

March 21

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. Matthew 5:44

HERE is a way to examine the real disposition of your own heart toward such.

(1 Th 5:15 KJV) "See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men."

R3136 "See that none render evil for evil unto any." This exhortation has a special force when we remember how much evil treatment was heaped upon the followers of our Lord at that time; and that the writer himself, as well as those specially addressed, had suffered much on account of their faithfulness in dispensing the Word of the Lord, the Word of life, the good tidings. The exhortation means that the Lord's followers are not to attempt to retaliate upon their enemies by doing them evil in return, or in any manner to "get even with them." The Lord's exhortation is that we seek to render good in return for the evil we receive, and includes our language as well as our conduct, we are not to give word for word, railing for railing, accusation for accusation, slander for slander any more than blow for blow. It includes also our very thoughts, for we are not even to render anger for anger, malice for malice, envy for envy. Two evils can never make a good...

The worldly spirit does not approve this part of the Apostle's counsel, but urges, rather, that we should treat others as they treat us--that we should "give as good as we get,"--meaning that we should give as bad as we get. By way of saying as good a word as they can in their own favor along these lines they sometimes accuse the Lord's followers of cowardice. Courage is one of the noble qualities of humanity, and it is quite a trial to some to be considered timid or lacking in courage; and to such this enjoined restraint of word and act is a particular trial. It is not true, however, that the Lord's counsel tends to effeminacy or lack of courage. This matter is well stated in the language of another, as follows:--

"One feature which stands out clear in the society founded by Christ and his apostles is the extraordinary heroism which was shown in the face of death and tortures, not only by men, but by feeble women and tender children. It amazed the heathen magistrates who were striving after *fortitude* by the aid of philosophy. It amazed the wild savages, who mistook gentleness for cowardice, when they found it was harder to terrify the missionary who came with the Gospel than the invader who came in battle array. Quiet endurance may be *more heroic* than violent resistance, and the Christian law of bearing personal insults and injuries meekly tends to the development of the highest courage and truest manliness. There is nothing more courageous, more heroic, in all history than living up to this precept."

F371-372 "God loved his enemies so as to be ready and willing to do for them whatever could be justly done; and Jesus loved his enemies so that he was heartily willing to do good to them--he bears no enmity or grudge toward them in return for their hatred, but is ready to pour out upon them in due time his

Would you cheerfully do them kindness and help them to the extent of your ability to see the error of their way and to overcome it? Can you tenderly pray for them and patiently bear with their weakness, their ignorance and lack of development, and try by a noble example to show them a more excellent

Millennial blessings, that they may all come to the knowledge of the truth, and that even those who pierced him may look upon him and weep when God shall pour upon them the spirit of prayer and supplication, in due time. (Zech. 12:10) We must have the love for enemies which our Lord describes, saying, "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." (Matt. 5:44) We must let no bitterness, animosity or rancor of any kind dwell in our hearts. They must be so full of Love that not even an enemy could stir up in our hearts an evil or malicious sentiment.

Oh, what long-suffering and brotherly kindness is implied in such an attainment of character as would find nothing, even in an enemy, to stir it to malice, hatred or strife! And this is the "mark" for which we are to run, as New Creatures. We have professed appreciation of this spirit of Love; we have professed devotion to it; we have consecrated our lives in accord with its principles; and now we are being tested to see to what extent our professions were truthful. The Lord very graciously gives us time to run this race, to develop this character. "He knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are dust." Nevertheless, it is essential to us that we conform to these arrangements if we would be joint-heirs with God's dear Son, as members of the New Creation."

(Luke 6:26-28 KJV) "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you! for so did their fathers to the false prophets. (27) But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, (28) Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you."

R2412 "When the persecutions come, be prepared for them -- forearmed by God's Word; for they will be temptations to your flesh: through them the Adversary will seek to embitter your soul and to stir up in you the elements of the old nature reckoned dead--anger, malice, hatred, envy, strife. If this be the effect of persecutions in you, the Adversary is gaining the victory -- you are not overcoming evil, but being overcome by it. The old nature will even call upon its best qualities to fight against persecution--it will call upon your natural sense of Justice to come, help and resist; it will call upon Conscientiousness to agree that the persecution is unmerited; it will call upon Benevolence and Spirituality, your love of family and friends, and every other good quality of your being--all will be appealed to either to fight the persecution or to abandon the course of godliness which led to it.

Then you will be in the thick of the fight, and unless previously armed with the panoply supplied in the divine Word, you are almost sure to lose faith, become terrified and flee. And whoever does this is sure to be wounded, if not captured by the enemy; for our armor is a front armor, not a back armor. It is invulnerable so long as we

way? If such be the case, then it is the sin that you despise, and not the sinner. The sin you should hate, but the sinner, never. Not until God's unerring judgment declares that the sin and the sinner are inseparably linked together may love let go its hold upon a brother man. Z. 91-141 R1330:6

stand firm for the right, the truth, in our great Captain's name and strength--it is a hindrance to those who draw back.

But why should we flee terrified? Is not this the very test of our loyalty and devotion to the Lord and his Word, for which all of our previous experiences and instructions were but preparations? Is not this the very test the Lord declares indispensable to all who would be accounted victors and be made his joint-heirs in the Kingdom? Is not this the very opportunity for which we prayed, and are not the incidental persecutions exactly what our Lord forewarned us would be part of the cost of faithful discipleship? And are not these the very persecutions whose absence earlier in our Christian experiences made us wonder whether or not we were acceptable sons of God?--Heb. 12:8.

Surely, our answer to these questions must be, Yea, Lord! even though because of weakness of the flesh the answer be not joyous as it should be, but through unbidden tears. And with this answer on our part the Lord is pleased; and angels of his mercy--his promises exceeding great and precious--minister unto us and strengthen us.

That is the time to "fight the good fight"--and, triumphing over self-will completely, to accept the buffetings and slanders and misrepresentations of good intentions and good deeds with meekness and patience. That is the time when the Lord's spirit of love, dwelling in us richly, will manifest itself in the control not only of our words and actions, but of our inmost thoughts. If even so much as a bitter feeling against our traducers and maligners arises, it is to be fought, and so complete a victory gained over it that every fiber of our beings will be in sweet accord with our Great Teacher's instructions, "Love your enemies. Pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you. Bless and injure not."

Your earliest definition of "injure not" will probably have been that you should not kill or wound your enemies physically; but as you look to the Teacher and heed his word you will hear him say, "Learn of me," and you will note with the Apostle, that tho he did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth, yet, "When he was reviled he reviled not in return; when he suffered he threatened not; but committed his cause to him that judgeth righteously." (1 Pet. 2:22,23.) If you are a faithful pupil it will not be long until you see that the perfect law of liberty, the law of Christ, is a discerner of the very thoughts and intents of the heart, and that while you must hate all sin, you cannot hate any sinner and yet have the love of God perfected in your heart. You see that this means that you not only must not retaliate and revile your foes, but must not even wish to do so. The evil wish must be conquered and the selfish conditions which gave it birth must be utterly destroyed and replaced with love--the spirit of Christ.--Compare 1Cor. 4:12 with 1Cor. 6:10.

Are you tempted to repine, to feel disappointed at your lot in life or your experi-

ences by the way? That is the time to remember that all repining, discontent and disappointments indicate that self-will in you is not so dead as you had hoped. For he who has buried his own will completely in the will of the Lord can know no disappointment; but in every affair of his life he sees by faith divine appointment or supervision, and hears the Word of the Lord in all of life's affairs assuring him: "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." (Rom. 8:28.) It is one of the evidences of reaching the graduating condition of heart, when we are able to take the oppositions of the great Adversary and of the world and of our own flesh *patiently*, uncomplainingly, uncomplainingly, "joyfully"--as a part of the disciplinary experience meted out to us by our all-wise and all-loving Lord.

Such is the "good fight." The first battle is the severest, and each subsequent victory is easier; for with each victory the new will (the Lord's will in us) grows stronger, and Hope's sight of the things God has in reservation for the faithful grows keener, and Faith's strength and endurance greater. And with the very first victory come blessings, which are added to after every victory: blessings of rest, peace, joy in the holy spirit and full assurance of faith, as our Teacher promised,--"*Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad!*"

From this standpoint, and from no other, is it possible to accept with fortitude and resignation whatever tests of patience, perseverance, faith, hope and love the Lord may see fit to permit to come upon you. In this condition all our experiences will result in blessings, however unpropitious they may appear on the surface."

R2426 "DEAR BROTHER RUSSELL... Sister McPhail and I often talk to ourselves about your severe trials, and wonder how you have been able to bear them as you have. I often think of Paul's words, 'We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed,' etc. (2 Cor. 4:8-11.) God's grace was always sufficient for him, and will be for you..."

IN REPLY: DEAR BROTHER:--I am glad to know that I have the Christian love and sympathy of yourself and family. One thing in connection with my troubles gives me great satisfaction, namely that, repeated-

ly and carefully searching my heart, I find in it no hatred toward those who have been maligning me--no desire to render evil for evil, but on the contrary a desire to do them all good, if possible. There is a great satisfaction in this, as it affords me one evidence that the spirit of love has possession of my heart. I trust that it may never be otherwise; but that more and more I may become a copy of God's dear Son, our Lord,--"who when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered threatened not, but committed his cause to him who judgeth righteously." (1 Pet. 2:23; 1 Cor. 4:12.) You will be glad to know that I have on the girdle of love; that the peace of God rules in my heart; and that I have a conscience void of offense toward God and toward men.--Col. 3:12-15; Acts 24:16; 1 Pet. 2:19; 3:16."

R1711 "Two classes specially were sifted out--the merely curious and slightly interested class, and a consecrated class which had not much *depth of character*, represented in our Lord's parable (Matt. 13:5,6,20,21) as the stony ground hearers, which received the message with joy, but not having depth of heart-soil and earnest love and consecration to the truth, when tribulation or persecution arose they were at once offended, and turned back and walked no more with the Lord and the faithful.

The same is true now, in the present harvest of the Gospel age. Blessed have been our eyes, for they have seen many of the "deep things" in the divine plan of the ages; and blessed have been our ears, for they have heard with wonderful clearness the lessons of the great Teacher... Now, again, offenses must needs come to prove all, and to turn back those who are not consecrated and those who have no *depth* of character, who are unwilling to bear the reproaches and afflictions of the Christ. So it was with Gideon's typical army. All who shall be owned of the Lord as joint-heirs with Christ must be a select class, a peculiarly zealous people;--and no wonder: Marvel not therefore at the fiery trials which shall try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you."

R5497 "The flesh would prefer to keep quiet, where the speaking forth of the Truth might bring reproach or persecution or ostracism. But the New Creature would feel "a burning fire shut up in his bones" if he were to withhold the Message of Truth..."

(1 Th 2:2-4 KJV) "Even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully en-

treated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention. (3) For our exhortation *was* not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile: (4) But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts."

(John 4:34 KJV) "Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work."

(Joh 7:16-18 KJV) "Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. (17) If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or *whether* I speak of myself. (18) He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.

(1 Pet 2:19-23 KJV) "For this is thank-worthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. (20) 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. (21) For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: (22) Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: (23) Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:"

(1 Cor 4:12 KJV)"And labour, working with our own hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it:"

(Col 3:12-15 KJV) "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; (13) Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. (14) And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. (15) And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful."

(1 Pet 3:16 KJV) "Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ."

R1330 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0 2008) "THE BOND OF PERFECTNESS"

"And above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfectness." -- Col. 3:14.

The Apostle says love is the bond of perfectness; and Jesus said love is the fulfilling of the divine law. Every intelligent being, from the humblest to the most exalted, craves love. The dog craves his master's affection and expresses his delight at every indication of it; a horse and even a cat will return your caresses; the birds reward your love with notes of joy; the lisping infant rewards your love with smiles and caresses. The young want to be loved; the middle aged, in the heat and strife of life's great battle, want the soothing solace of loving sympathy; the aged, weary and worn with the strife of years, want to lean upon the strong arm of love. The angels in all the glory of their higher state want it; our Lord Jesus wants it; and our heavenly Father wants it. We never grow weary of it; nor can we get too much of it.

It is not merely weakness that craves love; but strength and glo-

ry want it, too. What is this desirable thing so universally craved by every grade of intelligent being? It is one of those things which pen cannot describe. People may sing about it, and talk about it, and read about it, and write about it, and yet have but a faint idea of its reality. But stop reading and writing and talking for a moment, and call to mind the few living illustrations of love that have chanced to cross your pathway. In the long past years of sunny childhood can you recall the tenderness of Mother's love that covered your dimpled cheeks with showers of kisses that could not half express the wealth of her affection? And do you not recall the tenderness of Father's care, who patiently toiled and sacrificed, and then delighted to see in you the fruit of his labor? Or perhaps you have tasted the sweets of conjugal love, and have realized in the chosen partner of your life one ready always to rejoice in your prosperity, to share your burdens

and to cheer and urge you on to life's truest and highest attainments.

Or in a dark hour of sorrow and tears some tender hand has soothed your throbbing brow, some kindly ministry has strengthened your weakness, or some timely word of cheer, of counsel and encouragement has inspired you with new zeal for the stern conflict of life. What life has been so barren and drear that no such gleam of sunshine has ever brightened the pathway? Such illustrations give us some idea of what it is to be loved.

Then again consider for a moment the joy of loving--the joy of loving your own sweet child, or the manly glory of your noble husband, or the womanly grace of your devoted wife, or the tender sweetness of your sainted mother, or the ripened glory of your aged father, or the blessed communion of tried and faithful friends--the communion of saints. Then, rising above these earthly loves, some have tasted the sweets of that divine love that surpasseth all other loves. As yet, however, that divine love is only manifest to those who have faith in the divine promises and who walk in obedience to the divine commandments.

Now with these illustrations of what it is to love and to be loved, let our imaginations widen the sphere of this noble virtue, and do we not see that, when it reigns in all hearts, it will prove to be just what the Apostle says it is --viz.: "the bond of perfectness," and the greatest of all the Christian virtues? Indeed he shows that, though we might have all the other virtues combined, yet, lacking this one, we would be as sounding brass and as tinkling cymbals. In fact, the putting on of the other virtues, except as prompted by this virtue, would be mere sham and hypocrisy. Yet with this, though lacking the others to some extent, the heart would prove itself loyal, though the flesh might be weak to perform the dictates of love.

The Lord is saying a great deal for this virtue when he declares that love is the fulfilling of the law; or in other words, that if we had perfect love, we could easily and naturally keep the whole law of God. But here is our difficulty: we cannot love perfectly. Well, the Lord knows that we cannot, but he wants to see us endeavoring to love more and more, and making actual progress in this direction. Paul, too, shows us how love in the heart manifests itself in the outward life. We scarcely need to be told this, for the language of love is natural and its impulses are spontaneous; and yet, because we are not yet perfect in love, Paul's description makes manifest the absurdity of calling that love which is unworthy of the name. He says, "Love suffereth long and is kind. [It is kind even to the unthankful and the unholty, endeavoring to show them by example a more excellent way.] Love envieth not. [It is pleased rather to see another's success.] Love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up. [There is no pride in love, delighting in display and vain glory: it is rather humble and retiring.] Love doth not behave itself unbecomingly [It is consistent with its profession in all its actions]; seeketh not its own [is not on the alert for self-interest, but more for the interest and blessing of others]; is not easily provoked [endeavors to make due allowance for the weaknesses of others]; thinketh no evil [is slow to impute evil motives, and anxious to see and to foster every good intent]; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth [has no pleasure in either hearing or telling evil tidings, or in evil of any kind, but delights in God's truth and in its fruitage of developed holiness]."

"Love covers all things [makes due allowance for the weaknesses of the flesh]; believes all things [believes in the conquering power of love to help the weak and erring in the struggle against sin]; endures all things" [endures the necessary reproach and trials of faith and patience in the careful endeavor to build up and strengthen the weak].

THE BOND OF PERFECTNESS

(Col 3:8-9 ASV) "Put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, railing, shameful speaking out of your mouth... put off the old man with his doings"

(Col 3:12-15 ASV) "Put on therefore, as God's elect, holy and beloved, a heart of compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, longsuffering; (13) forbearing one another, and forgiving each other, if any man have a complaint against any; even as the Lord forgave you, so also do ye: (14) and above all these things *put on* love, which is the bond of perfectness. (15) And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to the which also ye were called in one body; and be ye thankful."

The child of God who is studiously endeavoring thus to manifest and cultivate the spirit of love will indeed become more and more like his blessed Master. What contradiction of sinners against himself did he bear! How patiently he bore with the weaknesses and the short-comings of his disciples! And how faithfully he taught them and led them to follow in his steps! There was the perfect pattern of that self-sacrificing love which was set for our imitation.

Well, says one, as he looks into this beautiful law of love, I would like to be fully actuated by such a noble principle, but some people are so despicably mean that I cannot love them. But are you sure you cannot love such people? Is it not rather the sins that you dislike and which ought to be despised by every heart that is truly loyal to God and righteousness? You say it is hard to distinguish between the two; and so it is sometimes, when inherited deformities of character have been fostered and cultivated and even gloried in, as they often are. But ⁽¹⁾ here is a way to examine the real disposition of your own heart toward such. Would you cheerfully do them kindness and help them to the extent of your ability to see the error of their way and to overcome it; can you tenderly pray for them and patiently bear with their weaknesses, their ignorance and their lack of development, and try by a noble example to show them a more excellent way? If such be the case, then it is the sin that you despise, and not the sinner. The sin you should hate, but the sinner, never. Not until God's unerring judgment declares that the sin and the sinner are inseparably linked may love let go its hold upon a brother man.

Love, however, properly differs, both in kind and in degree, according to the worthiness of the object upon which it centers. There is a love of admiration, a love of sympathy and a love of pity. The former is the highest type of love, and is properly bestowed only upon that which is truly lovely and worthy of admiration. On this line our Heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus claim our supreme and most ardent affection; and all the good and noble and true of our fellow men, in proportion as they approximate the glorious likeness of God, may also share this love of admiration. Of this same kind is the love of childish innocence; and of this same kind should be the love of conjugal felicity. The chosen life partner should be one beloved in this highest sense; and parental and filial affection should also be established on the same basis, and then the dearest earthly relationship would be akin to the heavenly.

The love of sympathy we can extend to the weakest one that is painfully toiling up the hill of difficulty toward a better life; and affectionately we may reach the sympathizing, helpful hand to such. If we are a step or two in advance of some such on the way, and if we realize a little less difficulty in making the ascent, let us thank God and use our superior vantage ground for the assistance of the weaker ones.

Then there is the love of pity for those so steeped in ignorance and sin as to be unable even to raise their eyes heavenward to catch the first inspiration toward a better life. Would we indeed scorn the degraded, or add another pang to those already so bruised by the fall? Ah, no: love pities the vilest, sympathizes with the weakest and glories in the truest and purest and loveliest of earth and of heaven. Thus our blessed Lord loved supremely our all-glorious Heavenly Father; thus he loved with tenderest sympathy his devoted disciples; and thus he loved with wondrous pity all the fallen sons and daughters of Adam's race, even to the extent of giving his life to redeem them. Let us emulate his example and walk in his footsteps.

⁽¹⁾ Mar. 21 Manna, Mat. 5:44

R2481 "Coming down to a *particularization* of the change which should take place in those who have consecrated themselves wholly to the Lord, the Apostle enumerates certain alterations of disposition which should be attempted, and, so far as possible, accomplished; namely, the putting away of all the following--anger, wrath, malice, evil-speaking, impurity of language, and falsehood in its every form. At first thought such correction of life might seem to be unnecessary to mention as being too coarse and entirely opposed to every true Christian principle; but as we scrutinize the matter we find that the Apostle has really taken into his list nearly all the weaknesses of the flesh which beset those who have become 'new creature in Christ.' What is more common

with Christian people than to become angry? How many there are who have named the name of Christ who have malicious or at least unkind thoughts respecting others, and who harbor these, and sometimes permit them to influence their conduct! How many there are who indulge in evil speaking, that is, slander (here translated "blasphemy")! This is often done in such a manner as not only to deceive the hearer, but also to deceive the speaker as respects his real intention in speaking of others discreditably, unkindly.

What a wonderful world this would be if all the evil or impure language were avoided! Every Christian should see to it that henceforth every word which proceeds from his mouth shall be such as will minis-

ter grace to the hearers--such words as will only good and be edifying. Finally, how much need there is, not only of having good intentions in the heart, but also of expressing those good intentions truthfully one to another--without deception, without hypocrisy. But it requires that a heart be very pure and very full of love if it would be very truthful, otherwise it would lead into trouble continually. If the unloving, ungenerous, unkind hearts, full of evil surmising, malice, hatred and strife, were to express themselves frankly it would add immensely to the trouble of the world. The Apostle therefore urges first, the purifying of the heart, and then general candor.

These corrections of life are urged as the reasonable and proper outcome of our transformation from the Adamic and fallen nature, reckoned dead, to the new nature of Christ, of whose "body" we have become reckonedly members, controlled and renewed in knowledge through our new Head, Christ Jesus.

And the Apostle then shows that in this new condition, as members of the body of Christ, we are to remember that previous differences of man are ignored, for whoever is accepted of the Lord as a member of his body is a fellow-member with every other member thus accepted,--whether, according to the flesh, they were Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, Barbarian or Scythian, bondman or freeman; because all who come into Christ are reckoned *dead* to their previous condition, and alive to the new conditions which are life for all...

In thinking of each other as *new creatures* in Christ Jesus. All are to be considered as on a common plane or level--none are to be disesteemed as "brethren" because of color, speech or sex.

With this thought before our minds,--of the oneness and equality of those who have been accepted into the body of Christ, the Apostle urges upon our attention the necessity, not only of putting off the evil dispositions of our fallen flesh, but the necessity also of putting on, cultivating, the various

graces of the Spirit exemplified in our Head, Christ Jesus. He specifies these: (1) Bowels of mercies, or, in more modern language, *compassionate sentiments*; a disposition toward largeness and generosity of heart toward everybody and everything--toward the saints, toward our neighbors and friends and relatives, toward our enemies, and toward the brute creation. Amplifying, he continues, showing that it would imply (2) kindness toward all; (3) humbleness of mind, the reverse of boastfulness, headiness, arrogance; (4) meekness, or gentleness of disposition; (5) long-suffering, or patient endurance with the faults and weaknesses of others. It implies that we should bear with each other's peculiarities of temperament and disposition, freely forgiving one another, if there be cause of offence found in each other--learning the meanwhile to correct ourselves, as we see our own blemishes more or less mirrored in others. Ad the standard for all this course of conduct is found in the Lord's course toward us, for he surely has been generous, kind, forbearing and forgiving.

The Apostle wishes us to notice that he is not attempting a reformation of the world along these lines, but merely a transformation of those who have entered into a special covenant with the Lord, namely, the Church: "the elect of God, holy and beloved." Nevertheless, all who are thus covenanted to the Lord, and hope to make their calling and election sure to membership in the glorified Church, will not only seek to have these fruits of the spirit in their own lives, but will seek also to cultivate the same as they may have opportunity in their friends and neighbors: above all will such seek to exercise such a good influence upon their own families--that as their children receive from them, as parents, the natural life and the necessary instructions and start therein, they may also if possible receive from them their start in the new life, and the necessary instructions and equipment for the same.

But the Apostle, as the mouthpiece of the holy Spirit, is a thorough instructor: not

only does he tell us what *dis-graces* to put off and what *graces* to put on, but viewing the Lord's body arrayed in these glorious qualities of heart,--compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, patient endurance, forbearance and forgiveness,--he adds, "And above all these put on love, which is the bond of perfectness." Love is thus pictured as the "girdle" which binds and holds in place the folds of the robe of Christ's righteousness, with its various graces. In other words, the Apostle would have us see that forbearance, meekness, patience, etc., must not be matters of courtesy merely, or matters of policy merely, but however much they might partake of these qualities at the beginning, the wearers will not be perfected in heart, not be fit of the kingdom, until they have reached the place where these various graces of their wills, or intentions, are bound to them by the cords of love--love for the Lord, love for righteousness, love for the "brethren," ad sympathetic love for the whole groaning creation. Love is indeed the bond of perfectness, the very spirit of the Lord.

How forceful in its place is the *last verse* of this lesson, "And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body [one corporation, one Church--the body of Christ], and be ye thankful." Not until God's people have reached some measure of what the Apostle has here outlined can they know experimentally the blessedness of having divine peace *rule* in their hearts and lives, controlling their relationship with every member of the body of Christ under the bond of love, and producing more and more in them the spirit of gratitude and thankfulness to God, for mercies and blessings enjoyed. Add such gratitude will find its natural and proper outlet in endeavors to serve the Lord: endeavors which the Lord will be sure to accept from such hearts, reckoned holy and acceptable through Christ Jesus, the head and Redeemer."

R2021

WHAT WOULD JESUS DO?

When the morning paints the skies,
And the birds their songs renew,
Let me from my slumbers rise,
Saying, "What would Jesus do?"

Countless mercies from above
Day by day my pathway strew;
Is it much to bless thy love?
Father, "What would Jesus do?"

When I ply my daily task,
And the round of toil pursue,
Let me often brightly ask,
"What, my soul, would Jesus do?"

Would the foe my heart beguile,
Whispering thoughts and words untrue?
Let me to his subtlest wile
Answer, "What would Jesus do?"

R2215

SCATTER SEEDS OF KINDNESS

"Loving words will cost but little,
Journeying up the hill of life;
But they make the weak and weary
Stronger, braver for the strife.
Do you count them only trifles?
What to earth are sun and rain?
Never was a kind word wasted;
Never one was said in vain.

"When the cares of life are many,
And its burdens heavy grow
For the ones who walk beside you,
If you love them, tell them so.
What you count of little value
Has an almost magic power,
And beneath that cheering sunshine
Hearts will blossom like a flower.

"So as up life's hill we journey,
Let us scatter all the way
Kindly words, to be as sunshine
In the dark and cloudy day.
Grudge no loving word, my brother,
As along through life you go,
To the ones who journey with you;
If you love them, tell them so."