

The Love of God Perfected

Happy Sabbath to all.

Two weeks ago, I spoke about fear being a barrier to conversion. I stated that people who think carnally are afraid of change, and one of the reasons for this is that they do not trust their journey to go from “glory to glory” as our Father has promised. (2Cor 3:18) Because the “natural man” does not have confidence in an inheritance of peace, he anticipates only aging, death, and uncertainty (at best) thereafter. Any change is seen as a step toward this doubtful destiny, and so he resists it.

Last week, we expanded on this a little, showing (among other things) how Satan steadfastly opposes the will of Yahweh for mankind. When our Father pronounces warnings, the enemy of souls speaks false confidence. When our Father provides us with promises, Satan seeks to inject doubts. Even the very Gospel, won for us at infinite price, is believed by so few in its purity and fullness, and it is because the tempters have made men dread changes, even when those changes are such that transform the life, and would bring us into harmony with our Creator.

This week, we are going to look at the goal of those changes. We, who are born of the Spirit, have been changed from the carnal to the spiritual, from the earthly to the heavenly. We have read that, although “eye hath not seen” those things that our Father has prepared for us, we have been given enough evidence, enough blessings, to trust in the path we have been called to walk. But as we walk, we are to be conscious of the sanctifying power of the Almighty on us, because it is in this that we rejoice.

Now, we may not know the “mechanics” of the transformation. We may not know exactly how, or when, the Spirit of Yah advances the work in us, but there are points at which we can examine ourselves, to know that we are “in the faith,” (2Cor 13:5) and to see that we are being drawn toward the goal, which is described thus: “the love of God perfected.”

That phrase comes from 1 John 2:5, and it is a key verse, set in a very relevant passage for us. I want us to see the entire passage, because it contains what may well be “new light” for some of us, even though – as John himself says – this is “no new commandment.”

Before I do that, I want you to think first about what it could mean to have the love of Yah “perfected” in us, and what that would look like. Remember, it is by “beholding” we become changed, and so in the CSDA Church we have spoken about the importance of such things as prayer, meditation, and having a vision of excellence. We must “see” ourselves, as much as our understanding will permit, as being perfect reflections of our Savior, or we cannot properly “agree” with the Spirit as It leads us in that direction. This is a part of the work of sanctification also, teaching us to “see” this pure vision.

If we see this vision, we might see ourselves perfectly and joyfully fulfilling the commandments of Yah. We might see ourselves speaking with voices of power, boldness, confidence, and truth. We might see ourselves in the best health that our bodies will permit, and exerting our energy, time and talents toward advancing the Gospel through any means at our disposal. We might see ourselves performing miracles, healing the sick either through knowledge or divine power, and drawing the faith of some to Yah while causing great anger in those who oppose His character.

These things are certainly true. These things are surely a part of the faith of Yahshua, and a part of our work – whether on New Moons or really at any point – is to confirm within ourselves that we are truly keeping all of Yah’s word, that we are really Sabbath-keepers in spirit and in truth (as well as merely physically), and that we are not still struggling with the “milk” of the message, when we should be going on to higher ground.

Are we giving a testimony that reflects an invincible faith? Are the habits that we hold in harmony with this vision of excellence? As Adventists, we are looking toward that time when we must stand before the Father without an Intercessor, when he that is just will be “just still,” and he that is holy will be “holy still,” (Rev 22:11) and at such a time, it must have come to pass that the love of Yah is perfected in us.

Now, with all these things in mind, and they are all true things, let us read the passage from which I took the phrase “the love of God perfected.” It is 1 John 2:3-11, and I will paste it here, so let me know when you have finished reading:

“And hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. He that saith, ‘I know him,’ and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in Him.

“He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked.

“Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning. Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.

“He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.”

Earlier this week, Pastor “Chick” sent out an email that contained a line that really caught my attention. He wrote, “Did you realize that communication with like-believers is a form of prayer?”

I thought that this concept deserved an entire study, perhaps several. I thought that it was almost a shame that I had already put together some preliminary notes for this Sabbath’s study about the love of Yah perfected, because the idea of communication with the brethren being a form of prayer was such an interesting and vital thought that I wanted to explore it further. As I turned to my notes, however, I realized that these were not two messages, but really one, and something that Yah has been telling us (in different ways) for some time now.

Our Father is appealing to His people for a strengthening of our unity. He is appealing to us for a further refinement in our communication. The efforts that some of us have made recently at improving this must continue, because it is through this means that the Spirit will perfect the love of Yah within us.

Does this seem like a bold statement? Does it seem strange? Wouldn’t it make more sense to say, “God will perfect His love within us by our obedience to His commandments?” We know that this cannot be

the case, at least not entirely, for while works performed in faith do reinforce that faith, the works themselves cannot bring a character into perfection. Might we say, instead, “Studying the Bible will perfect the love of God in us?” We know that this cannot be entirely true either, because many know the Word very well, and it has not made them Christians. Many spend hours in contemplation of the Scriptures, and they have not received victory over their sins, “ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.” (2Tim 3:7)

And of course, I would never discourage anyone from doing good works, or studying the Bible. But these things, if performed by an individual in isolation, offer no “training” for the Heavenly Society, where unity with the Father and our fellow holy beings is the highest form of existence. The greatest creatures in Heaven find supreme joy in merely standing next to the Throne, and saying, “Holy, Holy, Holy,” as their minds are exposed to greater and greater depths of Yah’s nature. But even that is not a solitary experience. Very little, if anything, about those “great things” that our Father has prepared for us is designed to be a solitary experience, and yet there are those who (while claiming to be awaiting Heaven) avoid fellowship, and covenants, and the society of those who are likewise preparing.

Now, I do not think that any of us who regularly gather here are at quite that level of deception. All of us claim to understand the blessings of fellowship, and most claim to know the purpose of Yah’s covenants. But we cannot escape from the world only part-way. We must take these matters seriously, because as John writes, smoothly going from the theme of “perfect love” to that of expressing love for the brethren, our relationship with Yahweh is reflected in our relationship with one another.

We must understand properly what this means.

If we do not perfect our communication, one with another, the love of Yah cannot be perfected in us. Some, in our history, may have been tempted to think that we have placed too much emphasis on the importance of communication by such means as we have available to us (telephone calls, emails, and so on). And yet, what would the Apostle John say differently than we have said, if he were alive to see the current state of Yahshua’s Bride? Would he not say that we must do everything possible to remain in close contact, separated as we are by distances that would seem incredible to this first-century individual?

The world, clearly, does not see the need for unity. When it DOES temporarily unite, it is generally – as it was in the original Babylon – for purposes contrary to the will of the Almighty. It is not to praise Yahweh, to bear one another’s burdens, or to rejoice in the commonality of the Holy Spirit.

It is on us, a part of our Gospel, a part of our testimony, to show the world what the love for the brethren looks like. It does not look like a group that assembles once a week, or once a month, and then does not speak again until another such assembly. It does not look like a group that is largely silent one with another, until something specific arises to say. Not that this has been happening across the board, but certainly there is still some “perfecting” that Yah would have us do with regard to expressing our love for one another, and this as the time before the Father without an Intercessor draws closer.

Each of us must be an intercessor for ourselves, and one another, so that we can be brought into the Most Holy Place with our High Priest. And it must begin now, with these “little things,” because we know what is expected of us, and that we must demonstrate heavenly faith even at this earthly level.

We have seen, in the past, how Satan has used silence. We have seen how he has used misunderstandings and separations over minor things that could be repaired with a word or two. We have borne witness to how the darkness that comes from one person not loving another has caused errors in thinking, and the result is an untrained conscience that cannot tell darkness from light, nor can it reason properly from cause to effect. More than one person has separated from our company – not because they disputed our beliefs – but because they disputed things that they mistakenly thought we believed.

We have had, to give examples just off the top of my head, individuals disputing with us for everything from sacrificing animals on the Passover, to believing that we must be genetic descendants of Israelites to be members of the 144,000, to dictating what subjects should be taught in Bible studies (none of which, of course, we do). Satan is pleased to see such deceptions separate potential believers from the truth that they claim to be seeking.

This is not a danger to which any individual is immune, but we have the cure before us. It is the love of Yah perfected in us, and that as expressed in spiritual fellowship, and loving communication, among us. The pen of inspiration has let us know that man is not safe for the duration of “an hour” without prayer. If communication with the brethren is a form of prayer – because we represent the Bride of Christ, with whom we are “One” – then how greatly should we endeavor to perfect that form of prayer?

Those that speak “often one to another,” these are the ones that are written in the Book of Remembrance, (Mal 3:16) and in such, but in no others, is the love of God perfected.

Brethren, we know that we shall not fail, nor shall we be discouraged.

This is not true because we have been made naturally immune to these things, but because we WILL do those things that our Father has instructed us to do in order to avoid them. And we do them, because those who are born of Yahweh do them, just as surely as a fig tree produces figs, and an olive tree produces olives. Those who are Yah’s will fellowship with one another, and will speak blessings to one another, because that is the love of Yah in us that is being perfected through the changes worked in us by His Holy Spirit.

Because of Yah’s work in us, we do those things that keep us from failure and discouragement. As we cooperate with this work of the Spirit, we know that we must be in constant watchfulness, and prayer (of all forms). We must pray for one another. We must use the opportunities we are given to bless one another with our words – now this is old light that must be made new again. We must take the time to bless one another with our words. This requires talking. This requires communication, and time. Because we are far apart, it requires effort. Every worthwhile relationship is built on communication, time and effort, and this is true even of human-to-human relationships. How much more is it not necessary for a spiritual relationship with our Father? And as John said in another place, “this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments, and His commandments are not grievous.” (1 John 5:3)

Remember, the greatest of the commandments is that we love, and therefore the greatest of Yah’s commandments is that we communicate – with Him, and with our neighbors. It is no small thing, this commandment of Yah, and for those of us who are born of the Spirit, it is no grief to know that we have been so instructed – so commanded. Let us count it a joy that our Father desires us to be perfect in our

love, and perfect in our communication and, casting out all fear, “let us go on unto perfection.” (Hebrews 6:1)