

DIVINE LOVE COVERETH

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"Hatred stirreth up strife, but love covereth all transgressions."—Prov. 25:25.

"Above all, have Divine love for one another, for Divine love throws a veil over a multitude of sins."—I. Peter 4:8. Divine love covereth all things with silence.—I. Cor. 12:8.

Recently a sister asked me to write an article answering the question why those professing godliness so constantly criticize Christian workers and pass on evil reports. There is only one answer: they lack the perfect love of God that covers.

Under the old covenant and under the new we have the statements, "Love covereth." Prov. 10:12; I. Pet. 4:8. And "the Love Chapter" emphatically confirms this, as the Greek for "Love beareth all things," is "Love covereth all things with silence." I. Cor. 13-7.

Early in Bible history we have a record of God's appreciation of the love that "covereth."

Blessings were given to Shem and Japhet because, when they heard of their father's shame, they walked backward and "covered" him, and "saw not the nakedness of their father." Gen. 9:23-27.

The Holy Spirit writing through Moses, must needs record Lot's worldliness for our warning. Gen. 13:10-13. But the Holy Spirit, writing through Peter, overlooks Lot's sin, long since forgotten, and tells us, "God . . . delivereth just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked; for that righteous man . . . in seeing and hearing vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds." 2 Pet. 2:8.

A true history must mention Rahab's falsehood, but love covers the heathen woman's sin of ignorance and only recalls her faith when she heard of Israel's God.—Josh. 2:8-16; Heb. 11:31.

Jesus was unsparing in His denunciation of the Pharisees to their faces and He sent a strong, characteristic word to the sly, cunning, deceitful Herod, but He never personally spoke evil of any individual behind his back. He reproved Peter to his face severely, but He did not tell John privately that Peter was influenced by Satan. He publicly rebuked Simon, but He did not go into the home of Mary and Martha and talk over how uncourteous Simon had been.

With God, a forgiven sin is "covered"—Psa. 32:1. There is not a hint of David's transgression in the New Testament, though his name occurs fifty-seven times.

If we forgive even as He, we never speak of an injury done to us.—Eph. 4:32.

A high standard? Yes, but the overcomers reach it. The sons of God are perfect in love "even as" their Father—Matt. 5:44-48. They reprove those whom they believe are wrong, but they put away all "evil speaking," and "take account" only of the "lovely" things.—Eph. 4:31; Phil. 4:8. They never mention a true, vile report, nor pass on an evil story, that possibly after all, may be much exaggerated or altogether untrue.

Years ago, when I was a babe, somebody stabbed me. It was my rule never to tell any human being of a wrong perpetrated against me. But this time I said, as I lay on my couch thinking it over: "I must tell Tom." But the Spirit whispered, "Love covers." I saw that I must not even tell my husband.

Then I opened my lips to talk to the Lord about it, and more decidedly the Spirit said, "Love covers." I was ready to weep. "Why,

Father," I cried, 'may I not even tell Thee about it?' Tenderly he said, "Love covers." I rose and went to my writing. Perhaps a week, perhaps a month elapsed before I recalled that I had been wounded, and then could not remember who or what had caused my pain.

The years went by and whenever the Spirit said, "Love covers," He wrought in me the obliteration of the bitter wrong, until one midnight I found myself wholly sleepless as the surges of a cruel injustice swept over me, and the love which covers seemed to have crept out of my heart. Then I cried out to God in an agony for the power to obey His injunction, "Love covereth."

Immediately the Spirit began to work in me the power that brought the forgetfulness. In a vision I dug a grave. I threw up the earth until the excavation was deep. Sorrowfully I lowered into it the thing which had wounded me. Quickly I shoveled in the clods. Over the mound I carefully laid the green sods. Then I covered it with white roses and rapidly walked away. Sweet sleep came. The wound which had been so nearly deadly was healed without a scar, and I know not today what caused my grief.

More years went by, and there came into my life a succession of daily trials, small and stinging, that I seemed utterly unable to forgive and forget. Again my agonizing cry to God was answered. In a vision, I dug another grave down in the swamp at the side of the house. Into a casket I put the noxious things, lowered them, covered them, put on the earth the weeds and rushes, and waited for the roses, but none came. I cried out, "Father, aren't you going to give me any roses?" And then up from each corner of the rough mound there sprang a tiny evergreen tree, that grew slowly toward heaven. I had my victory.

We grow in grace and in the knowledge of the Lord of Love. "To Him be glory."—2 Peter 3:18.

There are two Greek words translated love. "Phileo," human affection, personal attachment, brotherly love, and 'Agapao," much love, dear love, Divine love.

Jesus used both these words in His love-rebuke, and love-commission to the disciple that cursed and swore as he thrice denied Him.

"Simon, lovest thou me with Divine love?"

"Yea, Lord."

"Feed my lambs."

"Simon, lovest thou me with brotherly

"Yea, Lord."

"Feed my sheep."

"Simon, lovest thou me with brotherly love?"

Simon was grieved.

"Yea, Lord, thou knowest I love Thee with brotherly love."

"Feed my sheep."—John 21:15-17.

Long afterward, Peter, writing to the elect, says:

"Having made your souls pure, in obedience to the truth, in unfeigned brotherly love, now out of your hearts have Divine love for each other, steadily, for you have been begotten again by God's ever-living and enduring Word, from a germ not of perishable life."

"All mankind resembles the herbage, and all their beauty is like its flowers. The herbage dries up and its flowers drop off, but the Word of the Lord remains forever."—I. Peter 1:22-25.

Agapao is the word always used in the

Love Chapter, for only Divine Love can suffer long and be kind. Only Divine Love seeks not her own, but looks on the things of others. Only Divine Love covers all things with silence, believes the best of everyone, is full of hope, full of patient endurance and never fails."—I. Cor. 13:4-8.

"Thou hast faith, yet faith is not the sweetest,

Thou hast hope, bright hope of things to be;

Thou hast love, and love is ever greatest,

For love shall reign through all eternity."

A sister asked me to write and answer the question: "Why do those professing holiness, criticize Christians and pass on evil reports?" Why? They have never prayed and believed for the Divine love that covereth.

"He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God and God in him."—I. John.

"Gazing on the cloudless glory

Of the Lord we love;

Where unveiled, He fills with radiance

Those bright courts above.

"Day my day a change is passing

O'er our lifted brow;

Soon to shine like Christ in glory,

Though so dimly now.

"Evermore His love transforms us,

In the Father's sight;

Not His love as just our portion,

But His full delight.

"Wondrous riches of His glory,

Won in shame and blood;

And from heaven outpoured in fulness,

Endless love of God."

"BE NOT DECEIVED"

Every soul that searches God's Holy Word, and earnestly striving to gain heaven, will find an abundance of warnings against being deceived.

Even since the fall of Adam in the garden, Satan has put forth every effort and power to deceive man and keep him from the right way. Below we give a few of the many passages God has called our attention to. I Cor. 6:7, Gal. 6:7, 2 Tim. 3:13, Titus 1:10.

It is not at all surprising how easily man is deceived, for we read in Jer. 17:9 "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." There are countless ways in which the enemy has in deceiving souls. Multiplied sinners are being deceived by the god of this world, which has blinded the minds of those who believe not, yet more alarming still, how Satan is alluring and deceiving thousands upon thousands of God's people who really want to love and serve Him. False prophets, with false teachers has crept in too, bringing confusion and unrest, turning many, many away from God and true righteousness.

Well, here we give God's own Word in its strongest language in 2 Peter 2:1-2: "There will be false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction." Now we want to bring to the mind another fearful evil the enemy is using to drag souls to hell. This is the love of money and covetousness. I. Tim. 6:10. God declares the love of money is the root of all evil. Oh, how men and women will go the full length of sin and shame to obtain money. Yea, another dreadful evil is pride, and let us not count pride and vanity a small sin for it is successfully keeping multitudes out of the kingdom. Let us sound the alarm for the Lord tells us in Prov. 16: 18, "Pride goeth before a fall." Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, let no man deceive you! Amen!—Elma A. Brown—Missionary Holiness Herald and The Vanguard.