

to share our sorrows; to descend to the lowest and weakest, and worst of our kind; to shame the barlot into chastity, and to lift the thief into generous nobleness. The love that made him a homeless wanderer in the world of his own creation, that he might lead the homeless and hopeless back to his Father's house; the love that led him as a lamb to the slaughter; that, when he was nailed to the cross, breathed a prayer for his persecutors; the love that seized the cross as a leverage of the world's uplifting, that mounted it as a throne of power and from its summit of agony shouted, "It is finished," to a dying world. This is beyond description. Behold at once the shame and glory of the cross! Behold now love transmutes the cross into a throne of power, and the crown of thorns into an aureole of glory whose flashing splendors send light and life and hope and happiness and heaven itself to the remotest verge of earth, and to the last remnant of its ship-wrecked tribes.

Can we wonder that the cross becomes an evangel in all lands and an attraction to all hearts? Can we wonder that men lifted by it into newness of life exclaim, "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ?" I have seen the sun looking down upon the stagnant pool and lifting the putrid waters toward itself that they might come back in blessings on the land and pearls on the sea; but here I see the Sun of Righteousness from the cross on Calvary, lifting the hearts of a blighted and ruined race to himself, that he may send them forth in his own image, at once the evidences of his power and the demonstration of his love. I have seen the early spring coaxing the dried roots and tiny seeds of earth, until, obedient to his voice, they come forth to robe the earth with vernal splendors, and to scatter o'er lonely heath and rocky wild the sweet fragrance of a thousand flowers. And the old oak, bleak and bare by winter's blast, also heard the summons, and from tiny rootlet to farthest twig, along every avenue the life current has leaped and danced, until every fibre was animate with life and every branch was crowned with summer glory. But here is a mightier marvel. Men, dead in trespasses and sins, are drawn by this new power of the cross out of the charnel house of vice, and every fibre of their being becomes instinct with life. The entire manhood grows radiant with every virtue, and aglow with every splendor that flashes in undying lustre from saint and seraph in the plains of light.

I now pass to notice the power of this attraction. We have seen the power of attraction in matter. It binds worlds into systems and whirls them in unvarying harmony about their central sun. But the sun itself has a centre, and is flying through space with an incredible velocity, dragging with it the planets and worlds that compose the system. Other suns and systems are swung by the same power. Somewhere there must be a common centre—a world so vast that it seizes every atom, and world, and sun, and system in the universe, binds them all to itself, and preserves the harmony of the whole without a jar through the centuries. This power is beyond our computation. The mind wanders across the illimitable fields of space until it is lost and bewildered by the rush of countless worlds. The imagination attempts to explore and fathom the starry depths, but it comes back on weary wing with the astonished cry, "Lo, these are but the parts of his ways, but what a whisper of a word is heard of him, but the thunder of his power who can understand." And yet, this is but a feeble illustration of that power

that has its centre in the cross of Christ. If those worlds had broken away from the central orb, and with fearful velocity had gone crashing through space, wrecking all of life and beauty that lay along their destructive paths, and, if then that central world had reached down across the vast abysses, and seized those wandering constellations, had tied them to itself, and restored the harmony of the universe, then there had been some analogy, but even then the analogy had been incomplete. That binds matter, this binds souls; every one of whom is perverse, rebellious, depraved; every one of whom is opposed to God. He has not only broken away from the true soul centre, God, but he has formed for himself a new centre, selfish, sinful, degraded. About this centre twine every affection and power of the soul. To this new deity bows every attribute of the being in abject submission. How wonderful the power that untwines the soul's tendrils from the sensuous and sinful, and lifts them to clasp the cross with its ruggedness and shame—that turns back the flood of our depraved nature and bids the stream of our desires and yearnings flow upward to its God—that lifts the will, the ally and slave of sin, to be, amid trials, temptations, persecutions, death, the unchanging champion of truth and right. We measure force by the nature of the resistance it overcomes. Make this the test—

"THE MORE EXCELLENT WAY."

H. MURRAY.

At the conclusion of the twelfth chapter of Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, he promised to show "a more excellent way." This, as shown in the thirteenth chapter, is charity or love. They were so divided by their parties and contentions that their unity was destroyed, which was an evidence of their lack of love to God and man, without which their gifts and graces were as useless and worthless as the tinkling cymbal. This excellent way is, therefore, the all-important, essential way. No other way can avail us any conceivable good without love. This love is a broader, larger principle than is generally conveyed by our idea of love. The apostle is seeking to lead the mind into this true and larger view.

Christ in his question to Peter, "Lovest thou me," used the verb *agapao*; while Peter in his reply used the verb "*phileo*." (John xxi. 15). Although both these words are translated love, yet the one the Saviour uses comprehends infinitely more than *phileo*, and always implies acting. Peter's conception of love was no greater than "*phileo*," a friendship, a fellow-feeling, affinity or affection, that which is common and natural, and that which all have for those who are near and dear to them. A love of the kind which is seen in the beasts of the fields and the birds of the air.

With this view of love, it is hard to understand how it can be possible to love our enemies, how we can have the same affection for those who are not our own, as we can for our own. In the sense of "*phileo*," we cannot. It was in this sense that Christ loved John more than the other apostles. This is the kind of love that the Saviour said was not greater or better than the publican's. (Matt. v. 46).

We greatly fear that far too many get no higher in their view of love than "*phileo*,"

and satisfy their own consciences in the thought that to love the unlovely and those who hate us is impossible. But when we see the larger love, this benevolent disposition toward our fellow men, growing out of sincere and fervent devotion to God, a living active principle, then we can see how it is the "more excellent way," and that all other graces without it are worthless. This love is all supreme and ever abiding. "It acts from God as its author, and for him as its master, and to him as its end." This love is of God, for God is love.

Having the love of God we love the world as naturally as we breathe. We breathe because we have life. We love others because we love God, or the Divine nature. We love because it is our nature to love, and not because of the nature of that which we love. God loves the world not because the world was lovely but because God is love. Our loving others is not because of their virtue or goodness, but because of our own goodness, the nature of the Divine one in our own soul. We see how it is not only possible to love our enemies, but impossible not to love them when we have the love of God dwelling in us.

Selected.

SECRET OF OUR SUCCESS.

The May *Forum* contains an article on the question: "Is the Power of Christianity Waning?—No!" by H. N. Carroll, in which he makes this gratifying reference to the marvelous growth of the Disciples. After a table of the comparative numerical increase of the different denominations, he has this to say concerning us:

"The most remarkable instance of growth in the five years is that of the Disciples of Christ. This denomination, which is particularly strong in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky, Tennessee, Missouri and Texas, was so little known to the rest of the country when Mr. Garfield became president, that it was for years thereafter spoken of as the denomination to which President Garfield belonged. It is in spirit, doctrine, and practice not unlike the regular Baptists, from which denomination the Campbells and many others withdrew when the Disciples of Christ came into existence in the early part of the present century. It was organized as a movement "to restore the lost unity of believers and so of the Church of Christ by a return in doctrine, ordinance and life to the religion definitely outlined in the New Testament. It has no human creed, taking the Bible as its rule of faith and practice. Like the Baptists, the Disciples hold to immersion as the proper mode of baptism, and to the baptism of believers only. Unlike the Baptists, they baptize for the remission of sins, and celebrate the Lord's Supper every Sunday. It is not easy to arrive definitely at the secret of its growth, although the fact of the growth is clear enough. In 1880 it reported 350,000 members; in fifteen years, therefore, it has considerably more than doubled itself. The increase is at the rate of nearly 164 per cent. Their own idea of the secret of their success is because their plea is for Christian unity, their basis a Scriptural union basis, their zeal in evangelization, and their plan, direct preaching."