

THE WAY OF CHRISTIAN LOVE

I Corinthians 13

This is one of the outstanding chapters of the Bible. It is a masterpiece of literature. It has proved to be inexhaustible as men through the centuries have brought forth its precious truths in many choice expositions.

This profoundly rich chapter should never be divorced from its context. In the preceding chapter Paul discussed "gifts", which had been bestowed by the Holy Spirit. He made it clear that each believer in Christ is the recipient of a spiritual enablement or a capacity for specific service. In this chapter Paul shows that the supreme motive for and the superior value of these gifts ^{are} ~~is~~ found in love. The gifts are the manifestations of the Lord's power, while love is the manifestation of His nature. All spiritual gifts are without value apart from love.

There are those who emphasize the fact that the name of the Lord does not appear in this chapter. This reminds us of the fact that in Washington D. C. there is a beautifully engraved copy of the Constitution of the United States in which the lettering has been shaded so wonderfully that when one stands back and looks at it as a whole the face of George Washington appears. In like manner, this chapter is arranged in such a manner that, although Christ is not mentioned, His face appears clearly when the passage is viewed as a whole. In this connection James H. Brookes said, "It is the only chapter in Paul's Epistles that does not directly mention the Lord Jesus Christ in one or more of His names or titles. Yet this is no exception to the rule, for he draws a portrait of the Master so exquisite in coloring, so lovely in its lineaments that no one can fail to recognize the striking likeness even without the name attached." Truly, this is a beautiful dissertation on love, which was something that was seemingly lacking in the thoughts and conduct of the church members in Corinth.

I. The Preeminence Of Love. I Corinthians 13:1-3.

Life has many excellent gifts and men desire to have them. The list of endowments mentioned in these verses is a respectable one, and to enumerate them is to appreciate

their worth. Eloquence, prophecy, wisdom, knowledge, faith, charity and martyrdom are of great value among men. However, all of these coveted gifts are without value apart from love. Paul emphasizes the preeminence of love by saying that it is greater than eloquence, prophecy, wisdom, knowledge, faith, benevolence and martyrdom. Love adds great value to each of these desirable and highly praised gifts.

II. The Properties Of Love. I Corinthians 13:4-6.

1. Negative properties of love. I Corinthians 13:4-6.

(1) Love is not impatient. (verse 4).

Love suffers provocation and injury from others for a long time.

(2) Love is not envious. (verse 4).

Envy is the grudging admission of relative inferiority. Being the very opposite of jealousy and envy, love has no ill feeling whatsoever at the honor, success or prosperity of others.

(3) Love is not boastful. (verse 4).

Just as love does not begrudge the endowment of others, so it is not eager to make a display of its own. Pride and self-conceit never spring from love but always from selfishness. Boasting is prompted by a desire for human praise. Instead of looking for applause, love is interested in the welfare of others.

(4) Love is not rude. (verse 5).

Love is not discourteous or unmannerly. It always recoils from rudeness.

(5) Love is not selfish. (verse 5).

Love is self-emptying instead of self-seeking. Love is never self-assertive. It delivers from inbred selfishness and carnal self-seeking, and seeks the welfare of others.

(6) Love is not easily provoked. (verse 5).

Love does not keep a record of the wrongs and injuries it has suffered and then give way to anger. It is the lack of love which makes people sensitive, easily hurt, and likely to think evil about others.

(7) Love is not resentful. (verse 5).

Love is never fiery with resentment at slights but rather ignores them. It is always ready to give as charitable an interpretation as possible to the weaknesses of others.

(8) Love does not take pleasure in evil. (verse 6).

Instead of rejoicing in things that are wrong, love rejoices in that which is right. No faithful Christian ever rejoices over the downfall of another.

2. Positive properties of love. I Corinthians 13:6-7.

(1) Love rejoices in truth. (verse 6).

Love always rejoices in the propagation, progress and triumph of the truth. Love rejoices when people accept the truth, live in conformity to it, and faithfully proclaim it.

(2) Love bears all things silently. (verse 7).

Love bears all hardships and trials without complaint.

(3) Love believes. (verse 7).

Instead of suspecting or surmising, love believes the best rather than the worst about others.

(4) Love is hopeful. (verse 7).

Love looks at things in the best light instead of the worst. It is optimistic in the face of all unfavorable appearances and adverse circumstances.

(5) Love endures. (verse 7).

This sort of love is exemplified by the poor old mother who was seen waiting in the entrance of the penitentiary to take home with her a son who was soon to be released.

III. The Permanence Of Love. I Corinthians 13:8-13.

Love is permanent and imperishable. In a splendid manner these verses bring out the glorious truth of the eternal durability of love. It simply never fails. It began with God and will go on with Him through eternity. The time will never come when love will give way to some higher quality. It will never cease to be, for it is eternal.

ECHOES FROM THE NINETY-SIXTH SESSION OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CONVENTION

Houston, Texas, May 6-10, 1953

By H. C. Chiles

President --	J. W. Storer, Tulsa, Oklahoma
First Vice-President --	E. H. Westmoreland, Houston, Texas
Second Vice-President --	R. C. Campbell, Shelby, North Carolina
Secretaries --	George B. Fraser, Washington, D. C. Joe W. Burton, Nashville, Tennessee
Treasurer --	Porter W. Routh, Nashville, Tennessee

The 1954 Convention will be held in St. Louis, Missouri, June 2-6, and Slater Murphy, Memphis, Tennessee, will preach the annual sermon.

The 1955 Convention will be held in Washington, D. C., June 1-5.

Southern Baptist Statistics for 1952

State Conventions	22
District Associations	1,001
Churches	28,865
Church Members	7,634,493
Baptisms	354,384
Sunday School Enrolment	5,491,056
Training Union Enrolment	1,677,293
Woman's Missionary Society Enrolment	1,143,993
Vacation Bible School Enrolment	2,059,163
Brotherhood Enrolment	214,486
Total Gifts	\$248,004,289
Gifts to Missions	45,822,830
Total Value of Church Property	890,697,339
Estimated Value of Institutional Property	390,000,000
Per Capita Total Gifts	32.48
Per Capita Mission Gifts	6.00

Excerpts From President's Address

"With paeans of praise and doxologies of joy, we have begun the ninety-sixth session of the Southern Baptist Convention. With gratitude to our gracious Heavenly Father we look back over the road of service this Convention has marched for one hundred and eight years. Reports of our agencies and institutions will thrill our hearts. Numerous brethren will inspire us with a fresh insight into the Word of God as they focus our attention upon our blessed Lord. Led by the Spirit of God, we shall survey the past, evaluate the present, and face the future.

"History can never forget those Baptist preachers in Virginia who gladly suffered in prison for the cause of freedom not merely as a political expediency, but as a deep, fundamental, religious conviction. And so, in this place, we behold the outcropping of freedom's rock which underlies all America and upon which our nation must ever rest secure!

"But we see here also the outcropping of another spirit which has always characterized Baptists. Just as those noble patriots came from east of the Mississippi to take up arms and suffer for freedom's cause, so also our Baptist brethren came from the east to lift up, live out, and suffer for the Gospel of the Divine Son of God.

This outcropping of the spirit of conquest for Christ is the mighty expression of the missionary passion which has ever and must always characterize Baptists. There is freedom in Texas today because men dedicated to the cause of freedom came here and fought that freedom might be established. There are Baptists in Texas today, praise God a mighty army of them, because Baptist preachers, and laymen alike, imbued with the missionary spirit, came here and suffered, bled, and died that the cause of Christ might be established.

"Those men, fired with a missionary passion, came to Texas not as vacationists, but as vicars of Christ; not to dawdle, but to dare; not to loll in luxury, but to light fires for the Lord; not to practice philosophical gymnastics, but to preach as dying men to dying men.

"In 1839 the Baptist church at Washington, Texas, addressed an appeal for at least four men to serve in Texas. They set a high standard for these missionaries, saying, 'We need men of understanding, of deep research, of giant intellect, clothed with the spirit of the Gospel as a garment, that they may confound all our opposers, disseminate light, establish the churches, and be the means of pulling down the strongholds of Satan and building up the Kingdom of God.' The American Baptist Home Mission Society responded to their appeal.

"Another outcropping of this spirit that underlies Southern Baptists can be discerned in the example of the dividends that accrue from evangelizing the homeland. The investment made by the Southern Baptist Convention in this state through all those early years has borne fruit many hundredfold. Every dollar put into the work through all the years has been turned back into the stream of our denominational missionary program multiplied many times over. In a very real sense, the contributions made by our denomination have not been gifts; they have been the wisest and most profitable investments any corporation has ever made. The labor done by Southern Baptists has caused the work to grow apace until Texas is now a gigantic 'Baptist empire.' The result has been that those who first were the objects of the Home Mission enterprise have become, along with others, primary subjects in advancing it. And let him who would, in a faint-hearted and short-sighted fashion, whisper that the service of the Home Mission Board is no longer needed, look across Texas and beyond to the sprawling areas and ripe harvest fields of the West and the Northwest.

"Let Southern Baptists 'face up' to their obligation to answer this modern Macedonian call as promptly and energetically as Paul and his brethren did at Troas. Let us be done with a 'penny wise and pound foolish' point of view that whispers little lullabys and pious 'ditties' over non-existent comity agreements and cries to maintain the status quo. Souls are going to hell without Christ. Entire communities go on their godless way without a solitary church to hold forth the Word of Life. Let us no longer stand back, our ears stopped with the soft down of indifference, our mouths stuffed with the 'cotton candy' of sweet sentimentality, and our hands and feet bound with the red tape of 'proper procedure.'

"Not only does the outcropping of the missionary spirit for evangelizing the homeland summon us to the West, but it calls us to reach the masses in our great cities. The rural areas are rapidly becoming depopulated. For every tractor put to use on a farm, one family moves to the city. An eminent sociologist from Peabody College told our Promotion Conference in Oklahoma City in March that one thousand country churches are dying every year. To be sure, our Home Mission Board will continue to strengthen our work in the rural areas, but the Board must be given enlarged support for its City Mission Program. The ungodliness of our nation demands that Southern Baptists, through a vigorous Home Mission Program, meet the challenge. Just as long as one marriage out of every four winds up in the divorce court, as long as our annual crime bill is twenty-five billion dollars, and as long as our nation has only one hundred eighty-two thousand churches of all faiths, but four hundred thousand bars, saloons,

and other outlets for liquor, our Home Mission Board is still needed. Every reasonable man must agree that patriotic duty as well as Christian compulsion demands that we do our best to save our nation from destruction.

"Another mighty outcropping of the spirit that is Southern Baptists', discernible at this Convention, has to do with the glorious cause of world missions. Every church we organize in the homeland, every institution we set up, every program we project, should have as its end result the giving of the Gospel of Christ to all peoples of all the world. The spirit of missions, or world evangelization, has made us what we are and it and only it will maintain us.

"The record of giving among Southern Baptists the past fifty years shows conclusively that they subscribe to this principle of giving and growing. In 1902, our per capita giving to all causes was \$2.64 with 63¢ for missions. In 1942, our per capita giving to all causes was \$9.73 with \$1.80 going for missions. But last year, 1952, our per capita giving to all causes had increased to \$32.48 for all causes with \$6.00 going for missions. We haven't reached the ideal yet, but we are making progress.

"Southern Baptists have a job to do for the Lord. They can best do it in their own way and perform their duty as God gives to them to see their duty. We are pressured by two conflicting forces. On one side is the ecumenicalism of 'United Protestantism'; on the other is the 'anything-ism' of non-denominationalism. We are like a healthy, wealthy, attractive young lady. These ambitious 'Lotharios' are 'making eyes' at us. But we have not, cannot, and will not even 'drop our handkerchief' to invite or encourage their attention. However, a few neighborhood gossips are whispering over their back fences that the wedding date has already been set. But those who know the least always talk the most.

"One would-be suitor has made bold to announce that a chair is being reserved for us. But this young lady in all graciousness would suggest that before she occupies that chair it will have become an antique. No doubt this suitor means well in thinking of that chair as a 'love seat,' but this young lady realizes that for her it would become a 'hot seat.' And, too, she feels that this chair would be for her virtually an 'electric chair.' Personally I think the young lady is correct. For the moment she sits down in that chair, she signs her own death warrant and sets the date of her execution. This young lady doesn't object to being friendly with her ambitious suitors, but she has no matrimonial intentions."

--J. D. Grey

Convention Sermon

The Annual Convention Sermon entitled, "The Upward Look," was delivered by J. H. Landes, Wichita Falls, Texas. This sermon appeared in abbreviated form in the WESTERN RECORDER for the benefit of all who read our State Paper.

Sunday School Board's Hour

Dr. T. L. Holcomb, executive secretary-treasurer, Sunday School Board, made his final report to the Convention, closing eighteen years in a position of leadership and tremendous responsibility with the Sunday School Board.

During these eighteen years, the Board has published more than two hundred million tracts and six hundred forty different books. In 1952, the combined circulation of all the periodicals of the Board reached a total of 50,027,842. Total copies of all books published by the Board last year was 3,459,076. Total income of the Board in 1952 exceeded \$12,000,000.00.

Dr. Holcomb gave a brief address on "Standing On The Promises," in which he discussed six points and emphasized supporting verses of scripture.

1. Evangelism - quoting Luke 19:10: "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." He said that the field workers agreed on the statement: Evangelism has no parallel. The coming, the death, and the resurrection of Christ were all necessary to offer a complete salvation to every person in the world who would believe.
2. Faith - Mark 11:22: "And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God." The speaker declared that it is a great day in the life of a Christian when he is convinced by experience that God is trustworthy. A life, a church, an institution, or a denomination that builds on the promises of God will endure through the trials of time.
3. Divine Leadership - the Twenty-Third Psalm is precious, every verse is a jewel. We have found unusual help in the fourth verse: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." We have received encouragement when we realize that our Lord does not lead into shadows and difficulties, but through them onto the highway of Christian service. In fact, he is more interested in the course we follow than any of us can be even in our own life's work and destiny.
4. Practical Wisdom. Again and again we have faced problems that we do not know how to solve. Not with a lazy, indifferent attitude, but with zeal and earnestness we sought all the information possible, but even then we did not know the answer. Someone would suggest that I think it is time for us to turn to James 1:5 - "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." Whatever mistakes have been avoided and whatever progress has been achieved, we gladly attribute to this marvelous verse of scripture.
5. It has been a joy through our literature and on the field to magnify God's Amazing Grace. If Southern Baptists are to achieve the great purpose that the Lord has for us, it will be our clear message on grace.
6. We do not become depressed or confused when we are praising God. We have found it both a joy and a blessing in sounding the praise note in all phases of our work. Psalm 103, verses 1 and 2: "Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits," have helped us to give expression to our heart's desire to praise the God of our salvation.

Home Mission Board

The Home Mission Board, Dr. J. B. Lawrence, executive secretary, reported 1,274 missionaries, which was a gain of 104 over last year. Of this number, 362 were summer student workers. In 1952 there were 30,565 conversions in services conducted by the missionaries of the Home Mission Board. They delivered 110,715 sermons and addresses, distributed 79,650 Bibles and Gospels, opened 600 new missions, and constituted 265 new churches. Professions of faith resulting from the work of 425 Home Board chaplains totaled 11,284. Circulation of the Southern Baptist Home Missions magazine totaled an average of 117,200 per month. Home Mission study books sold totaled 181,868.

In promoting the work, the Home Mission Board has placed emphasis on the presentation of all phases of the work which is being done, magnifying the church as the sponsor, and presenting Home Missions as a part of the world mission program of Southern Baptists.

Foreign Mission Board

Dr. M. Theron Rankin, executive secretary of the Foreign Mission Board, reviewed the accomplishments of the denomination's overseas program in part as follows:

We are living today in an expectant world, not a defeated world. A large majority of the people of the world are surgent with hope; they are convinced that a new day lies out just ahead of them. Entire nations of people are primarily conscious of the political and national freedom they have gained, and they are looking to the future with dynamic expectations of a richer economic and social life than they and their forefathers have ever known.

In and through the events of history which, over the past several decades, have left us with a sense of defeat, we are now able to see God Himself moving to accomplish His purposes among men. There is no defeat in Him. He makes use of the tragedies and failures of men.

Southern Baptists are on the verge of attempting great things for the world. Impulses of expansion are beating against the borders of our present programs. One feels the pressure of a potential greatly enlarged support which has not yet been realized.

A strong current of concern for this hungry, expectant world is rising among us which can carry us far if we dare to with it. But let us not overlook the fact that unless we move with God as He moves to meet the hungers of men, we may be left behind and discarded.

Dr. Rankin reported that the Board now has 879 missionaries in 32 countries. He said in presenting the 1952 reports of overseas conventions and missions affiliated with the Board:

Figures in reports of areas where mission work has been conducted only a few years, if taken by themselves, would not be so inspiring. The Foreign Mission Board has missionaries serving in some 15 countries where the work is less than 10 years old--less than five years in most of them.

The primary measurement of any foreign missionary effort is the extent to which this effort succeeds in developing indigenous Christian constituencies who themselves become the evangelizing agencies of their own peoples and their own nations.

Ten thousand missionaries sent to Japan or Brazil or Nigeria could never by themselves evangelize any one of these countries. The primary task of the missionaries is to develop indigenous churches which in time will have their own pastors and church leaders who have been trained in their own agencies and institutions to lead these churches in evangelizing the world.

Baptisms in foreign fields totaled 18,154 in 1952, bringing the combined membership of the 1,942 churches to 195,067. The churches are served by 1,276 national pastors. There are 2,919 Sunday Schools with enrolments totaling 205,901; and 4,949 other church organizations (Training Unions and Missionary Societies and Auxiliaries) have a combined enrolment of 143,391.

Among the 460 schools conducted by the missions are 17 theological seminaries, which enrolled 563 of the 61,705 students in all the schools. Eight hospitals, eleven dispensaries, and seven clinics served 71,245 patients. A total of 5,458,720 tracts were published on the mission fields. Mission orphanages care for 136 children. Nine good will centers are maintained by missions.

The Foreign Mission Board appointed 84 missionaries in 1952. The total income from the Cooperative Program, Lottie Moon Offering, and designated gifts amounted to \$7,785,699.64. Approximately 94 per cent of this total was used for support of missionaries and work conducted abroad.

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In speaking to the Baptist Pastors' Conference on the subject, "Missions In Baptist History," Dr. H. C. Goerner, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, said:

Few modern Christians owe as much to missions as do the people called Baptists. If one turns back the pages of history just 160 years and notes the status and characteristics of the Baptists of the world on that day in June, 1793, when William Carey set sail from England for India, on what proved to be the journey that inaugurated the modern era of Christian missions, one scarcely can believe the transformation which has so obviously been wrought amongst Baptists largely by that very enterprise and the part which Baptists played in it.

- (1) Missions provided the means by which Baptists were changed from a despised and persecuted sect into one of the strongest Christian denominations, with a worldwide constituency, exercising an influence and enjoying a position which their spiritual forebears could hardly have imagined.
- (2) Missions produced the leaders who are most widely known and honored outside Baptist circles. Such names as William Carey, Adoniram Judson, John Mason Peck, Johann Oncken, Alfred Saker, Matthew T. Yates, William Ashmore, and Timothy Richard call forth a response of admiring recognition among Christians in general. Baptists have not distinguished themselves as theologians. Few of that name have earned laurels as authors. Even preachers of renown have been few among this people who so magnify the Book. But in missionary zeal and achievement Baptists have not been far behind in supplying names for the Christian hall of fame.
- (3) Missions furnished the stimulus which led Baptists to discover one another and organize into self-conscious, cooperating conventions. Scattered groups of independent churches became efficient, growing denominational bodies. Both in Britain and in America the first general organizations were for the sole purpose of world evangelization. Baptists, with their strong insistence upon freedom, individuality, and the autonomy of the local congregation, have difficulty in getting together even among themselves, except for one great controlling purpose. When they can be shown that cooperation is essential for success in world missions, they subordinate their individual and local claims to the greater common task.

History speaks to this generation and to the future. If Baptists are to continue to grow, to win the respect and admiration of others, and to draw together in spiritual fellowship and cooperative activity, they must keep missions central in all their planning, praying, and working. A great heritage calls for a great dedication.

Enrolment Gain In Southern Baptist Schools

Dr. R. Orin Cornett, executive secretary of the Education Commission, reported the first increase in total enrolment in Southern Baptist educational institutions since

1947-48. Total enrolments for the 1952-53 academic year were reported as follows: seminaries, 4,727; senior colleges and universities, 35,404; junior colleges, 9,865; academies and Bible schools, 2,664; total, 52,660, compared with 47,626 for the preceding year. The number of ministerial students in the seminaries, colleges and academies reached an all-time high of 8,993.

Enrolment in our five seminaries was as follows: Southwestern, 2,160; Southern, 1,088; New Orleans, 711; Golden Gate, 244; and Southeastern, 230.

Circulation Of State Baptist Papers

The Alabama Baptist	59,700
Arizona Baptist Beacon	7,900
Arkansas Baptist	42,600
California Southern Baptist	12,814
Florida Baptist Witness	33,100
The Christian Index (Georgia)	65,857
The Illinois Baptist	10,500
Kansas Southern Baptist Beams	2,300
Western Recorder (Kentucky)	65,610
The Baptist Message (Louisiana)	48,000
The Maryland Baptist	8,250
The Baptist Record (Mississippi)	79,526
Word and Way (Missouri)	40,000
Baptist New Mexican	15,200
Biblical Recorder (North Carolina)	64,631
Baptist Messenger (Oklahoma)	69,000
Pacific Coast Baptist	2,300
The Baptist Courier (South Carolina)	86,000
Baptist and Reflector (Tennessee)	58,650
Baptist Standard (Texas)	266,291
Religious Herald (Virginia)	<u>21,200</u>
 Total	 1,059,429

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Acting as the disbursing agent for the Convention in gifts for missions, education, and benevolences from the churches received through the state executive offices, the Executive Committee reported total receipts during the year of \$13,923,025.73, compared with \$12,151,636.09 for 1951. The Cooperative Program receipts increased from \$8,101,421.63 in 1951 to \$9,076,047.82 in 1952.

Of the total amount received, \$7,482,064.20, or 53.74 per cent, went to the Foreign Mission Board, and \$2,590,580.22, or 18.61 per cent, went to the Home Mission Board.

The Executive Committee recommended that \$8,750,000 of the Cooperative Program receipts in 1954 be distributed among its nineteen agencies and institutions, and that all receipts above that amount be distributed to the Advance Program, with the Home Mission Board receiving twenty-five per cent and the Foreign Mission Board seventy-five per cent.

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Dr. C. E. Matthews submitted the following resolution on Evangelism, which had been approved by the Executive Committee:

Resolved that this Convention go on record as approving the 1955 simultaneous Evangelistic Crusade of all Southern Baptist churches

and mission stations, following in the wake of the "Million More in '54" Sunday School movement by Southern Baptist churches.

We earnestly urge that every Southern Baptist church and mission station participate in the 1955 simultaneous Crusade which begins March 26 and closes April 24.

We most heartily invite the Baptist churches of Cuba, the Republic of Panama, and Panama Canal Zone to join with Southern Baptist churches in this great soul-winning crusade.

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Note: The foregoing is by no means a complete report. No attempt has been made to report any of the sermons.