LOVE'S LABORS

NO. 1617

A SERMON
DELIVERED ON LORD'S-DAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 4, 1881
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON

"Charity beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."
1 Corinthians 13:7

THE grace of charity, or love, of which so much is most admirably spoken in this chapter, is absolutely essential to true godliness. So essential is it that if we have everything beside, but have not charity, it profits us nothing. The absence of charity is absolutely fatal to vital godliness—so says the Holy Ghost in this chapter.

When, then, you read the apostle's high encomiums of charity, do not say, "This is a fancy virtue to which certain special saints have attained, and we are bound to admire them for it, but we need not imitate them." Far from it. This charity is the common, everyday livery of the people of God. It is not the prerogative of a few, but it must be the possession of all. Do not, therefore, however lofty the model may be, look up to it as though you could not reach it—you must reach it.

It is put before you not only as a thing greatly desirable, but as absolutely needful. For if you excelled in every spiritual gift, yet if you had not this, all the rest would profit you nothing whatever. One would think that such excellent gifts might benefit us a little, but no, the apostle sums them all up, and says of the whole, "It profiteth me nothing."

I pray that this may be understood by us at the very beginning, lest we should manage to slip away from the truth of God taught us by the Holy Ghost in this place, and should excuse ourselves from being loving by the notion that we are so inconsiderable that such high virtue cannot be required of us, or so feeble that we cannot be expected to attain it.

You must attain it, or you cannot enter into eternal life, for if any man has not the Spirit of Christ he is not of His, and the Spirit of Christ is sure to beget the charity of our text, which "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

What does this teach us at the outset, but that a salvation which leads to this must be of God, and must be wrought in us by His power? Such a comely grace of God can never grow out of our fallen nature. Shall such a clean thing as this be brought out of an unclean thing? This glorious salvation unto pure love must be grasped by faith, and wrought in us by the operation of the Spirit of God.

If we consider salvation to be a little thing, we bring it, as it were, within the sphere of human possibility. But if we set it forth in its true proportions as involving the possession of a pure, loving, elevated state of heart, then we perceive that it is a divine wonder. When we estimate the renewed nature aright we cry, "This is the finger of God," and right gladly do we then subscribe to Jonah's creed, "Salvation is of the LORD."

If charity be in any man and abound, God must have the glory of it. For assuredly it was never attained by mere natural effort, but must have been bestowed by that same hand which made the heavens.

So then, brethren, I shall hope when I conclude to leave upon your minds the impression of your need of the grace of God for the attainment of love. I would not discourage you, but I would have you feel how great a labor lies before you, and how impossible it will be unless you are girt with a strength beyond your own. This shall be your solace—that if it cannot be the outcome of your own effort, yet "The fruit of the Spirit is love," and the Spirit is ready and willing to bear fruit in us also.

Notice then, first, *the multitude of love's difficulties*. It has to bear all things, believe all things, hope all things, and endure all things. Secondly, observe the triumph of love's labor. It does all these four things—it "beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." And then, thirdly, this will bring us back to the point we have started from—*the sources of love's energy*, and how it is she is able thus to win her four-fold victory over countless difficulties.

I. Consider well THE MULTITUDE OF LOVE'S DIFFICULTIES.

When the grace of God comes into a man, he is born at once to love. He that loves is born of God, and he that is born of God loves. He loves Him that begat, even God, and he loves him that is begotten of Him, even all the saved ones. He commences to obey the great command to love his neighbor as himself. His motto is no longer that of an earthly kingdom, *Dieu et mon droit*—God and my right. But he bears another word on his escutcheon, *Dieu et mon frére*—God and my brother.

No sooner is love born than she finds herself at war. Everything is against her, for the world is full of envy, hate, and ill-will. I would warn the most loving-hearted that they have entered upon a war for peace, a strife for love—they are born to hate hatred, and to contend against contention. As the lily among thorns, so is love among the sons of men. As the hind among the dogs, so is charity among the selfish multitude.

Evidently the difficulties of love are many, for the apostle speaks of them as "all things," and as if this were not enough, he repeats the words, and sets forth the opposing armies as four times "all things." I do not know whether you can calculate this mighty host. "All things" would seem to comprehend as much as can be, but here in the text you have this amount multiplied by four.

For, my brother, you will have to contend with all that is within *yourself*. Nothing in your original nature will help you. God has put within you a new life, but the old life seeks to smother it. You will find it a severe struggle to master yourself, and if you succeed therein, you will be a conqueror indeed.

Besides that you will have to contend with "all things" in *the persons* whom you are called upon to love. You must have fervent charity towards the saints, but you will find very much about the best of them which will try your patience. Like yourself, they are imperfect, and they will not always turn their best side towards you, but sometimes sadly exhibit their infirmities.

Be prepared, therefore, to contend with "all things" in them. As for the ungodly whom you are to love to Christ, you will find everything in them that will oppose the drawings of your love, for they, like yourself, by nature are born in sin, and they are rooted in their iniquities.

When you have mastered that kind of "all things," you will have to contend with "all things" in the *world*, for the world lies in the wicked one, and all its forces run towards self, and contention, and hate. Every man's hand is against his fellow, and few there are who honor the gentle laws of love. They know not that divine charity which "seeketh not her own."

The seed of the serpent is at enmity with all that is kind, and tender, and self-sacrificing, for these are the marks of the woman's seed. Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you. And then remember that "all things" *in hell* are against you. What a seething mass of rebellions life—all venomous with hate—is seen in the regions of darkness.

The prince of the power of the air leads the van, and the host of fallen spirits eagerly follow him, like bloodhounds behind their leader. All these evil spirits will endeavor to create dissension, and enmity, and malice, and oppression among men—and the soldier of love must wrestle against all these.

See, O my brother, what a battle is yours! Speak of crusades against the Paynim—what a crusade is this against hate and evil. Yet we shrink not from the fray.

Happily, though love has many difficulties, *it overcomes them all* and overcomes them four times. There is such vitality in evil that it leaps up from the field whereon it seemed to be slain, and rages with all its former fury.

First, we overcome evil by *patience*, which "beareth all things." Let the injury be inflicted—we will forgive it and not be provoked—even seventy times seven will we bear in silence. If this suffice not, by

God's grace we will overcome by *faith*—we trust in Jesus Christ, we rely upon our principles, we look for divine succor—and so we "believe all things."

We overcome a third time by *hope*—we rest in expectation that gentleness will win, and that longsuffering will wear out malice—for we look for the ultimate victory of everything that is true and gracious, and so we "hope all things."

We finish the battle by *perseverance*—we abide faithful to our resolve to love. We will not be irritated into unkindness. We will not be perverted from generous, all-forgiving affection, and so we win the battle by steadfast non-resistance. We have set our helm towards the port of love, and towards it we will steer, come what may. Baffled often, love "endureth all things."

Yes, brethren, and love conquers on all four sides. Love does, as it were, make a hollow square, and she sets the face of her warriors towards all quarters of the compass. Does God seem Himself to smite love with afflictions? She "beareth all things." Do her fellow Christians misrepresent her, and treat her ill? She believes everything that is good about them, and nothing that is injurious.

Do the wicked rise against her? When she tries to convert them, do they return evil for good? She turns her hopefulness to the front in that direction, and hopes that yet the Spirit of God will bring them to a better mind. And does it happen that all her spiritual foes attack her with temptations and desperate insinuations? She lifts up the banner of patience against them, and by the power of God's grace, she puts the infernal enemy to the rout, for she "endureth all things."

What a brave mode of battle is this! Is not love a man of war? Is she not invincible? Hear love's heroic cry as she shouts her defiance,

"Come one, come all, this rock shall fly,
From its firm base as soon as I."

If once taught in the school of Christ to turn love to every point of the compass, and so to meet every assault against our heart, we have learned the secret of victory.

It seems to me that I might read my text as if it said that *love conquers in all stages of her life*. She begins in conversion, and straightway those that mark her birth are angry, and the powers of evil are at once aroused to seek her destruction. Then she "beareth all things." Let them mock, love never renders railing for railing—Isaac is not to be provoked by Ishmael's jeers.

She gathers strength, and begins to tell out to others what she knows of her Lord and His salvation. She "believeth all things," and so she confesses her faith—and her fellow Christians are confirmed by her witness. It is her time of energy, and so she tries to woo and win others, by teaching them the things which she believes.

She advances a little farther, and though often disappointed by the unbelief of men, and the coldness of her fellow Christians, she nevertheless "hopeth all things," and pushes on in the expectation of winning more of them. Her dove's eyes see in the dark, and she advances to victory through ever-growing conflict.

Ay, and when infirmities thicken upon her, and old age comes, and when she can do little else but sit still, and bear and believe and hope—she still perseveres, and accepts even the stroke of death itself without complaining, for love "endureth all things."

I do not think I need say more upon the difficulties of love. I am sure that every experienced person knows that these difficulties are supreme, and that we require superlative grace if we are to master them.

Love does not ask to have an easy life of it—self-love makes that her aim. Love denies herself, sacrifices herself, that she may win victories for God, and bring blessings on her fellow men. Hers is no easy pathway, and hers shall be no tinsel crown.

II. Secondly, let us survey THE TRIUMPH OF LOVE'S LABOR.

Her labors are four-fold. First, in *bearing all things*. The word here rendered "bear" might as correctly have been translated "cover." You that have the Revised Version will find in the margin,

"Love *covereth* all things." "Covereth" is the meaning of the word in ordinary Greek, but Paul generally uses the word in the sense of "bear."

Our translators, therefore, had to choose between the usual meaning and the Pauline usage, and they selected Paul's meaning, and put it down in the first place as "beareth," giving us in the margin the other sense of "covereth." The two ideas may be blended, if we understand it to mean that love beareth all things in silence, concealing injuries as much as possible even from herself.

Let us just think of this word "covers" *in reference to the brethren*. True love refuses to see faults, unless it is that she may kindly help in their removal. Love has no wish to see faults. Noah's younger son discovered and declared the shame of his father, but his other sons took a garment and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father.

After this fashion does love deal with the sins of her brethren. She painfully fears that there may be something wrong, but she is loath to be convinced of it. She ignores it as long as she can, and wishes that she could deny it altogether. Love covers, that is, it never proclaims the errors of good men.

There are busybodies abroad who never spy out a fault in a brother, but they must needs hurry off to their next neighbor with the savory news—and then they run up and down the street as though they had been elected common criers. It is by no means honorable to men or women to set up to be common informers. Yet I know some who are not half so eager to publish the Gospel as to publish slander.

Love stands in the presence of a fault, with a finger on her lip. If anyone is to smite a child of God, let it not be a brother. Even if a professor be a hypocrite, love prefers that he should fall by any hand rather than her own.

Love covers all injuries by being silent about them, and acting as if they had never been. She sits alone, and keeps silence. To speak and publish her wrong is too painful for her, for she fears to offend against the Lord's people. She would rather suffer than murmur, and so, like a sheep before her shearers, she is dumb under injury.

I would, brothers and sisters, that we could all imitate the pearl oyster. A hurtful particle intrudes itself into its shell, and this vexes and grieves it. It cannot eject the evil, and what does it do but *cover* it with a precious substance extracted out of its own life, by which it turns the intruder into a pearl. Oh, that we could do so with the provocations we receive from our fellow Christians, so that pearls of patience, gentleness, long-suffering, and forgiveness might be bred within us by that which else had harmed us.

I would desire to keep ready for my fellow Christians, a bath of silver, in which I could electroplate all their mistakes into occasions for love. As the dripping well covers with its own deposit all that is placed within its drip, so would love cover all within its range with love, thus turning even curses into blessings. Oh that we had such love that it would cover all, and conceal all, so far as it is right and just that it should be covered and concealed.

As to *bearing* all, taking the words as they stand in our version, I wish to apply the text mainly to our trials in seeking the conversion of *the unconverted*. Those who love the souls of men must be prepared to cover much when they deal with them, and to bear much from them in silence. When I begin to seek the conversion of anyone, I must try as much as ever I can to ignore any repulsiveness that there may be in his character.

I know that he is a sinner, else I would not seek his salvation. But if he happens to be one who has fallen very low in the esteem of others, I must not treat him as such, but cover his worst points. You cannot possibly bring the Samaritan woman who has had five husbands into a right state of mind by "wondering that he spake with the woman." Thus the disciples acted, but not so their Master, for He sat on the well and talked with her, and made Himself her willing companion that He might be her gracious Savior. He ignored her sin so far as to converse with her for her good.

You will not long have begun this holy work before you will discover in the heart you seek to win much ignorance of the Gospel. Bear with it, and bring forward the text which sheds light on that darkness, and teach the truth which will remove that error. Ere long you will have to contend with

hardness of heart, for when a man knows the truth, he is not always willing to receive it. Bear it, and be not vexed.

Did you not expect the heart to be hard? Do not you know what business you are upon? You are sent to turn men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. Be not astonished if these things should not prove to be child's play.

In addition to this, perhaps you will have ridicule poured upon you. Your attempts to convert will be converted into jests. Bear it. Bear all things! Remember how the multitude thrust out their tongues at your Lord and Master when He was dying, and be not so proud as to think yourself too good to be laughed at.

Still speak concerning Christ, and whatever happens, bear all things. I will not attempt to make a catalog of your provocations—you shall make one, yourself, after you have tried to convert men to Christ—but all that you can possibly meet with is included in my text, for it says, "beareth *all things*."

If you should meet with some extraordinary sinner who opens his mouth with cruel speeches such as you have never heard before, and if, by attempting to do him good you only excite him to vulgarity and blasphemy, do not be astonished. Have at him again, for charity "beareth all things," whatsoever they may be.

Push on and say, "Yes, all this proves to me how much you want saving. You are my man. If I get you to Christ there will be all the greater glory to God." O blessed charity, which can thus cover all things and bear all things for Christ's sake.

Do you want an example of it? Would you see the very mirror and perfection of the charity that beareth all things? Behold your divine Lord. Oh, what He has covered! It is a tempting topic, but I will not dwell on it. How His glorious righteousness, His wondrous splendor of love, has covered all our faults and all their consequences, treating us as if He saw no sin in Jacob, neither perversity in Israel.

Think what He bore when He came unto His own, and His own received Him not! What a covering was that when He said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." What a pitying sight of the fearful misery of man our Lord Jesus had when holy tears bedewed those sacred eyes! What a generous blindness to their infamous cruelty He manifested when He prayed for His bloodthirsty enemies.

O beloved, you will never be tempted, and taunted, and tried as He was. Yet, in your own shorter measure may you possess that love which can silently bear all things for the elect's sake and for Christ's sake—that the multitude of the redeemed may be accomplished—and that Christ through you may see of the travail of His soul.

Now let us look at the second of love's great labors. You have heard of the labors of Hercules, but the fabulous hero is far outdone by the veritable achievements of love. Love works miracles which only grace can enable her to perform. Here is the second of them—love "*believeth all things*."

In reference, first, to our fellow Christians, love always believes the best of them. I wish we had more of this faith abroad in all the churches, for a horrid blight falls upon some communities through suspicion and mistrust. Though everything may be pure and right, yet certain weak minds are suddenly fevered with anxiety through the notion that all is wrong and rotten.

This unholy mistrust is in the air, a blight upon all peace—it is a sort of fusty mildew of the soul by which all sweet perfume of confidence is killed. The best man is suspected of being a designing knave, though he is honest as the day, and the smallest fault or error is frightfully exaggerated, till we seem to dwell among criminals and to be all villains together.

If I did not believe in my brethren, I would not profess to be one of them. I believe that with all their faults, they are the best people in the world, and that, though the church of God is not perfect, yet she is the bride of One who is. I have the utmost respect for her, for her Lord's sake.

The Roman matron said, "Where my husband is Caias, I am Caia." Where Christ is King, she who stands at His right hand is "the queen in gold of Ophir." God forbid that I should rail at her of whom her Lord says, "Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee."

True love believes good of others as ever as it can, and when it is forced to fear that wrong has been done, love will not readily yield to evidence, but she gives the accused brother the benefit of many a doubt. When the thing is too clear, love says, "Yes, but the friend must have been under very strong temptation. And if I had been there, I dare say I would have done worse."

Or else love hopes that the erring one may have offended from a good, though mistaken, motive—she believes that the good man must have been mistaken, or he would not have acted so. Love, as far as she can, believes in her fellows.

I know some persons who habitually believe everything that is bad, but they are not the children of love. Only tell them that their minister or their brother has killed his wife, and they would believe it immediately, and send out for a policeman. But if you tell them anything good of their neighbor, they are in no such hurry to believe you.

Did you ever hear of gossips tittle-tattling approval of their neighbors? I wish the chatterers would take a turn at exaggerating other people's virtues, and go from house to house trumping up pretty stories of their acquaintances. I do not recommend lying, even in kindness, but that side of it would be such a novelty that I could almost bear with its evils for a change.

Love, though it will not speak an untruth in praise of another, yet has a quick eye to see the best qualities of others, and it is habitually a little blind to their failings. Her blind eye is to the fault, and her bright is for the excellence.

Somewhere or other I met with an old legend—I do not suppose it to be literally true, but its spirit is correct. It is said that, once upon a time, in the streets of Jerusalem, there lay a dead dog, and everyone kicked at it and reviled it. One spoke of its currish breed, another of its lean and ugly form, and so forth. But one passed by who paused a moment over the dead dog and said, "What white teeth it has." Men said, as He went on His way, "That is Jesus of Nazareth."

Surely it is always our Lord's way to see good points wherever He can. Brethren, think as well as you can even of a dead dog. If you should ever be led into disappointments and sorrows by thinking too well of your fellow men, you need not greatly blame yourself. I met, in Anthony Farrindon's Sermons, a line which struck me.

He says the old proverb has it, "Humanum est errare," *to err is human*, but says he, when we err by thinking too kindly of others we may say, "*Christanum est errare*," *it is Christian to err* in such a fashion. I would not have you credulous, but I would have you trustful—for suspicion is a cruel evil. Few fall into the blessed error of valuing their fellow Christians at too high a rate.

In reference to the unconverted, this is a very important matter. Love "believeth all things" in their case. She does not believe that the unconverted are converted, for, if so, she would not seek their conversion. She believes that they are lost and ruined by the Fall, but she believes that God can save them.

Love believes that the precious blood of Christ can redeem the bond slaves of sin and Satan, and break their iron chains. She believes that the power of the Holy Spirit can change a heart of granite into a heart of flesh. Love, therefore, believing this, believes that God can save this sinner by herself, and she therefore begins to speak to him, expecting that the word she speaks will be God's instrument of salvation.

When she finds herself sitting next to a sinner, she believes that there was a necessity for her to be there, even as Christ must go through Samaria. She says to herself, "Now will I tell this poor soul what Christ has done, for I believe that even out of my poor lips eternal life may flow, and in such a babe as I am, God may perfect praise to His own glory."

She does not refrain from preaching Christ through fear of failure, but she believes in the great possibilities which lie in the Gospel, and in the Spirit of God—and so she deals earnestly with the man next to her.

She believes in her own principles. She believes in the grace of God. She believes in the power of the Spirit of God. She believes in the force of truth. She believes in the existence of conscience, and so she is moved to set about her saving work. She believes all things.

Brethren, do you want a model of this? Then I beseech you look to your divine Master once again. See Him in the morning when the sheep are counted, missing one of them, and so full of faith is He that He can find the lost one, that He leaves the ninety and nine, and cheerfully enters the pathless wilderness.

See how He bounds over the mountains! How He descends the ravines! He is seeking His sheep until He finds it, for He is fully assured that He shall find it. He shall not fail nor be discouraged, for His faith is great in the salvation of men, and He goes forth to it believing that sinners shall be saved.

I delight in the deep, calm faith of our Lord Jesus Christ. He had no faith in man's goodness, for "He knew what was in man," but He had great faith in what could be done in men, and what could be wrought for them, and for the joy that was set before Him, in this He endured the cross, despising the shame. He had faith that grand things would come of His salvation—men would be purified, error would be driven out, falsehood would be slain, and love would reign supreme.

Here is the second grand victory of love—she "believeth all things." Herein let us exercise ourselves till we are skilled in it.

Love's third great labor is in "*hoping all things*." Love never despairs. She believes in good things yet to come in her fellow men, even if she cannot believe in any present good in them. Hope all things about your brethren.

Suppose a friend is a member of the church, and you cannot see any clear signs of grace in him. Hope all things about him. Many true believers are weak in faith, and the operations of grace are dim in them. And some are placed in positions where the grace they have is much hindered and hampered—let us take these things into consideration.

It is hard to tell how little grace may yet suffice for salvation—it is not ours to judge. Hope all things, and if you should be forced to see sad signs in them, which make you fear that they have no grace, yet, remember that some of the brightest believers have had their faults, and grave ones too. Remember yourself, lest you also are tempted. If you cannot hope that these persons are saved at all, hope that they will be, and do all that you can to promote so blessed an end.

Hope all things. If your brother has been very angry with you without a cause, hope that you will win him, and set about the task. If you have tried and failed, hope to succeed next time, and try again. Hope that though you have failed seven times, and he still speaks bitterly, yet in his heart he is really ashamed, or at least that he will be so very soon. Never despair of your fellow Christians.

As to the unconverted, you will never do anything with them unless you hope great things about them. When the good Samaritan found the poor man half dead, if he had not hoped about him, he would never have poured in the oil and the wine, but would have left him there to die.

Cultivate great hopefulness about sinners. Always hope of them that they will be saved yet, though no good signs are apparent in them. If you have done your best for them, and have been disappointed and defeated, still hope for them. Sometimes you will find cause for hope in the fact that they begin to attend a place of worship. Grasp at that and say, "Who can tell? God may bless them."

Or if they have long been hearers, and no good has come of it, still hope that the minister will one day have a shot at them, and the arrow shall pierce through the joints of the harness. When you last spoke to them, there seemed a little tenderness—be thankful for it, and have hope. If there has been a little amendment in their life, be hopeful about them. Even if you can see nothing at all hopeful in them, yet hope that there may be something which you cannot see, and perhaps an effect has been produced which they are endeavoring to conceal.

Hope because you are moved to pray for them. Get other people to pray for them, for as long as they have someone to pray for them, their case is not over. If you get others to pray, there will be another string to your bow. If they are very ill, and you cannot get at them, or they are on their dying beds, still

have hope about them, and try to send them a message in some form or other. Pray the Lord to visit and save them. And always keep up your hope about them. Till they are dead let not your hope be dead.

Would you see a model of this? Ah, look at our blessed Lord, and all His hopefulness for us. How, despairing of none, He went after those whom others would have given up. If you need a proof, remember how He went after *you*. Will you despair of anybody since Christ did not despair of you?

Wonders of grace belong to God, and all those wonders have been displayed in many among us. If you and I had been there when they brought the adulterous woman taken in the very act, I am afraid that we would have said, "This is too bad, put her away, she cannot be borne with." But oh, the hopefulness of the blessed Master, when even to her He said, "Woman, where are thine accusers? Neither do I condemn thee. Go, and sin no more."

What wonderful patience, and gentleness, and hopefulness our Lord displayed in all His converse with the twelve. It was a noble hopefulness in Christ which led Him to trust Peter as He did. After he had denied his Master with oaths, our Lord trusted him to feed His sheep and lambs, and set him in the forefront of apostolic service.

He has also had compassion on some of us, putting us into the ministry, and putting us in trusting with the Gospel, for He knew what love would do for us, and He was certain He could yet make something of us to His own glory.

The last victory of love is in *enduring all things*, by which I understand a patient perseverance in loving. This is perhaps the hardest work of all, for many people can be affectionate and patient for a time, but the task is to hold on year after year.

I have known some men earnestly check their temper under provocation, and bear a great many slights, but at last they have said, "There is an end to everything. I am not going to put up with it any longer. I cannot stand it."

Blessed be God, the love that Christ gives us endures all things. As His love endured to the end, so does the love which the Spirit works in us endure to the end.

In reference first to our fellow Christians, love holds out under all rebuffs. You mean that I shall not love you, my good man, but I shall love you. You give me the rough side of your tongue, and make me see that you are not a very lovable person, but I can love you notwithstanding all that.

What? Will you do me a further unkindness? I will oppose you by doing you a greater kindness than before. You said a vile thing about me—I will not hear it, but if it be possible I will say a kind thing of you. I will cover you up with hot coals till I melt you. I will war against you with flames of love till your anger is consumed. I will master you by being kinder to you than you have been unkind to me.

What hosts of misrepresentations and unkindnesses there are—but if you go on to be a true Christian you must endure all these. If you have to deal with people who will put up with nothing from you, take care to be doubly patient with them. What credit is there in bearing with those who bear with you?

If your brethren are angry without a cause, be sorry for them, but do not let them conquer you by driving you into a bad temper. Stand fast in love—endure not some things, but all things, for Christ's sake—so shall you prove yourself to be a Christian indeed.

As to your dealing with the unconverted, if ever you go into the field after souls, be sure to carry your gun with you, and that gun is love. You gentlemen who go out shooting partridges and other birds at this time of the year, no doubt find it a pleasant pastime. But for real excitement, joy, and pleasure, commend me to soul-winning.

What did our Lord say, "I will make you fishers of men." If you go out fishing for souls you will have to endure all things, for it will come to pass that some whom you have been seeking for a long time will grow worse instead of better.

Endure this among the all things. Those whom you seek to bless may seem to be altogether unteachable. They may shut their ears and refuse to hear you—never mind, endure all things. They may grow sour and sullen, and revile you in their anger, but be not put about by them—let them struggle till they are wearied—and meanwhile quietly wait, saying to yourself, "I *must* save them."

A warden who has to take care of insane persons will frequently be attacked by them, and have to suffer hard blows—but what does he do? Strike the patient and make a fight of it? No, he holds him down and pins him fast—but not in anger, for he pities him too much to be angry with him. Does a nurse with a delirious patient take any notice of his cross words, and grumbling, and outcries? Not she. She says, "I must try to save this man's life," and so, with great kindness, she "endureth all things."

If you were a fireman, and found a person in an upper room, and the house was on fire, would you not struggle with him rather than let him remain in the room and burn. You would say, "I will save you in spite of yourself."

Perhaps the foolish person would call you names, and say, "Let me alone, why should you intrude into my chamber?" But you would say, "Never mind my intrusion. I will apologize, afterwards for my rudeness, but you must first be out of the fire." I pray God gives you this blessed unmannerliness, this sweet casting of all things to the wind, if by any means you may save some.

If you desire to see the mirror and the paragon of persevering endurance, look you there! I wish you could see it. I wish these eyes could see the sight as I have sometimes seen it. Behold the cross! See the patient Sufferer and that ribald multitude—they thrust out the tongue. They sneer. They jest. They blaspheme. And there He hangs, triumphant in His patience, conquering the world, and death and hell by enduring "all things."

O love, You did never sit on a throne so imperial as the cross, when there, in the person of the Son of God, You did endure all things. Oh that we might copy in some humble measure that perfect pattern which is here set before us. If you would be saviors, if you would bless your generation, let no unkindness daunt you. Let no considerations of your own character, or honor, or peace of mind keep you back. But of you may it be said, even as of your Lord—"He saved others, himself he could not save."

Have I not shown you four grand battles far excelling all the Waterloos, and Trafalgars, and Almas, and Inkermans on record? Heroes are they that fight and win them—and the Lord God of love shall crown them.

III. I close by noting THE SOURCES OF LOVE'S ENERGY.

The time is gone, as I thought it would be, but it has brought us round in a circle to where we started. Only the Holy Ghost can teach men how to love, and give them power to do so. Love's art is learned at no other school but at the feet of Jesus, where the Spirit of love does rest on those who learn of Him. Beloved, the Spirit of God puts love into us, and helps us to maintain it.

Thus—first, love wins these victories, for *it is her nature*. The nature of love is self-sacrifice. Love is the reverse of seeking her own. Love is intense. Love is burning. Therefore she burns her way to victory. Love!

Look at it in the mother. Is it any hardship for her to lose rest and peace and comfort for her child? If it costs her pain, she makes it pleasure by the ardor of her affection. It is the nature of love to court difficulties, and to rejoice in suffering for the beloved object. If you have fervent love to the souls of men, you will know how true this is.

Next to this, *love has four sweet companions*. There are with her tenderness that "beareth all things," faith that "believeth all things," hope that "hopeth all things," and patience which "endureth all things." And he that has tenderness, and faith, and hope, and patience has a brave quaternion of graces to guard him, and he need not be afraid.

Best of all, *love sucks her life from the wounds of Christ*. Love can bear, believe, hope, and endure because Christ has borne, believed, hoped, and endured for her. I have heard of one that had a twist—they say that he saw something that others never saw, and heard a voice that others never heard, and he became such a strange man that others wondered at him.

Oh, that I had more and more of that most solemn twist which comes through feeling a pierced hand laid on my shoulder, and hearing in my ears a sorrowful voice—that selfsame voice which cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" I would see that vision and hear that voice, and then—what then? Why, I must love. I must love. I must love.

That would be the soul's strange bias and sweet twist. Love makes us love. Love bought us, sought us, and brought us to the Savior's feet—and it shall henceforth constrain us to deeds which else would be impossible.

You have heard of men sometimes in a mad fit doing things that ordinary flesh and blood could never have performed. Oh to be distracted from selfishness by the love of Christ, and maddened into self-oblivion by a supreme passion for the Crucified. I know not how otherwise to put my thoughts into words so that they may hint at my burning meaning.

May the Lord of love look into your very eyes with those eyes which once were red with weeping over human sin. May He touch your hands with those hands that were nailed to the cross, and impress the blessed nailmarks upon your feet—and then may He pierce your heart till it pours forth a life for love, and flow out in streams of kind desires, and generous deeds, and holy sacrifices for God, and for His people.

God grant it, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—1 CORINTHIANS 13

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—797, 264, 439

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.