may elapse before the bread we have cast upon the waters comes back; but if the vision tarry, wait for it! Why not?" The answer does not always stand next door to the petition. Prayers, however, are never forgotten when they go up before the faithful One. Long after we have forgotten them, God remembers them. For our encouragement let us again read the words of exhortation used by the writer of

Hebrews (1-35:36): "Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise."

And remember, says the *Wesleyan Methodist*, that answers to your prayers should be diligently looked for. Said Grundall: "To pray and not watch what becomes of our prayer is a great folly and no little sin; like children that throw stones into the river, which they never look to see more. What is this but to take the name of God in vain, and play with an ordinance that is holy and sacred?" When you have been in the closet of secret prayer, expect the thing for which you have offered petition. In the language of the Apostle John: "And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us: and if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petition that we desire of Him." Let us expect that the answer is on the way, and not be surprised when it arrives. Cuyler gave utterance to a very great truth when he wrote: "Answered prayer covers the field of providential history as flowers cover the western prairies." And this is not alone an historical fact, but a present and joyful reality which we all may realize. God hears and answers prayer! —*The Christian*.

TITHING.

1. It is Scriptural—approved of God in the Old Testament and supported by Christ's words in the New.
2. It is a good start in the individual's life of giving.
3. It is spiritual, for personal faith is called into play.
4. It is business-like, for there is definiteness, progressiveness and system.
5. It is a crushing blow against selfishness.
6. It causes the giver to take the initiative in Christian giving, rather than holding back one's response until the money appeal is made.
7. It commandeers all alike in quality giving.
8. It frees the church from the disgrace of deficits.
9. It enables the church to frequently plan for an enlarging work.
10. It safeguards the spirituality of the church by eliminating drives for money.
11. It establishes the individual as a financial steward, accountable to God.
12. It gives confidence in the practice of prayer.
13. It awakens thought as nothing else, regarding time and service for God.
14. It elevates worship to the high plane of rounded-out sincerity.
15. It makes giving a principle and no longer a spasmodic expression.
16. It is likely to result, as it has with many others, in our giving being more than a tenth of all our receipts.
17. It means less of the comforts and pleasures of life, that money can purchase, but the power to enjoy those that are left are expanded.
18. It creates in our lives a commanding position over others in the matter of giving, we can use the most effective weapon of example.—*Way of Truth*

Regeneration is God's act; but repentance and faith, which are immediate issues of it, are ours, and you must enter by the straight gate if you would enter into God's family and obtain the privileges of it.

BROKEN THINGS

God uses most for His glory those people and things which are most perfectly broken.

The sacrifices He accepts are broken and contrite hearts.

It was the thorough breaking down of Jacob's natural strength at Peniel that got him where God could clothe him with spiritual power.

It was by breaking the surface of the rock at Horeb by the stroke of Moses' rod that it let out the cool waters to thirsty people.

It was when the three hundred elect soldiers under Gideon broke their pitchers, a type of breaking themselves, that the hidden lights shone forth to the consternation of their adversaries.

It was when the poor widow broke the seal of the little pot of oil and poured it forth, that God multiplied it to pay her debts and supply means of support.

It was when Esther risked her life and broke through the rigid etiquette of a heathen court, that she obtained favor to rescue her people her people from death.

It was when Jesus took the five loaves and broke them the bread was multiplied in the very act of breaking, sufficient to feed five thousand.

It was when Mary broke her beautiful alabaster box rendering it henceforth useless, that the pent-up perfume filled the whole house.

It was when Jesus allowed His precious body to be broken to pieces by thorns and nails and spears that His inner life was poured out like a crystal ocean for thirsty sinners to drink and live.

It is when a grain of corn is broken up in the earth by death, that its inner heart sprouts forth and bears hundreds of other grains.

And thus on and on, through all history and all biography, and all vegetation, and all spiritual life, God must have broken things.

Those who are broken in wealth and broken in self-will, and broken in their ambitions, and broken in their beautiful ideals, and broken in worldly reputation, and broken in their affections, and broken oftentimes in health, and those who are despised, and seem utterly helpless and forlorn, the Holy Ghost is seizing upon and using for God's glory. It is "the lame that takes the prey," Isaiah tells us.

It is the weak that overcome the devil. God is waiting to take hold of our failures and nothingness and shine through them.—*Selected*.

DEEP WATER.

Young men make a sad mistake when they think it necessary to have a personal acquaintance with the dark and seamy side of life. Many a man who has peered into the abyss "just to see what it was like" has lost his balance and fallen almost hopelessly.

A young man was talking to the pilot on one of our big steamers. "How long," he asked, "have you been a pilot on these waters?"

The old man replied, "Twenty-five years; and I came up and down many times before I was a pilot."

"Then," said the young man, "I should think you must know every rock and sandbank in the river."

The old man smiled at the youth's simplicity, and replied, "Oh, no, I don't; but I know where the deep water is."

That is what we want—to know the safe path, and keep to it.—*Atkins*.

Keep low at the feet of Jesus. It will save many a disastrous fall.—*Christian Witness*.