

THE COMPREHENSIVE LOVE OF GOD.

By Rev. T. Moore-Smith.

Human love is limited. We have our choice spirits, our circle of friends whom we love, our own nation, or country, our fatherland, our select summer resort, the place of peculiar beauty, restfulness and quiet. It is natural, it is human nature. We find it so hard to love some people, they are so rude, so vulgar; we are glad to get away from them to the other end of the car, the opposite end of the church pew, or the other side of the street. How unlike our Father—God. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

In the forefront of one of the most marvelous chapters in the New Testament stands the affirmation: "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." Three very distinct types, and yet Jesus loved them. He does not seek uniformity. He does not destroy individuality. He only seeks to make all partakers of the divine nature. He came to seek and to save that which was lost, and lost souls of every nation, class and color find a welcome. As Faber again says:—

"There is welcome for the sinner,
And more graces for the good,
There is mercy with the Savior,
There is healing in his blood."

Martha was business-like and practical, thoughtful about the well-being and comfort of other people. "Martha served." Here we have her whole character in a nutshell. She was a practical worker, ever on the lookout for the needy ones, ever ready to minister to their wants. Martha would feed the hungry, clothe the naked, wait on the sick, and attend to the cooking. The Marthas fill a most important and needful place in our domestic and every-day life. What would life be without them? And yet, are they fully appreciated by the regular church-going people? Are they not too often treated unkindly? They are expected in the family pew every Lord's Day morning. And yet we expect a nice dinner, well served when we get home, with perhaps one or two friends from church. Do we value the Marthas as we ought? What burdens are theirs? What family cares? What petty annoyances. Yet, still at the post of duty. How such some mothers would enjoy the week-night prayer-meeting, away from the rattling of dishes and din of the house; but who is to mind the babies? And if these same busy mothers should venture to bring the baby to church, and the little one should treat the congregation to a sample of its own music, how those who had severely condemned her for her lack of interest in spiritual things would frown on the little one and the frightened mother.

I remember once in Leith, Edinburgh, Scotland, at a meeting in the parish church, when the veteran evangelist, Richard Weaver, was preaching. The large church was crowded to hear the old warrior, and several mothers were there with their infants. One young mother, who had her baby with her, was a poor workman's wife, and had either to stay at home with her baby and miss the service, or bring the little one with her. So to the church she came, and everything went all right until about midway through the service the youngster, with a pair of good, strong lungs, sent forth more

noise than music. Many of the people frowned and scowled, and every one of the two thousand turned to stare at mother and child. This unnerved the mother, and she arose to leave the building. But Weaver would not permit it. "God bless you, mother," shouted the evangelist, "God bless you; come back and take your seat, and God bless your child." The young mother came back, and the child slept peacefully and quietly on its mother's breast. Then, turning towards the audience, Weaver said:—"Will you people cease staring at that mother and mind your own business? Do you know what it cost her to be here to-night? It has cost her a great deal. Now, leave her alone." Then, looking up towards the gallery, he again said: "God bless you, mother, and God bless your child." She is one of a great multitude of Marthas, busy all day long and far into the night, and sometimes all through the night till day dawn. Why condemn her if she has no class in the Sabbath school? Or has not been attending the missionary meetings? Or did not turn up at the sewing circle? She has a great work on hand, and it is God's work, just every bit as much his as is yours, in the Sabbath school or the sewing circle. She who rocks the cradle rules the world, and she who gives a cup of cold water in his name shall not lose her reward. "Jesus loved Martha." All honor to the noble women who go and do a great and good work, but think tenderly, kindly, prayerfully of the others at home, bearing the burden and heat of the day. "Jesus loved Martha."

Religion is something more than the singing of gospel hymns and attending gospel meetings. I well remember, at our sunrise prayer-meetings, and at our great open-air gatherings on Jail Square, Glasgow, one sister who was never absent from a single service, requesting, again and again, the prayers of God's people for her unconverted husband, while the same husband would return home after a hard day's toil, to find the fire out, the dishes unwashed, and the supper to cook. Is it any wonder he remained unconverted? But the Marthas have done much for humanity and God, and "Jesus loved Martha" and her sister.

Mary was a mystic. She pondered long over the deep things of God. She meditated by the hour upon the things that accompany salvation. Mary had deep spiritual insight, and at times rapturous experiences. Her mind was full of visions of divine things. She was one of those spiritual, clinging, tender souls, most at home in the holiest atmosphere. If the right atmosphere is not in the house she enters her presence will create it. Her delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth she meditate day and night. Her place is at the Master's feet. Her constant joy is in having deep communion with the unseen. The things "seen" are indeed to her but temporal, while the things "unseen" are eternal. The strenuous worker is apt to misunderstand Mary, just as the severely practical have no sympathy, and no patience, with dreamy souls. Yet it is from these dreamy souls we get our great classics in devotional literature, our special aids in discerning deeper truths. We need the calm, contemplative Mary, whose holy, gentle spirit will transmit restfulness and peace to the busy, bustling life. We need the mystic spirits who see visions and dream dreams, to lead us ever and anon away from the "maddening crowd" to the place apart, where in

holy solitude we can clearly see the Father's face and commune with the divine. Nothing can make us for the loss of the moments on the Mount, no matter how brief. It is there that the soul is restored and youth renewed. It is when on the Mount, alone with God, that we get fresh vigor and courage for the conflicts in the valley. We need the Mary; why sit for the Master's feet and communicate to us the thoughts and words of Jesus himself, but we, too, must have our moments at his feet, that when we go out from his presence we may not go without him. While Martha served, Mary only waited; but they also serve who only stand and wait. "Jesus loved Martha," and he also loved "her sister."

"And Lazarus." The man of few words. The silent one. The unknown. What do we know about him? Next to nothing. What did he ever do? Did he do anything? We don't know. Only a very ordinary, commonplace man, and yet "Jesus loved him." And there are so many like Lazarus, multitudes of undistinguished people, unknown ones, commonplace people, with few gifts, and fewer graces. And Jesus loves them. No man need say: "No man cares for my soul." The Son of Man is ever in our midst, seeking out the unknown souls, the commonplace people. He overlooks none. He despises none. He died and lives for all. There are so few men of genius, so few great leaders, only one Shakespeare; but what a crowd of very ordinary people. But Jesus still has compassion on the multitude. He loves the commonplace people. He loves you and me, and by his love he constrains us. He loves the man of genius and the commonplace man, the hard, practical worker, and the dreamy mystic, the great leaders in national history, and the hosts following their leaders. How comprehensive the love of our God. "Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus."—The Cumberland Presbyterian.

GOOD MANNERS.

Many times have we in these columns pleaded for the teaching of good manners to the youth of our country. Our efforts in that behalf have been seconded by able and earnest correspondents. We have urged this plea, and continue to urge it upon our educators, school boards and university authorities from pure love of country and an earnest desire that the scholastic youth of Canada may not be developed into lop-sided beings—cultivated in mind, enriched in memory, but ignorant, and also not seldom uncouth as regards their gracious and gentle art of good breeding. It is futile for men of superior intellectual ability and culture to condemn good manners simply because they have never been taught them. Better, far better, to begin even late in life to learn the essential truth that the cardinal principle of good manners is unselfishness, and that the lesson taught by their exercise is one of the purest and best available to man—it matters not what his condition or circumstances may be—the ennobling lesson of self-denial for the good of others. The Earl of Chesterfield, in his well-known letters to his sons, holds that mutual complaisances, attentions, and sacrifices of little conveniences, are a natural and implied compact between civilized people. The lack of them amongst people supposed to be civilized savours of barbarism. It should ever be strongly of barbarism. It should ever be borne in mind that a man cannot possibly be a gentleman if he lacks good manners. F. W. Robertson, in his striking, comprehensive way, thus writes of what we take to be the product of good manners in their most engaging form: "Let the weakest, let the humblest, remember that in his daily course he can, if he will, shed around him almost a heaven. Kindly words, sympathizing attentions, watchfulness against wounding men's sensitiveness—these cost very little, but they are priceless in their value. Are they not almost the staple of our daily happiness? From hour to hour, from moment to moment, we are supported, blest by small kindnesses."