

"LOVE."

Owe no man anything, but to love one another, for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this: "thou shalt not commit adultery;" "thou shalt not kill;" "thou shalt not steal;" "thou shalt not bear false witness;" "thou shalt not covet;" and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, viz: "thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor, therefore love is the fulfilling of the law." Rom. 13:8,10. Our love to God and for each other should be such as to cause our life's service to him, and for the members of the body of Christ to seem to us even shorter, comparatively, than was Jacob's service for Rachel, who served seven years. But his love for her was so great, that it seemed unto him but a few days. Gen. 29:20. If we were nearer perfect in love, a life of service to God, in whatever way he might see fit to use us, would be to us a pleasant service, and well pleasing to Him. I think if we would consider how great was his love for us, it would beget love in us. We would then be anxious to love him with all the heart, soul, strength and mind, also to love one another as he loved us, for we can do more in this way to please him than in any other one way. We can thus fulfill the spirit of the law, which we could do in no other. Brother; sister, did you ever meditate and think of God? One of whose main attributes is love. Yea, for God is love. Have you considered how great his love was and is for us? Has your heart not been made to leap for joy, as you have read some of the words, penned by inspired writers concerning the love of God for his children?

John it was who wrote much concerning love; hear him as he exclaims: (1 John 3:1.) "Behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." Did you ever think of that? Called to be sons and daughters of the loving God, adopted into the family of God, and have Jesus as our elder brother,

and with him share all the glories of the heavenly kingdom. Yes, friends, he that has given us Jesus, will, with him freely give us all things. Surely the apostle could say: "behold what manner of love;" also God has manifested his love toward us, because he sent his only begotten son into the world, that we might live through him. "Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that he loved us." 1 John 4:9,10. "Yea he loved us before we loved him. When we were without strength, when there was no arm to save; yea, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. Thus God commendeth his love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." Rom. 5:6,8. **[R31 : page 6]** Friends, here is manifested pure, unselfish love; when we were sinners, aliens from God, Christ died for us. Oh, can we not in part repay him by loving in return? Surely if we have his spirit we will love him, for love begets love. Can we not say with the Apostle Paul: "I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Rom. 8:38,39. Not only should we love God fervently, and be unseparable from that love, but we shall love those begotten by him; (through his word of truth) this is a new commandment given unto us by Christ, viz: "that as he loved us we should love one another." John 13:35.

If we thus loved each other, it would be love indeed. If we had love one for another as Christ loved us, it would lead to the giving of our lives for each other if necessary, and that is what John says: "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." 1 John 3:16. True we are not thus tried, but if we were would our love enable us so to do? Has our love for each other, reached the state of perfection which seems to be brought to light in the word of truth? When we thus love, we will watch every word and action, lest we should offend our brother, for we would not hurt the feelings of any one whom we love.

We should also by love serve one another. Service, when love prompts, is a pleasant service, and renders the most arduous task an easy one, and besides being a pleasant service to us, it is acceptable to God. If we thus love we can say with Paul: "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfill ye my joy, that ye be like minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind." Do you see the unity, brethren that Paul would have among us? He also says: "Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory." We should not be envious of one another, but in lowliness of mind, let each esteem others better than himself. Yes, if we cannot speak well of our brother, do not let us speak evil, for God will bring all things to light. "Look not every man on his own thing, but every man also on the things of others; let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." Phil. 2:1,5. Do you not **[R32 : page 6]** see that in exercising love we become more like Jesus? and surely this should be our highest aim. Paul further says: "That we are taught of God to love one another. 1 Thess. 4:9. Peter says: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently." 1 Pet. 1:22.

John says: "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. Is love then not important? Think on these things, meditate on them, grow in love. For (says the same Apostle) "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." How shall we know John? Why, if we love the brethren. No doubt many of you have asked yourselves the above question, viz: "Have I passed from death unto life" – am I now while on trial, coming off victorious through Christ, so that I shall awake in his likeness, and not come into judgment [trial] again? is the idea. Well if you are, then you find an answer. Do you

love the brethren fervently out of a pure heart? If you do, you have passed from death unto life, or so says John, and he is good authority. He also says (1 John 4:12): "If we love one another, God dwelleth in us and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him and he in us, because he hath given us of his spirit." No doubt but this is the way in which his spirit bears witness with ours, that we are his children, and if children then heirs, etc. How very important then is love to each other. It shows to us in what position we stand with our heavenly Father, in fact, it is a test of sonship, for "If we love God, we must also love our brother; for if we love not our brother whom we have seen, how can we love God whom we have not seen?" Impossible. John says: If any man make such a claim, he is a liar. So, if we think we love God, and do not love our brother, we are only deceiving ourselves; for this commandment we have from him, viz., "that he who loveth God love his brother also." 1 John 4:20,21. Then let us who think we love God examine ourselves and see whether we love our brother; for in that we can make no mistake. And further, friends, "Let us love, not in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth, keeping ourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." Jude 21. If we have love to God and for each other, it becomes to us as well as to others an evidence that we have the spirit of God, for one of the first fruits of the spirit is love (Gal. 5:22); and not only is it a fruit, but love and faith form a breastplate, which signifies a piece of defensive armor, and it is necessary that we have on the whole armor of God, in order that we may be able to stand in the evil time; and it is also necessary that we be rooted and grounded in love, that we may 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, "that we may be filled with all the fulness of God." Eph. 3:7-19. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God." Rom. 8:28. Yes, all things. Whether for the present they seem evil or no,

remember they will all work for our good, if – if what? – why, if we love God.

Let us be sure, then, that we love him, and do not worry over trouble, knowing the result to us. Also, blessed are we who endure temptation, for when we are tried we shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." James 1:12. Yes, it is for those who love him. The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him. "To all that call upon him in truth he will fulfill the desire of them that fear him; he also will hear their cry and will save them, The Lord preserveth all them that love him." Psalm 145:18-20. Yes, friends, in this coming time of trouble (upon which we have already entered) he will deliver us from the snare of the fowler and from the noisome pestilence. "We shall not be afraid for the terror by night,... nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness, nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday;...there shall no evil befall us, neither shall any plague come nigh our dwelling, ...because we have set our love upon him, therefore he will deliver us." Psalm 91. Oh, yes! It is profitable in many ways to love the Lord. He has provided a place of safety during the day of wrath for every trusting, loving child of his. When we are tried, we shall receive the crown of life, and it is during this time that we shall all be tried; for he shall sit as a refiner and a purifier of silver, and purify the sons of Levi. Now, especially is it needful that we become more perfect in love, for, though we shall be tried, there is to be a place of safety from the strife of tongues, from all the trouble coming on the world, and as there is such a place, you may rest assured it is for those who love him. Hence, grow in love, and let us who put our trust in God rejoice. "Let us ever shout for joy, because thou defendest us. Let us also who love thy name be joyful in thee." Psalm 5:11.

"Let us who love thy salvation say continually, the Lord be magnified." Psalm 40:16.

"For great peace have they who love thy law, and nothing shall offend them." Psalm 119:165.

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HE WHO is to rule others should first learn to obey. Do you seek an opportunity for practice in ruling? Rule yourself. "Greater is he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."

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