

# Assembly of Eloah

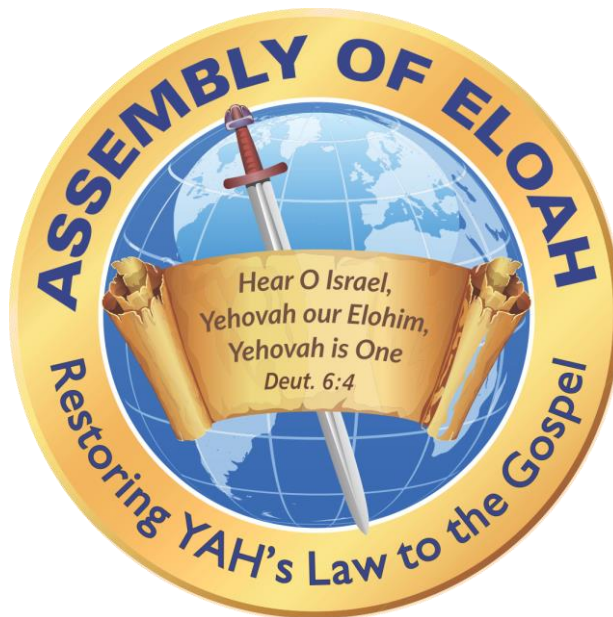
This is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and the one you have sent -- Jesus Christ. Jn. 17:3

## 1Corinthians 13

(Copyright © 2006 Will Boettcher)

Edition 1

IF I HAVE NOT CHARITY



P.O. Box 45 • Rockton • Ontario • Canada • L0R1X0 • [www.assemblyofeloah.org](http://www.assemblyofeloah.org)

This paper may be freely copied and distributed provided it is copied in total with no alterations or deletions. The publisher's name and address and copyright notice must be included. No charge may be levied on recipients of the distributed copies. Brief quotations may be embodied in critical articles and reviews without breaching copyright.

## INTRODUCTION

The New Testament instructs us to love the Lord your God or Y<sup>e</sup>hovah your Elohim and to love our neighbor. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.

## WHO DO WE LOVE?

Mat. 22:37-40 And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. <sup>38</sup> This is the great and first commandment. <sup>39</sup> And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. <sup>40</sup> On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets." (ESV used throughout except where noted)

What is the word "love"? We love to cook, we love a certain restaurant, we love our spouses, we love the weather, et cetera. There is sexual love, brotherly love, affectionate love, etc. We have music about love, and on and on it goes; but do any of these have anything to do with the love spoken of in Matthew 22:37-40 or, for that matter, any of the love spoken of in The Bible?

Let's continue on and see what we find.

In the Old Testament, we see that it is the One True God who instructs us to love Him and our neighbor.

Deut. 6:4-5 "Hear, O Israel: Y<sup>e</sup>hovah (The LORD) our God, Y<sup>e</sup>hovah (the LORD) is one. <sup>5</sup> You shall love Y<sup>e</sup>hovah (the LORD) your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

Lev. 19:18 You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own

people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am Y<sup>e</sup>hovah (the LORD).

Again, I ask: "What is this word, "love"? John Gill, in his 1760 Expositor, brings out some of the intensity of the word "love".

And thou shalt love the Lord thy God,.... Which is the first and chief commandment in the law, the sum and substance of the first table of it; and includes in it, or at least has connected with it, knowledge of God, esteem of him, delight in him, faith and trust in him, fear and worship of him, and obedience to him, which, when right, springs from it. God is to be loved because of the perfections of his nature, and the works of his hand, of nature, providence, and grace; and because of the relations he stands in to men... with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might; with a superlative love, above all creatures whatever; with the whole of the affections of the heart, with great fervency and ardour of spirit, in the sincerity of the soul, and with all the strength of grace a man has, with such love that is as strong as death. Jarchi interprets loving God with all the heart, that is, with thy heart not divided about God, a heart not divided between God and the creature; "all thy might" he interprets of mammon or substance; and, indeed, that is one way in which men may show their love to God, by laying out their substance in his service, and for the support of his cause and interest in the world.

## Love and Serve

In the following scriptures, we are told to walk in all His ways, and that we are to **love** and **serve** Y<sup>e</sup>hovah our Elohim. It is interesting how "love" and "serve" are connected here.

Deut. 10:12 "And now, Israel, what does Y<sup>e</sup>hovah (the LORD) your God require of you, but to fear Y<sup>e</sup>hovah (the LORD) your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve

Y<sup>e</sup>hovah (the LORD) your God with all your heart and with all your soul,

Deut. 11:13 "And if you will indeed obey my commandments that I command you today, to love Y<sup>e</sup>hovah (the LORD) your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul,

## Obey and Serve

In Deuteronomy 13:4, we see "obey" and "serve" being presented together.

Deut. 13:4 You shall walk after Y<sup>e</sup>hovah (the LORD) your God and fear him and keep his commandments and obey his voice, and you shall serve him and hold fast to him.

The first word to consider is "obey". How do we do that? Well, we keep the commandments, we keep the holy days, we keep the pilgrim feasts, etc., but is there more to this command to obey? It turns out that the word "obey" (SHD 8085) actually means hear: "to hear as well as to respond on what is heard."

This comes from the adopted root meaning "a careful hearing of someone or something as well as responding appropriately in obedience or action". This is according to the Ancient Hebrew Lexicon by Jeff Benner.

Then we see that "serve" means just that: to work or labor for another; to serve them.

The Brown Driver Briggs Gesenius Hebrew and English Lexicon (BDB):

'âbad

BDB's Definition:

- 1) to work, serve
- 2) 1a) (Qal)

- 3) 1a1) to labour, work, do work
- 4) 1a2) to work for another, serve another by labour

So, how do we obey our God, serve our God and love our God? We have already seen that the word "obey" means to hear, and then respond to what we hear. But how do we love Him and how do we serve Him? One way is to love and serve other humans and, in doing so, we serve the Messiah and thereby, our Father.

Mat. 25:40 And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'

In some ways, this message was started in the 70's when my wife and I were at one of the Feasts in St. Petersburg, Florida. We were sitting on the main floor and the speaker (I do not remember his name or anything about him) got up to present the sermonette. All I remember from that Feast was the gist of his message. In fact, it may be the only message that I remember from all of the Feasts we went to in Florida. It is just the heart of his message that I remember.

At some point, he paused and looked out over the audience and said, "I know there are those of you out there who have asked God for help this Feast. You may not have enough money, or you may need a ride, or some other help. I want you to look around." He paused and then continued, "These are those whom God has sent to help (serve) you." I never forgot that, and that statement was the start of this message.

Now, we have seen how to obey Him and we've seen how to serve Him. We know that we obey Him because we love Him. We also know some of the many ways we serve Him. But what about that word "love"?

## The word for "charity" in 1 Corinthians 13

In the New Testament, there are ten Greek words for love, but this paper will only address one, SGD 26. We will try to define just what is being said in 1 Corinthians 13 or what the word "charity" (love) entails. Because the definition found in Strong's leaves something to be desired, we will use Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament.

1Cor. 13:1-3 If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love (SGD 26), I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. <sup>2</sup> And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love (SGD 26), I am nothing. <sup>3</sup> If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love (SGD 26), I gain nothing.

Let's look at SGD 26, the word translated "love or charity" in 1 Corinthians 13.

agape

Thayer's Definition:

1) brotherly love, affection, good will, love, benevolence (an inclination to do kind or charitable acts)

We see here that it is just being a nice guy. Loving people as you would want to be treated; friendly, kind, helpful, etc.

Next let's look at the root word of SGD 26, which is SGD 25. The word seems to be similar, but with a greater intensity.

25 agapao

Perhaps from agan (much) (or compare 5689)

KJV - Love 135, beloved 7

1) of person

1a) to welcome, to entertain, to be fond of, to love dearly

Thayer then points us to SHD 5689 that, as we see, has a much more sensual nature to it. The Brown, Driver and Briggs Gesenius Hebrew Aramaic Lexicon even refers to the word as "lust", but consider the word "doted" or "dote" in both definitions.

1890 Strong's Greek and Hebrew Lexicons:

05689 'âgab aw-gab'

A primitive root; to breathe after, that is, to love (sensually): - dote, lover.

Brown, Drive, Briggs

05689 'âgab

BDB's Definition:

1) (Qal) to have inordinate affection or lust

1a) lust (participle)

1b) paramours (participle as subst)

When we look at the 1828 Webster's Dictionary, we see that "dote" is excessive or extravagant love.

Webster's 1828 Dictionary

Dote

1) To be delirious; to have intellect impaired by age, so that the mind wanders or wavers; to be silly.

2) To be excessively in love; usually with, on or upon; to dote on, is to love to excess or extravagance.

Do these descriptions seem a bit odd, to have this much ardor for another of the

same sex? Note that it does not distinguish as to who we should love, just that we should love them. And the Greek word for loving our Father is the same word, SGD 25. So, when we look closer at this rather benign word, "love", in 1Corinthians 13, we see that it has a much stronger connotation than the context or Thayer would indicate.

As we continue, we will see how strong our love for Y<sup>e</sup>hovah and others is to become.

## Comparing Love

One of the definitions of SGD 26 is "benevolence", which is *an inclination to do kind or charitable acts*. Love is the good side of the two-headed coin of **love / self-righteousness**. This will become clearer as we progress.

A closer look at some of the other words will show the intent of the word "charity" or "love".

1Cor. 13:1-2 If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. <sup>2</sup>And if I have prophetic <4394> powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love <26>, I am nothing.

Looking at SGD 4394 in the Thayer' Lexicon, it is clear that anyone with the gift of prophecy has been given a wonderful ability. And yet it is as nothing.

Thayer's 4394 προφητεία propheteia  
Thayer's definition:  
1) prophecy

1a) a discourse emanating from divine inspiration and declaring the purposes of God, whether by reproof and admonishing the wicked, or comforting the afflicted, or revealing things hidden; especially by foretelling future events

1b) Used in the NT of the utterance of OT's prophets

1b1) of the prediction of events relating to Christ's kingdom and its speedy triumph, together with the consolations and admonitions pertaining to it, the spirit of prophecy, the divine mind, to which the prophetic faculty is due.

Prophecy is a wonderful gift, but it does not compare to love.

Albert Barnes, although a Trinitarian, has some interesting perspectives on 1Corinthians 13. In his *Barnes' Notes on the New Testament*, he shows that to "understand all mysteries" is referring to the mysteries of religion, the unknown of unrevealed understandings of the Old Testament.

### Barnes

*And understand all mysteries* - On the meaning of the word "mystery", see note to 1Corinthians 2:7. This passage proves that it was one part of the prophetic office, as referred to here, to be able to understand and explain the "mysteries" of religion; that is, the things that were before unknown, or unrevealed. It does not refer to the prediction of future events, but to the great and deep truths connected with religion; the things that were unexplained in the old economy, the meaning of types and emblems; and the obscure portions of the plan of redemption. All these might be plain enough if they were revealed; but there were many things connected with religion which God had not chosen to reveal to people.

The mysteries would seem to be what we would all desire to know and yet, without love, it is as nothing.

According to Barnes, the knowledge referred to in verse 2 is both secular and religious. And the "faith" (SGD 4102) is a conviction, trust or confidence in Y<sup>e</sup>hovah so strong that the mountains could be moved. And yet, if I do not have this "charity" or "love" (SGD 26) according to Barnes, I'm still an unpardoned sinner and of no value to anyone.

1Cor. 13:2 And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge <1108>, and if I have all faith <4102>, so as to remove mountains, but have not love <26>, I am nothing.

#### Barnes

*And all knowledge* - See the note at 1Corinthians 12:8. Though I knew everything. Though I were acquainted fully with all the doctrines of religion; and were with all sciences and arts.

*And though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains* - Though I should have the highest kind of faith. This is referred to, by the Saviour (Mat. 17:20), as the highest kind of faith; and Paul here had this fact doubtless in his eye.

*I am nothing* - All would be of no value. It would not save me. I should still be an unredeemed, unpardoned sinner. I should do good to no one; I should answer none of the great purposes which God has designed; I should not by all this secure my salvation. All would be in vain in regard to the great purpose of my existence. None of these things could be placed before God as a ground of acceptance in the Day of Judgment. Unless I should have love, I should still be lost.

A somewhat similar idea is expressed by the Savior, in regard to the Day of Judgment, in Mat. 7:22-23, "Many will say unto me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name?

and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

### Giving versus love

If anyone of us were to give all that we have; no matter how much or how little (remember the widow's mite); and even went so far as to give our body to be burned; without that uncompromising charity or love, it is for naught. And yet, if we give from God's spirit of love, whether to Y<sup>e</sup>hovah or man, we are serving Him.

We begin to see here the dark side of the **love / self-righteousness** two-sided coin. If we give everything we own and it is not from love, then is it not from self-righteousness? Why else would we give without love, except to prove how righteous we are?

1Cor. 13:3 If I give away all I have, and if I deliver up my body to be burned, but have not love <26>, I gain nothing.

### What love is not

In 1Cor. 13:4, we begin to see what love is not. And know this; the flipside of the good points can be self-righteousness. Barnes has much to say about verse 4.

1Cor. 13:4 Love <26> is **patient** and **kind**; love <26> does **not envy** or **boast**; it is not arrogant

#### Barnes

*Charity suffereth long* KJV - Paul now

proceeds to illustrate the "nature" of love, or to show how it is exemplified. His illustrations are all drawn from its effect in regulating our conduct toward others, or our contact with them. The "reason" why he made use of this illustration, rather than its nature as evinced toward "God," was, probably, because it was especially necessary for them to understand in what way it should be manifested toward each other. There were contentions and strifes among them; there were of course suspicions, and jealousies, and heartburnings; there would be unkind judging, the imputation of improper motives, and selfishness; there were envy, and pride, and boasting, all of which were inconsistent with love; and Paul therefore evidently designed to correct these evils, and to produce a different state of things by showing them what would be produced by the exercise of love...

*And is kind* - The word used here denotes to be good-natured, gentle, tender, affectionate. Love is benignant. It wishes well. It is not harsh, sour, morose, ill-natured. Tyndale renders it, "is courteous". The idea is that, under all provocations and ill-usage, it is gentle and mild. "Hatred" prompts to harshness, severity, unkindness of expression, anger, and a desire of revenge. But love is the reverse of all these. A man who truly loves another will be kind to him, desirous of doing him good; will be "gentle," not severe and harsh; will be "courteous" because he desires his happiness, and would not pain his feelings. And as religion is love, and prompts to love, so it follows that it requires courtesy or true politeness, and will secure it...

Just being a nice guy. Loving people as you would want to be loved or treated: friendly, kind, helpful, etc.

*Envieth not* KJV - οὐ ζηλόδι ου zeloi. This word properly means to be "zealous" for or against any person or thing; that is, to be eager for, or anxious for or against anyone. It is used often in a good sense (1Cor. 12:31; See the notes to 1Cor. 14:1, 1Cor. 14:39 and

2Cor. 11:2, etc.); but it may be used in a bad sense - to be zealous "against" a person; to be jealous of; to envy (Act. 7:9; Act. 17:5; Jas. 4:2, "ye kill and envy."). It is in this sense, evidently, that it is used here, - as denoting zeal, or ardent desire "against" any person. The sense is, love does not envy others the happiness which they enjoy; it delights in their welfare; and as their happiness is increased by their endowments, their rank, their reputation, their wealth, their health, their domestic comforts, their learning, etc., those who are influenced by love "rejoice" in all this...

*Vaunteth not itself* KJV - (περπερευεται perperueitai, from περπερος perperos, a boaster, braggart) The idea is that of boasting, bragging, vaunting. The word occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. Bloomfield supposes that it has the idea of acting precipitously, inconsiderately, incautiously; and our translators have placed this idea in the margin: "he is not rash." But most expositors suppose that it has the notion of boasting, or vaunting of one's own excellences or endowments. This spirit proceeds from the idea of "superiority" over others; and is connected with a feeling of contempt or disregard for them. Love would correct this, because it would produce a desire that they should be happy - and to treat a man with contempt is not the way to make him happy; love would regard others with esteem - and to boast over them is not to treat them with esteem; it would teach us to treat them with affectionate regard - and no man who has affectionate regard for others is disposed to boast of his own qualities over them..

*Is not puffed up* - (φουσιούται phusioutai). This word means to blow, to puff, to pant; then to inflate with pride, and vanity, and self-esteem.. It perhaps differs from the preceding word, inasmuch as that word denotes the expression of the feelings of pride, vanity, etc., and, this word, the feeling itself. A man may be very proud and vain, and not express it in the form of boasting. That state is indicated by this word. If he gives expression to this feeling, and boasts of

his endowments, that is indicated by the previous word. Love would prevent this, as it would the former. It would destroy the *feeling*, as well as the *expression* of it... Pride, vanity, and even knowledge may swell the mind with the conviction of self-importance; but love is humble, meek, modest, unobtrusive...

In verse 5, we see very clear opposites of self-righteousness.

1Cor. 13:5 or rude. It does not **insist on its own way**; it is not **irritable** or **resentful**;

Barnes

*Doth not behave itself unseemly* KJV - (οὐκ ἀσχημονεῖ οὐκ aschemonei). This word occurs in 1Cor. 7:36 (see the note on that verse). It means to conduct improperly, or disgracefully, or in a manner to deserve reproach. Love seeks that which is proper or becoming in the circumstances and relations of life in which we are placed. It prompts to the due respect for superiors, producing veneration and respect for their opinions; and it prompts to a proper regard for inferiors, not despising their rank, their poverty, their dress, their dwellings, their pleasures, their views of happiness; it prompts to the due observance of all the "relations" of life, as those of a husband, wife, parent, child, brother, sister, son, daughter, and produces a proper conduct and deportment in all these relations. The proper idea of the phrase is, that it prompts to all that is fit and becoming in life... And in the same manner, it would lead a man to avoid profane and indecent language, improper allusions, double meanings and innuendoes, coarse and vulgar expressions...

The next section is another opposite of self-righteousness.

*Seeketh not her own* KJV - There is, perhaps, not a more striking or important expression in the New Testament than this; or one that more beautifully sets forth the nature and

power of that love which is produced by true religion. Its evident meaning is, that it is not selfish; it does not seek its own happiness exclusively or mainly; it does not seek its own happiness to the injury of others. This expression is not, however, to be pressed as if Paul meant to teach that a man should not regard his own welfare at all; or have no respect to his health, his property, his happiness, or his salvation...

...True religion, or love to others, will prompt us to seek their welfare with self-denial, and personal sacrifice and toil. Similar expressions, to denote comparison, occur frequently in Scriptures. Thus, where it is said "I desired mercy, and not sacrifice" (Hos. 7:6; compare Mic. 6:8; Mat. 9:13), it is meant, "I desired mercy more than I desired sacrifice; I did not wish that mercy should be forgotten or excluded in the attention to the mere ceremonies of religion." The sense here is, therefore, that a man under the influence of true love or religion does not make his own happiness or salvation the main or leading thing; he does not make all other things subservient to this; he seeks the welfare of others and desire to promote their happiness and salvation, even at great personal sacrifice and self-denial. It is the *characteristic* of the man, not that he promotes his own worth, health, happiness or salvation, but that he lives to do good to others...

*Is not easily provoked* KJV - ...Here it means evidently to rouse to anger; to excite to indignation or wrath. Tyndale renders it, "is not provoked to anger." Our translation does not exactly convey the sense. The word "easily" is not expressed in the original. The translators have inserted it to convey the idea that he who is under the influence of love, though he may be provoked, that is, injured, or though there might be incitements to anger, yet that he would not be roused, or readily give way to it.

The meaning of the phrase in the Greek is that, a man who is under the influence of love or religion is not "prone" to violent anger or exasperation; it is not his character to be hasty, excited, or passionate. He is calm,



serious, patient. He looks soberly at things; and though he may be injured, yet he governs his passions, restrains his temper, subdues his feelings. This, Paul says, would be produced by love...

*Thinketh no evil* KJV - That is, puts the best possible construction on the motives and the conduct of others. This expression also is "comparative." It means that love, or that a person under the influence of love, is not malicious, censorious, disposed to find fault, or to impute improper motives to others. It is not only "not easily provoked," not soon excited, but it is not disposed to "think" that there was any evil intention even in cases which might tend to irritate or exasperate us. It is not disposed to think that there was any evil in the case; or that what was done was with any improper intention or design; that is, it puts the best possible construction on the conduct of others...

## Positive aspects of love

Barnes, in verse 6, brings out an interesting point of view regarding sin or iniquity.

1Cor. 13:6 it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth.

*Rejoiceth not in iniquity* KJV - Does not rejoice over the "vices" of other people; does not take delight when they are guilty of crime, or when, in any manner, they fall into sin. It does not find pleasure in hearing others accused of sin, and in having it proved that they committed it. It does not find a malicious pleasure in the "report" that they have done wrong; or in following up that report, and finding it established. Wicked people often find pleasure in this (Rom. 1:32), and rejoice when others have fallen into sin, and have disgraced and ruined themselves... A man often rejoices when an enemy, a persecutor, or a slanderer has committed some crime, and when he has shown an improper spirit, uttered a rash expression, or taken some step which shall involve him in ignominy. But love does none

of these things. It does not desire that an enemy, a persecutor, or a slanderer should do evil, or should disgrace and ruin himself.

There are those who, even though they are not of us, do good and for this we should be grateful. Remember it was from the Tree of Good and Evil that they ate, not just the tree of evil.

*Rejoiceth in the truth* KJV - The word "truth" here stands opposed to "iniquity," and means virtue, piety, goodness. It does not rejoice in the "vices," but in the "virtues" of others. It is pleased; it rejoices when they "do well." It is pleased when those who differ from us conduct themselves in any manner in such a way as to please God, and to advance their own reputation and happiness. They who are under the influence of that love rejoice that good is done, and the truth defended and advanced, whoever may be the instrument; rejoice that others are successful in their plans of doing good, though they do not act with us; rejoice that other people have a reputation well-earned for virtue and purity of life, though they may differ from us in opinion, and may be connected with a different denomination. They do not rejoice when other denominations of Christians fall into error; or when their plans are blasted; or when they are calumniated, and oppressed, and reviled...

Verse 7 brings out several more positive aspects of love.

1Cor. 13:7 Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

Barnes

*Beareth all things* KJV - ...and then to "hide," "conceal," not to make known. If this be the sense here, then it means that love is disposed to hide or conceal the faults and imperfections of others; not to promulgate or blazon them abroad, or to give any undue publicity to them. Benevolence to the individual or to the public would require that

these faults and errors should be concealed. If this is the sense, then it accords nearly with what is said in the previous verse. The word may also mean, to forbear, bear with, endure. Thus, it is used in 1Th. 3:1, 1Th. 3:5. And so our translators understand it here, as meaning that love is patient, long-suffering, not soon angry not disposed to revenge. And if this is the sense, it accords with the expression in 1Cor. 13:4, "love suffers long."... It means, that in regard to the errors and faults of others, there is a disposition "not" to notice or to revenge them. There is a willingness to conceal, or to bear with them patiently.

But this being said, Christ himself gave us the proper handling of offenses and trespasses against us. So what Barnes is talking about is not offenses or abuses, but faults and imperfections of others. In other words, do not gossip. God does not condone sin. And the law of the land does not condone law-breaking.

Mat. 18:15-17 "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. <sup>16</sup> But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. <sup>17</sup> If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

*Believeth all things* KJV - The whole scope of the connection and the argument here requires us to understand this of the conduct of others. It cannot mean, that the man who is under the influence of love is a man of "universal credulity;" that he makes no discrimination in regard to things to be believed; and is as prone to believe a falsehood as the truth; or that he is at no pains to inquire what is true and what is false, what is right and what is wrong. But it must mean, that in regard to the conduct of others, there is a disposition to put the best

construction on it; to believe that they may be actuated by good motives, and that they intend no injury; and that there is a willingness to suppose, as far as can be, that what is done is done consistently with friendship, good feeling, and virtue. Love produces this, because it rejoices in the happiness and virtue of others, and will not believe the contrary except on irrefragable evidence.

*Hopeth all things* KJV - Hopes that all will turn out well. This must also refer to the conduct of others; and it means, that however dark may be the appearances; how much so ever there may be to produce the fear that others are actuated by improper motives or are bad people, yet that there is a "hope" that matters may be explained and made clear; that the difficulties may be made to vanish; and that the conduct of others may be made to "appear" to be fair and pure. Love will "hold on to this hope" until all possibility of such a result has vanished and it is compelled to believe that the conduct is not susceptible of a fair explanation...

*Endureth all things* KJV - Bears up under, sustains, and does not murmur. Bears up under all persecutions at the hand of man; all efforts to injure the person, property, or reputation; and bears all that may be laid upon us in the providence and by the direct agency of God;

## Love never fails

Love will be there when Y<sup>e</sup>hovah becomes "all in all", even if all else fails. Why? Because He IS love (1John 4:8, 16)

1Cor. 13:8 Love <26> never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away.

Barnes

*Charity never faileth* KJV - Paul here proceeds

to illustrate the value of love, from its "permanency" as compared with other valued endowments. It is valuable, and is to be sought because it will always abide; may be always exercised; is adapted to all circumstances, and to all worlds in which we may be placed, or in which we may dwell. The word rendered "faileth" (ἐκπίπτει ekpíptei) denotes properly to fall out of, to fall from or off;... Here it means to fall away, to fail; to be without effect, to cease to be in existence... The sense is, that while other endowments of the Holy Spirit must soon cease and be valueless, LOVE would abide, and would always exist. The "argument" is, that we ought to seek that which is of enduring value; and that, therefore, love should be preferred to those endowments of the Spirit on which so high a value had been set by the Corinthians.

*But whether there be prophecies* - That is, the "gift" of prophecy, or the power of speaking as a prophet; that is, of delivering the truth of God in an intelligible manner under the influence of inspiration...

*They shall fail* - The gift shall cease to be exercised; shall be abolished, come to nothing. There shall be no further use for this gift... and it shall cease. God shall be the teacher there.

*There be tongues* - The power of speaking foreign languages. They shall cease...

All will have one language, so speaking in foreign languages will cease to be needed.

Zep. 3:9 "For at that time I will change the speech of the peoples to a pure **language**, that all of them may call upon the name of the LORD and serve him with **one** accord.

1Cor. 13:9 For we know in part and we prophesy in part,

Barnes

*For we know in part...* This expression means

"only in part;" that is, "imperfectly." Our knowledge here is imperfect and obscure. It may, therefore, all vanish in the eternal world amidst its superior brightness; and we should not regard that as of such vast value which is imperfect and obscure...

*And we prophesy in part...* the apostle is showing the imperfection of the prophetic gift; and he observes, that there is the same imperfection which attends knowledge. It is only in part; it is imperfect; it is indistinct, compared with the full view...

1Corinthians 13:9 points out that we know in part, but verse 10 show that when the perfect comes, we will know in full. Could it be that the coming perfect is Christ?

1Cor. 13:10 but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away.

Now we come to verse 11 of 1Cor 13. We could go to Barnes for verse 11, and his comments are valid, but let's look at this verse a bit differently. Barnes would point us to a childhood in explaining this verse, but the question becomes: "Is there another understanding we might glean from verse 11?"

What if it has to do with our grasp of love as either new or non-Christian, versus having a mature understanding of love? As we exercise this love, we begin to develop into that mature individual our Father is creating. We begin to put away childish ideas of what love is and become that man or woman of mature love.

Love is a growth process. It is the basis of Christianity and, as we practice it, we grow.

How do we practice it? Shall we go back and re-read the preceding pages?

Love equals righteousness and, as we grow, we begin to become love as our Father and elder brother. We become that mature man or woman as we put away childish things.

1Cor. 13:11 When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways.

In order to understand verse 12, we need to read verses 9 through 12. Verse 12 begins by pointing out that we see as if looking in a poor quality mirror. The mirrors of the ancients were of polished metal and, if you have ever looked into one, you would understand the analogy. Even our modern polished stainless-steel mirrors cannot compare to a glass mirror with a silver back. We now have only a poor understanding of truth, even as we strive to know and understand, to grow to the mature man or woman. But when perfection comes (verse 10), then we will see face-to-face. Then we will know, as we are known fully by Y<sup>e</sup>hovah.

1Cor. 13:9-12 We don't know everything, and our prophecies are not complete. <sup>10</sup> But what is perfect will someday appear, and what isn't perfect will then disappear. <sup>11</sup> When we were children, we thought and reasoned as children do. But when we grew up, we quit our childish ways. <sup>12</sup> Now all we can see of God is like a cloudy picture in a mirror. Later we will see him face to face. We don't know everything, but then we will, just as God completely understands us.

1Cor. 13:13 For now there are faith, hope, and love. But of these three, the greatest is love.

Barnes

*And now abideth* KJV - "Remains" (μένει menei). The word means properly to remain, continue, abide; and is applied to persons remaining in a place, in a state or condition, in contradistinction from removing or changing their place, or passing away. Here it must be understood to be used to denote "permanency," when the other things of which he had spoken had passed away; and the sense is, that faith, hope, and love would "remain" when the gift of tongues should cease, and the need of prophecy, etc.; that is, these should survive them all. And the connection certainly requires us to understand him as saying that faith, hope, and love would survive "all" those things of which he had been speaking, and must, therefore, include knowledge (1Cor. 13:8-9), as well as miracles and the other endowments of the Holy Spirit. They would survive them all; would be valuable when the others should cease; and should, therefore, be mainly sought; and of these the greatest and most important is love... it seems evident that Paul means to say that faith, hope, and love will survive "all" those other things of which he had been speaking; that "they" would vanish away, or be lost in superior attainments and endowments; that the time would come when they would be useless; but that faith, hope, and love would then remain; but of "these," for important reasons, love was the most valuable. Not because it would "endure" the longest, for the apostle does not intimate that, but because it is more important to the welfare of others...

*But the greatest of these is charity* - Not because it is to "endure" the longest, but because it is the more important virtue; it exerts a wider influence; it is more necessary to the happiness of society; it overcomes more evils. It is *the* great principle which is to bind the universe in harmony, which unites God to his creatures, and his creatures to himself, and which binds and confederates all holy beings with each other. It is therefore more important, because it pertains to society, to the great kingdom of which God is the head, and because it enters into the very

conception of a holy and happy organization. Faith and hope rather pertain to individuals; love pertains to society, and is that without which the kingdom of God cannot stand. Individuals may be saved by faith and hope; but the whole immense kingdom of God depends on love. It is, therefore, of more importance than all other graces and endowments; more important than prophecy and miracles, and the gift of tongues and knowledge, because it will SURVIVE them all; more important than faith and hope, because, although it may co-exist with them, and though they all shall live forever, yet LOVE enters into the very nature of the kingdom of God; binds society together; unites the Creator and the creature; and blends the interests of all the redeemed, and of the angels, and of God, INTO ONE.

## Conclusion

We see that the gift of love, which is God's spirit, is much more than what we would imagine. It is above all other gifts, when properly implemented. The other gifts are important, but love is the greatest, and it is to be desired and to be manifested in our lives, as it shows the world that we belong to Y<sup>e</sup>hovah.

Amen, Y<sup>e</sup>hovah