

D.L. Moody:

I remember the morning I came out of my room after I had first trusted Christ, and I thought the old sun shone a good deal brighter than it ever had before; I thought that the sun was just smiling upon me, and I walked out upon Boston Common, and I heard the birds in the trees, and I thought that they were all singing a song for me. Do you know I fell in love with the birds? I never cared for them before; it seemed to me that I was in love with all creation. I had not a bitter feeling against any man, and I was ready to take all men to my heart. If a man has not the love of God shed abroad in his heart, he has never been regenerated. If you hear a person get up in a prayer meeting, and he begins to speak and find fault with everybody, you may know that his is not a genuine conversion; that it is counterfeit; it has not the right ring, because the impulse of a converted soul is to love, and not to be getting up and complaining of every one else, and finding fault. But it is hard for us to live in the right atmosphere all the time. Some one comes along and treats us wrongly, perhaps we hate him; we have not attended to the means of grace and kept feeding on the word of God as we ought; a root of bitterness springs up in our hearts, and perhaps we are not aware of it, but it has come up in our hearts; then we are not qualified to work for God. The love of God is not shed abroad in our hearts as it ought to be by the Holy Ghost.

But the work of the Holy Ghost is to impart love. Paul could say, "The Love of Christ constraineth me." He could not help going from town to town and preaching the Gospel. Jeremiah at one time said: "I will speak no more in the Lord's name; I have suffered enough; these people don't like God's Word. They lived in a wicked day, as we do now. Infidels were creeping up all around him, who said the word of God was not true; Jeremiah had stood like a wall of fire, confronting them, and he boldly proclaimed that the Word of God was true. At last they put him in prison, and he said: "I will keep still; it has cost me too much." But a little while after, you know, he could not keep still. His bones caught fire; he had to speak. And when we are so full of the Love of God, we are compelled to work for God, then God blesses us. If our work is sought to be accomplished by the lash, without any true motive power, it will come to nought.

Now the question comes up, have we the love of God shed abroad in our hearts and are we holding the truth in love? Some people hold the truth, but in such a cold stern way that it will do no good. Other people want to love everything, and so they give up much of the truth; but we are to hold the truth in love; we are to hold the truth even if we lose all, but we are to hold it in love, and if we do that, the Lord will bless us.

There are a good many people trying to get this love; and they are trying to produce it of themselves. But therein all fail. The love implanted deep in our new nature will be spontaneous. I don't have to learn to love my children. I can not help loving them. I said to a young miss some time ago, in an inquiry meeting, who said that she could not love God; that it was very hard for her to love Him - I said to her, "Is it hard for you to love your Mother? Do you have to learn to love your Mother? And she looked up through her tears, and said, "No; I can't help it; that is spontaneous." "Well," I said, "when the Holy Spirit kindles love in your heart, you can not help loving God; it will be spontaneous." When the Spirit of God comes into your heart and mine, it will be easy to serve God. The fruit of the Spirit, as you find it in Galatians, begins with love. There are nine graces spoken of in the sixth chapter, and of the nine different graces, Paul puts love at the head of the list; love is the first thing - the first in that precious cluster of fruit. Some one has put it in this way: that all the other eight can be put in the word love. Joy is love exulting; peace is love in repose; long suffering is love on trial; gentleness is love in society; goodness is love in action; faith is love on the battlefield; meekness is love at school; and temperance is love in training. So it is love all the way; love at the top; love at the bottom, and all the way along down these graces; and if we only just brought forth the fruit of the Spirit, what a world we would have; there would be no need of any policemen; a man could leave his overcoat around without some one stealing it; men would not have any desire to do evil. Says Paul, "Against such there is no law," you don't need any law. A man who is full of the Spirit don't need to be put under law; don't need any policemen to watch him. We could dismiss all our policemen; the lawyers would have to give up practicing law, and the courts would not have any business.